



New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield

Broadband Update

JOURNEY'S END

Board of Selectmen Determines to Sign with Charter Communications

By Barry R. Shapiro

New Marlborough's long, seemingly never-ending trek to obtain high speed internet has ended.

At its meeting on June 26, 2018, the Board of Selectmen unanimously selected Charter Communications to build and thereafter operate a fiber optic network for the town. Construction will begin following the negotiation and execution of a franchise agreement between the Town and Charter and the execution of necessary pole licenses, with the expectation that service will begin within two years thereafter.

"We believe we're making the best choice for the Town," said Michele McAuley Shalaby, chair of the Board of Selectmen. "We have confidence in our choice, that our residents will be pleased with this service. We are also pleased that we were able to accomplish this without burdening the Town with significant debt which was our



photo by Sandra Fusco Walker

The well-attended broadband information session on June 23 attracted a diverse crowd.

objective from the start. I thank all the members of the Broadband Committee and Mari Enoch, Chief Procurement Officer, for their efforts on our behalf. They all worked extremely hard and carried out due diligence in a thorough and highly professional manner."

Charter, by far the largest party interested in providing service to the town, is an American telecommunications company offering its services to consumers and businesses under the brand name "Spectrum." It provides services to over 25 million customers in forty-one states, and is the second-largest cable operator in the United States by subscribers, just behind Comcast, and the third largest pay television operator behind Comcast and AT&T U-verse/DirecTV. It is the fifth largest telephone provider based upon residential subscriber line count. Charter's revenues were approximately \$41 billion in 2017 with net income of approximately \$9.9 billion.

The process to bring high speed internet to the town spanned about ten years and encountered numerous dead ends, including multiple requests for proposals (RFPs) and a flirtation with Frontier Communications which went nowhere. In

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the end, the choice came down to three options: 1) Crocker Communications, based on its response to a request for proposals issued by the Town, (2) Charter which, as a cable provider, is exempt from the RFP process (Charter did, however, submit detailed answers to questions, comparable to those set forth in the RFP, to the Broadband Committee), and 3) a Town-owned system which could be operated independently or as part of the WiredWest cooperative.

Before making its final recommendation to the Board of Selectmen, the Committee determined that it wanted to present its findings to town, answer questions, and get some feedback. Accordingly, on Saturday, June 23, 2018, the Broadband Committee held an informational meeting at Town Hall to present its findings. At this well-attended meeting, Richard Long, chairman of the Committee, reviewed the options in detail.

He reported that there were three respondents to the RFP: Crocker Communications, Fiber Connect, and Matrix Design. Based on a variety of factors which the Committee set forth, including competitive cost to subscribers, minimized cost to taxpayers, if possible, minimized risk to the Town, and the ability to provide reliable service over time, Crocker's proposal was the highest rated by the Committee and was deemed the winner of the RFP process.

Crocker offered fast internet speed (1 Gigabit) and no requirement for the Town to incur debt. Crocker would receive \$1.71 million from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI, the state agency responsible for dispensing state money for broadband projects) in installments during construction. (This is a reversal of MBI's earlier position in which it would only provide funding two years after operations had commenced and certain milestones had been achieved.) However, Crocker's proposal was contingent on it obtaining financing from the United States Department of Agriculture for the balance of the construction costs, something that was not guaranteed. Crocker's charge for installation (\$499) and monthly subscription costs

(\$120) were higher than the Charter option.

Charter also offered fast internet speed (100 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload; 1 Gigabit available at extra cost) and also did not require the issuance of any debt by the Town. Charter would, however, require a payment of \$3.15 million up front. These funds would be provided as follows: MBI would provide the same \$1.71 million which they would provide to Crocker (all money paid upfront for Charter) and, in addition, would provide an additional grant of \$720,000 (for a total of \$2.43 million). The remaining \$720,000 needed to get to the \$3.15 million total would be the Town's responsibility, but to avoid the need for the Town to borrow these funds through the issuance of debt, MBI agreed to advance this amount on the Town's behalf; the Town would repay this \$720,000 to the state over fifteen years (approximately \$48,000 per year) with nominal interest; this amount would be likely repaid to the state as an offset against state grants.

Unlike Crocker, Charter offers a full range of services including the "Triple Play" of internet, phone, and television, and assumes all risks of operation. Crocker does not offer television but does offer telephone services. Subscription costs for internet alone would be \$45 per month for the first two years and then \$65 per month thereafter. Installation would be \$50.

Neither Crocker nor Charter requires a subscription contract, meaning that subscribers can terminate at any time. The connection distance allowance for each was similar (250 feet for Charter, subject to final negotiation with the Committee, and 300 feet for Crocker. All risks of construction, maintenance of the system, and the risk of obsolescence rest with both Charter and Crocker and not the Town.

A Town-owned network would require that the Town incur approximately \$3 million in debt to build the network (assuming that MBI provided \$1.71 million upfront). Approval of two thirds of the voters at a special town meeting would be required for this. In addition, the town would need to assume all risks of constructing and



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operating the system, including obsolescence and a lower than expected “take rate” among residents. Details of the network, such as internet speed, subscription contract period, build time, and whether the Town would turn to WiredWest to operate the network, would have to be determined.

All options contemplate that a minimum of 96 percent of premises in town would be reached by the service.

Following the presentation of these options, the floor was opened for questions and almost an hour was taken up as over twenty residents rose to ask a wide-ranging series of questions of the Committee, including questions about engineering, build time, the number of residences to be served, and speeds of the network. The question period was followed by an opportunity for residents to comment on the available options and to give their views on which might be in the Town’s best interest, with the speakers seemingly divided among the three available options.

The Committee did not make a formal recommendation at the informational meeting but indicated that it would take the input from the attendees, consider it, and reach a consensus on Tuesday, June 26, delivering such consensus to the Board of Selectmen at its meeting that night. This is exactly what happened.

The Broadband Committee met on the 26th at 5 p.m. All members of the Board of Selectmen, along with a small number of townspeople, listened to Richard Long and Committee member Steve Klein deliver a long and comprehensive summary of the extensive work the Committee had done to investigate all options, highlighting the positive and negative aspects of each. Considerable time was spent reviewing the town owned option and the benefits, risks and cost of such an approach, which, Mr. Klein noted, would result in a five percent increase in the property tax rate. Following the presentation and a brief discussion, the Committee unanimously voted to recommend that the Board of Selectmen move forward with Charter. “While the Committee recognizes that there are sincerely passionate views for the other choices, we

ultimately concluded that Charter was in the best overall interest of the Town,” said Mr. Long.

By 6 p.m., when the Board of Selectmen convened their meeting, the room had filled to overflowing. Chairman Shalaby stated that the Committee had recommended that the Board move forward with Charter and led a detailed discussion of each Selectman’s view of the available options, highlighting the benefits and risks of each approach. The Board asked some questions of Mr. Long and then unanimously voted to move forward with Charter.

The next step is to negotiate and sign a formal “franchise agreement” between the Town and Charter. “We hope that we can get this done within the next few months,” said Mr. Long, whose committee will bear the responsibility of finalizing the franchise agreement. “From that point, Charter has indicated that it should be able to get the first residents “lit” within twelve months after the last pole license is in place. Hopefully, we’ll be celebrating the arrival of high speed internet sometime in 2020, possibly sooner.”

So, dear reader, after years of false hopes, this is really happening. I’ll repeat that. This is really happening. And, barring some unforeseen difficulty in getting the franchise agreement signed and the pole licenses in place, residents should see Spectrum trucks stringing fiber within two years and the first residences lit around that time.

Buffering and long waits for data to load will soon be unpleasant memories and New Marlborough’s residents will finally be able to awaken from the long nightmare of waiting and waiting and waiting for broadband internet service to arrive.

In the interim, stay tuned. □

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN



May 21: The Board, with all three members present, held two special permit hearings plus its regular Monday evening meeting, all on the same night. The proceedings started an hour early, at 5:00 p.m., and the meeting wasn't adjourned until shortly after 7:30 p.m.

The first order of business was to approve a **special permit application from Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) to install a four-foot-square sign on the front lawn of New Marlborough Central School displaying the words "Southern Berkshire Regional Schools."** The new sign will be located next to an existing three-foot-square "New Marlborough Central School" sign, which is being upgraded with a new version, which, in addition to the school's name, will feature the District's logo of a tree with the letters "SBRSD" superimposed on it.

There was some initial confusion on the Board's part as to why a special permit was even needed. However, after consulting the Town's Protective Bylaws, the Board concluded that the combined area of the two signs, twenty-five square feet, exceeded the maximum allowable area of sixteen square feet for two non-residential signs. But after discussion, the Board decided it really wasn't a problem and that it would allow it.

As there were no findings from any of the Town boards or commissions and no abutter letters, the Board voted by roll call vote to approve the permit, and then adjourned the hearing, before moving on to other business.

The rest of the meeting, according to the agenda, was to have been devoted to clearing out the lengthy backlog of selectmen meeting minutes, which according to state law must be posted "in a timely manner," generally understood to be within thirty days of the

meeting date. **There were at least fifteen sets of minutes going back to early March that hadn't been reviewed and approved for posting.** Part of the problem, as the selectmen are quick to point out, is that the Board has met much more often than usual. A rough count of the agendas that have been posted on the Town's website show that over the past three months the Board has met nearly thirty times. That's thirty meetings of one kind or another over a ninety-day period, or an average of three meetings per week. Normally, the Board meets once a week.

But there also appear to be problems with the accuracy and completeness of the minutes, often requiring extensive revisions and additional drafts. So at Chairman Shalaby's suggestion the Board agreed that instead of spending a great deal of time at tonight's meeting reviewing minutes, when there's so much other business to attend to, it would hold a special working session next Thursday, May 31, "to just do minutes," as Ms. Shalaby put it.

The only other piece of regular business was a Memorial Day update from Mr. Yohalem who said he'd met with Memorial Day coordinator David Hastings and that this year's parade will start at 9:00 a.m., with the featured speaker being Town Moderator Barry Shapiro. It was also noted that following the ceremony there will be a community dedication of the newly refurbished baseball field at New Marlborough Central School in honor of the late John B. Ormsbee. That, in turn, will be followed by a town-wide kick ball tournament, featuring teams from each of the five New Marlborough villages plus Monterey.

And with that the Board adjourned its regular meeting, and then, following a ten-minute break, convened a **second special permit hearing, this one**

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email: ssmithlaw@barringtonlawoffice.com

to consider an application by CVE North America Inc. to install and operate a five-megawatt, ground-mounted solar facility.

The array would occupy a 16.4-acre tract in the northwest portion of a 114-acre parcel owned by New Marlborough's John C. and Terry Palfini. Access to the site, which is located at 1248 Mill River Great Barrington Road, would be from Knight Road via an existing wood road, which is to be upgraded with gravel. But as the permit application states, a new section of road will have to be built where the existing road extends onto a neighboring parcel.

According to a lease option agreement between CVE and the Palfinis, CVE will pay the Palfinis an annual rental fee of \$3,500 per acre per year, assuming the option is exercised. That works out to \$57,400 per annum, or nearly \$1.15 million over the term of the twenty-year lease, which also includes options for four five-year extensions. If approved, this would be the second commercial solar field in New Marlborough.

Construction of the field will take two to three months, according to Valerie Miller, a project manager with the environmental consulting firm SWCA Inc., who was representing CVE at the hearing. She said there will be "some minor tree cutting" to open the site up to sunlight. However, when asked later in the hearing what percentage of the site will require tree cutting, she replied about fifty-percent, or nearly eight acres. She said once the trees and stumps have been cleared and the arrays are in place, the area will be reseeded and then mowed at least once a year. There will also be a seven-foot-high chain-link fence enclosing the arrays with a six-inch clearance at the bottom to facilitate movement by small wildlife.

According to Travis Scott, who works as a site originator for CVE and who was also present for

the hearing, the company is still waiting to receive an interconnection service agreement, (ISA) from National Grid, which it needs before it can begin feeding power into the utility's distribution system, but he said CVE expects to receive it "any day now."

In answer to a question from the floor about the company's previous solar installations, Mr. Scott said CVE, which is a relatively new North American affiliate of a privately-owned French renewable energy company, Cap Vert Energie, currently has six other solar projects under construction, including one in Tolland and another in Cheshire, but that none have been completed.

Because of a wetlands area on the larger parcel, the company filed a request for determination of applicability (RDA), with the Conservation Commission and has already received a negative determination, meaning the project meets the requirements of the state's Wetlands Protection Act.

Abutters, however, were another matter. Three of them, all residing on Aberdeen Lane and whose properties all back up onto the proposed site have raised concerns about the project, and especially the need for vegetative screening. They are Kathleen Zavotsky, Robert Butter, and Louise Yohalem. In addition, Judy Thompson, a long time Knight Road resident, expressed concern that heavy construction trucks going to and from the site would damage Knight Road, which she described as already in fragile condition.

With regard to a potential conflict of interest involving Selectman Yohalem, who is both an abutter and a member of the Town's special permit granting authority, Ms. Shalaby, at the start of the hearing, read aloud an email from Mr. Yohalem disclosing to

Because of the unusual number of Board meetings there's a backlog of fifteen sets of minutes to be reviewed, revised, and approved for posting.



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the Board that he and his wife are abutters. However, as Ms. Shalaby went on to explain, Mr. Yohalem cannot recuse himself from the proceedings by the rule of necessity which states special permits have to be decided by all three members of the Town's special permit granting authority, which in this case is the Board of Selectmen.

For its part, the Planning Board, in its report on the project, cited the need for vegetative screening not only for the abutters but also for any other residents with a view of the site. It also recommended that CVE be required to provide proof it has received approval from National Grid to tie into its distribution system.

There were other concerns raised by the Board and members of the audience to which CVE didn't have immediate answers. They included whether the company is willing to enter into a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes, (PILOT) agreement with the Town; post a surety bond covering the eventual decommissioning of the array; and insure the town against damage to Knight Road.

There was also concern about noise, both from construction activity and electrical noise from the array. In addition, Selectman Yohalem said he would like to see financials for the company and asked whether CVE or its owners are willing to guarantee the performance of the company in completing the project.

In the end, on the advice of Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard, who was also present, the Board agreed to continue the hearing until June 6 to give CVE time to gather the information it needs to respond to the Town's questions.

May 31 and June 6: The Board held special working sessions just to review meeting minutes. There were no selectmen updates, no town administrator updates and no public comment. Between the two sessions, the Board had reviewed and approved thirteen sets of minutes from March, April, and May. There are now nine sets of minutes remaining.

June 6: At 6:00 p.m. the Board reassembled for the continuation of the special permit hearing on CVE's application to install a 5-megawatt solar array at 1248 Mill River Great Barrington Road.

In response to the issues raised by the abutters SWCA's Valerie Miller said she's been in touch with all three property owners to discuss a year-round vegetative screening barrier of western red cedar, also known as giant arborvitae, which at installation will be between six and seven feet tall.

She also submitted a set of visuals showing views of

the existing vegetation along the abutters' property lines, behind which is where the evergreen barrier will be installed. She also indicated the company would maintain and replace, if necessary, screening trees over time.

As for the PILOT agreement and surety bond for the decommissioning plan, Ms. Miller said the company's agreeable to doing both, but that final numbers will need to be negotiated with the Town. She also indicated the Town has been named as an additional insured for potential damage to Knight Road.

Ms. Shalaby then moved to close the public comment portion of the hearing to allow the Board time to formulate its findings and complete a list of conditions under which the special permit

will be granted, as follows:

- Finalization of the PILOT agreement between the Town and CVE
- A project performance guarantee by the "parent" company or the owners of the parent
- A surety bond for decommissioning the array, if abandoned
- A certificate naming the Town as insured against damage to Knight Road
- Submission of proof by the applicant of approval for a grid tie-in from National Grid
- Fulfillment by the applicant of the requirements for a curb cut
- Landscape screening for the abutters as provided for in the plan submitted by SWCA, including replacement of screening trees
- The hours of construction will be 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8:00 a.m. to noon on Saturday, with abutters being notified in advance of any Saturday work
- Applicant will give sufficient proof that there will not be a nuisance created by noise from the array

A second application was received for a special permit to install and operate a ground-mounted solar facility abutting a residential area off Knight Road. A list of conditions for the permit was established.

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- And finally, that the height of the panels will be no more than eleven feet from the ground

And with that the Board voted by roll call vote to grant the special permit subject to approval by town counsel, and then adjourned the hearing.

June 11: The meeting was convened at 4:30 p.m. to continue dealing with the backlog of meeting minutes. Over the next hour and a half the Board reviewed and approved four sets of minutes, and reviewed but then held two sets of minutes pending a second draft. That left three sets of May minutes still to be reviewed.

For its first order of regular business, the Board interviewed contractor and town resident **Owen Wright, who submitted a letter of interest in applying for the assistant building inspector position being advertised by the Town.**

As reported previously, current Building Inspector Tom Carmody has taken a full-time inspector's position with the City of Pittsfield and is looking to step back from the New Marlborough job. He's already reduced his office hours by half, and in discussions with the Board has outlined a succession plan that would involve taking on an assistant for a limited period of time while he trains that person to take over the full responsibilities of his job. That's the position Mr. Wright is applying for.

A resident of Sisson Hill who by his own account has worked in the building trades since the late 1980s, Mr. Wright said he's planning to take the local inspector's exam in the fall and will also begin taking classes at the same time. He said his ultimate goal is to become certified as a building commissioner, which he said requires additional classes and a separate exam, by the middle of next year.

A plan to restructure the office of building inspector is being developed to transition away from Mr. Carmody, who will leave at the end of the year.

The Board intends to restructure the department, according to Chairman Shalaby, to include an alternate inspector who would step in when the building inspector is away or otherwise unavailable. But as Mr. Yohalem pointed out, that will require approval by the voters at next year's Annual Town Meeting, since it will involve increasing the building department's budget to include a salary line for the alternate. In the interim, **the Board would like the department to re-establish normal office hours two days a week.** Currently, Mr. Carmody is meeting with contractors only on Monday nights. So to get things rolling, the Board voted to appoint Mr. Wright assistant building inspector with an interim salary of \$156.18 per week, effective immediately through June 30, and to reduce Mr. Carmody's salary to \$234.26 per week, from \$390.44, so as to stay within budget.

The selectmen also set office hours for the department at two hours in the evening and two hours on a weekday morning, and made the point in its motion that "all such office hours to be on business days not holidays." Meanwhile, the Board asked Messrs. Carmody and Wright for a proposal as to what the office hours and salary split should be going forward through the end of the year, when Mr. Carmody is planning to depart.

In other matters, the Board voted to authorize Ms. Shalaby to sign the Center for EcoTechnology contract extending the Town's participation in the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program, which permits town residents to dispose of hazardous waste such as oil-based paints and motor oil at designated collection sites. This is the seventeenth year the Town has participated in the multi-town collaborative program.

Based on a recommendation from Highway Superintendent Loring, the Board awarded a paving and road reclamation contract to Lane Corporation of



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Westfield. Lane submitted a low bid of \$531,794 covering several road projects including top coats for the Mill River Great Barrington Road and New Marlborough South Sandisfield Road and the reclamation of a 5,700-foot stretch of Norfolk Road. There was one other bidder, LB Corp. of Lee, which submitted a bid of \$622,553. The Town will be using \$353,220 of its Chapter 90 money to fund the top coats and \$178,574 in Free Cash, approved by the voters at the recent Annual Town Meeting, for the reclamation work.

Under Town Administrator updates, Ms. Enoch reported that the contractor who normally takes care of the Town's roadside grass mowing has informed Superintendent Loring that he's no longer able to perform the work. So Mr. Loring is now looking at various options, including putting the job out to bid or possibly leasing a piece of equipment that will allow the Highway Department to do the job internally.

Ms. Enoch said that Monterey, which had been using the same contractor, has expressed interest in possibly putting out a joint bid for the work. But either way, as she noted, these would be temporary solutions just to get through the summer, and that the Town will have to come up with something permanent going forward. This development comes less than a month after the County Sheriff's Office indicated in a letter that it will not be able to help the Town this summer with weed-whacking around its guardrails.

Separately, Ms. Enoch said the **state is finally getting around to replacing the Norfolk Road bridge in Southfield**, which has been restricted to one lane of traffic since April 2012. The work will be funded by the state's Transportation Improvement Program and is scheduled to be completed in 2020.

According to the state, the bridge will be closed for up to sixty days during construction, and since all the Town's emergency services vehicles are located in Southfield, they will have to detour around the bridge via Canaan Southfield and Lumbert Cross Roads to access the rest of the town. **For that reason, the state**

is going to repair the bridges on Canaan Southfield Road and Lumbert Cross Road, both of which have posted weight limits on them, before beginning work on the Norfolk Road bridge. But the good news, according to Ms. Enoch, is that "We're getting two more bridges done under same project."

In other matters, Ms. Enoch said the town has a safe deposit box at Berkshire Bank in Great Barrington and needs to update the names of the Town Hall staffers who need access to it. So after voting their approval to do so, the selectmen signed a letter giving access to the following people: Town Clerk Kathy Chretien, Town Treasurer Marilyn Fracasso, and Town Administrator Enoch.

Finally, Ms. Enoch said the Town received a letter from the state Attorney General's office regarding the Special Town Meeting held on April 13 where the Town adopted the marijuana moratorium bylaw.

As she reminded the Board, the town made the moratorium effective through December 31, and then added the words "and January 1 through June 30," with the expectation that the AG's office would strike out the second line if the extension were not approved. But instead, the letter simply states that Article I as voted at the Special Town Meeting is approved, and does not indicate there were any strikeouts. But just to be safe, she's asked for clarification from Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard to make sure her reading of the letter is correct.

Under selectmen's updates, Ms. White noted with not just a little enthusiasm that the Hadsell Street bridge has finally been reopened to traffic. It's been closed since July 2011 when the state announced the bridge would have to be replaced.

In broadband developments, Ms. Enoch said **the Town received three responses to its recent RFP — from Crocker Communications, Matrix Design and Fiber Connect.** She said the selection committee, which she heads, is still evaluating the responses, and that as a result the broadband informational meeting originally scheduled for June 16 has been put off for a week until Saturday, June 23, at 10:00 a.m.

Under Public Comment, Daniel Doern, who was present for the meeting, said he has drafted a proposal for the Planning Board offering to form an ad hoc committee **to inform townspeople of the cannabis facilities that are available to the town under the new state regulations and to determine which facilities, if any, they would prefer to have here.** The idea is to assist the Planning Board in developing a marijuana bylaw. He said the proposal is on the Planning Board's agenda for discussion two days hence at its Wednesday evening meeting. □

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LAND TRUST NEWS

The Land Trust is exploring some new activities this summer. Join us for a bit of adventure, a dose of learning, and a new experience on the trail.

On Thursday, June 28, we hosted a moonlight walk up North Road. Dubbed the "Strawberry Moon" by the Native Americans, the full moon will guide our walk starting at the New Marlborough Meeting House and heading uphill for a mile and a half or so. At the clearing just past the intersection of Old North Road, we will feast on fresh strawberries! Why not?!

On Saturday, July 7, the Land Trust and the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) will organize two "Stream Teams" of volunteers to walk the Konkapot and assess the status of a two-mile stretch of river. This is an opportunity to learn about the health of the Konkapot, a tributary of the Housatonic River, and to be part of data collection for a significant stream assessment report to be issued by HVA in October. We will meet at the New Marlborough Town Hall at 9:00 a.m., gain some training from HVA staff, and then head to the river.

On Saturday, July 21, at 10:00 a.m., the Land Trust and the New Marlborough Library will co-host a program featuring New Marlborough author, Leslie Wheeler, reading from her book, Rattlesnake Hill, at the Lower Carroll Mill, the fictionalized site of "the scene of the crime" in her new book. The event will begin with the talk at the New Marlborough Library in Mill River followed by a walk to the mill site and a reading by the author.

On Saturday, July 28, at 3:00 p.m., mushroom enthusiast Michal Undergrowth will lead us on a mushroom walk to learn about mushroom identification, their uses, and lore. Location for the hike will be announced soon.

Teacher and artist Nanci Worthington is directing a program, "Art as a Tool for Citizen Science", which focuses on observation of nature at the Joffe Nature Sanctuary. The group meets monthly to "find out what the landscape can teach us, using drawing and writing to aid us in seeing things in a different way."

In other news, the Land Trust's second edition of the trail guide to eleven hikes in New Marlborough will be published and distributed by mid-July. The new edition is updated and improved with new maps, trail descriptions, and photos. Make sure to get your copy.

Visit our website, nmlandtrust.com, for more event details and other activities. We will also post each event by email as the time nears. See you out in the woods! □

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This is the second of two articles on the To-Ho-Ne camps, which for half a century provided a respite for city dwellers on the shores of Lake Buel. Here, a nephew of the camps' founders describes his adventures — and misadventures — as a neighbor of the camps and a counselor at one of them.

TO-HO-NE SUMMERS

By Daniel Menaker

During my grade-school and junior-high years, my brother, Mike (three years older), and I hung out at the Guest Camp. Those were days when child supervision in general was more relaxed than it was to become over the next two decades, and Mike and I roamed at will, together or separately, from Enge's farmhouse, up on what is now Mill River Great Barrington Road, down to the Boys Camp and through the woods to the Guest Camp, looking for salamanders, raccoons, and possums, and watching out for snakes. And fantasizing ourselves into terror by imagining we had heard or caught sight of bears. And, mainly, getting down to the Guest Camp for swimming and rowboats and tag using the white float fifteen yards out from the camp's dock as an escape platform — and being Enge's favorites and getting to know the guests.

It was magical and so lucky, this part of childhood. I would wait on the front lawn at the Farmhouse — on what is now Mill River Great Barrington Road, right at the turnoff for Downs Road — for the *New York Times* to be delivered by the mailman, with its Yankee box scores often not from the day before or the day before that but the day before that — the delay probably owing to press times, night games, early editions. At the Guest Camp, I was allowed to stay up until 10:00 p.m. or later, when tea was served, joining the square dances which my uncle called (and at which I became a kind of little prodigy), or some of the more worldly guests in their game of Rock Crusher, a variation on high-low poker, at which I also became prodigious, often winning two or three dollars in an evening.

Sometimes two or three dollars wasn't enough, and I turned larcenous: During lunchtime, when everyone was out on the Guest Camp lodge's porch, eating blintzes and sour cream or borscht (also with sour cream) or tuna salad or tomatoes and red onion salad, I would sneak into Glen's office through an outside door at the back of the lodge (it gave onto an ellipse where visitors pulled up in their be-finned Chevies and Fords and the occasional Chryslers and Cadillacs), and I would steal change from a little cardboard box in Glen's desk. Nickels, dimes, quarters. Every now and then a half dollar. Not too



Daniel Menaker today, and as a boy at the camp in the early 1950s (left).

many — and never the rare silver dollar — so that Glen wouldn't notice the larceny (or so I foolishly hoped).

What then? Down to Gibson's Grove, at the south-easternmost point of the lake, where I played pinball on Glen's dimes, becoming once again prodigious, ate ice cream, and watched the teenagers go down the water slide in little carts on wheels that made a big rumble, followed by a joyous splash. And then swing, striving for 45 degrees, in

the double swing chairs. And listen to the jukebox: "Rags to Riches," "The Wayward Wind," "This Old House." On still nights, the music would waft north to the Guest Camp, as if to accompany the breeze. Or vice-versa.

During the summer of 1961 — I was twenty — I worked as a counselor at Boys Camp. A few memories stand out from that experience. For example, one of the kids in my cabin, Jeff, was overweight, and when he arrived at camp, his mother took me aside and quietly asked if I would help him watch his diet. Even though the request took me somewhat by surprise, I said yes. Jeff lost ten pounds that summer, and his father slipped me \$20 at the end of the camp session. This was an extraordinary amount of money for those days, and just for helping a fine, smart kid avoid seconds. In fact, in general, I began to grow up myself, when I saw that the kids in my cabin were coming to me for comfort and reassurance. Another example: An unathletic boy, Greg, ran into our bunk in tears one day and climbed into my lap and told me that some other kids had made fun of him for not being good at sports. I said, "Oh, but Greg, you are so much smarter and kinder than anyone who would say that to anyone else." This was true, in fact, but it still amazed me that it actually worked. The sun came out in his face, and he scampered off to be cleverer than the others.

The kids in my cabin were "freshmen" — around eight or nine years old. They ranged from hefty Jeff to slender Greg, and I was lucky — they were all well behaved and energetic. Since I was playing soccer in college during the school year, I helped with the soccer activities, though there was an older German counselor who really knew — and could play --- the game, the way very few Americans could back then. Since the folk-music wave

was approaching its zenith back then, and since I went to a college where it was a craze, and since my uncle Enge had taught me some guitar, the sing-alongs in the lodge also gave me a chance to pitch in.

One incident, unassociated with goals or chords, stands out in my memory. Pete supervised a freshman cookout competition one evening, in which the kids had to build a fire, boil water, and soft-boil an egg. My kids did a great job, but the catch was that I had to eat the egg. It was good, and I was surprised, and I said so. The kids were very pleased, and Pete looked at me in a new and different way—maybe a little less nepotistically. He said, simply, “You mean it. That’s unusual.”

The To-Ho-Ne camps are gone, but their legacy reaches to the present day, not only in the gratitude of former campers and parents but even in their physical presence. The late Dr. Mark Mishkin, former camp doctor, and his wife, Barbara, bought the Guest Camp’s land and built a summer house there. Mark died last year, but as I write this, we are expecting Barbara’s arrival on Memorial Day. Their sons, Jonathan, a radiologist in Albany, and Jeremy, a lawyer in Philadelphia, both To-Ho-Ne veterans, visit frequently. Jared McDade — whose father, Tom, was a counselor way back when and who also became a New Marlborough homeowner — still has the family house on Sisson Hill Road in Mill River. Tom McDade went on from counselorhood to be an attorney, an FBI man, and comptroller of General Foods. He had a scar from a bullet wound in his hand, courtesy of Baby Face Nelson, and he helped keep some Menakers, radicals that they were (though from all I know, their radicalism was not only harmless but feckless), out of trouble with the House Un-American Activities Committee. Former camper Jack Sussman purchased a house around the corner from Enge’s house, which is where his widow, Connie, and son, Lee, live to this day.

Finally, my wife, Katherine Bouton, and I are here, too. (As it happens, Katherine has her own claim to this part



Campers with founder Pete Menaker, front row, center, in 1969.

of the world. One of her aunts lived and worked in Sheffield. Another knew my Uncle Enge as a fellow-progressive, and — get this! — had stayed at the Farmhouse before Katherine and I had even met.) We inherited Enge’s house across from Downs Road more than twenty years ago, and we aren’t going anywhere — except, well, you know, someday — and are looking forward to being more fully a part of the Five Village community. And then come our kids, Will and Lizi (her spelling, I assure you) Menaker, who love 1555 MR-GB Rd and NM in general, and who will, Katherine and I hope, keep it in the family. They both went to

Camp Half Moon when they were kids, the little traitors. But by then there was no choice. The camps on the lake have thinned out: Gibson’s and Hebert’s are gone, and Ted Mack’s camp, where Kutscher’s Sports Academy is now, has also left the Lake Buel stage.

At any rate, Lizi takes the same kind of pride in this local family. She was hanging out by the lake at the little beach of To-Ho-Ne Shores’ lakefront with some friends not long ago. (At 1988 real-estate-bargain prices, we bought a small lot in that development, across the road from the original property that Enge left us.) Another resident, a middle-aged woman who had recently acquired property there, didn’t recognize Lizi and was skeptical of her right to be at this private beach. She said to my daughter, “Does your family really own a house here? What’s your name?”



Campers on Lake Buel in the 1950s

With just a little steel and pride, Lizi said, “Elizabeth Menaker.” The woman said “Oh,” and quickly apologized. For, as you probably know, the road through the To-Ho-Ne Shores community is named Peter Menaker Road. (Michael Lapin, who bought the camp’s land and started the development, came to admire the camp’s and its founder’s legacy.) If this isn’t the closest to fame and influence the Menaker name will ever get, it is, for me, the most gratifying. □

The Way We Were**MICHELLE DAWSON**

by Joe Poindexter

For kids born at the dawn of the Age of the Internet, the seductive connectivity of Facebook, Snapchat, and Twitter was still decades away, and socializing had to happen the old-fashioned way — by actually getting together with your pals. For Michelle Dawson, a life-long resident of Clayton, the venue was often the field behind a neighbor's house, which was kept mowed so children could use it as a playground. Michelle played tag and baseball there.

There was also her own backyard, where an archery session once ended with Michelle planting an arrow into a strip of vinyl siding her father had just installed on their house. And at the back of the property was the Umpachene River. But the village itself was a playground, too. Michelle and a friend liked to go out onto Clayton Mill River Road and try to get passing truck drivers to sound off by raising their arms and pulling down on an imaginary air-horn.

During Michelle's childhood, Clayton offered a blend of rural quiet and village cohesiveness. "We had privacy," she says, "but everyone was together, helping each other." Neighbors were on hand when someone needed assistance with a house repair. Then there was Bob Winterbottom, father of the former Southfield postmaster, who was on-call whenever someone in the village encountered a plumbing problem. In those days, Clayton had a general store — on the northwest corner of Clayton Four Corners — and across the road a former hotel (now owned by Roland Betts) with a bit of lore known to



Michelle Dawson in the Fire Department front office. photo by Joe Poindexter

every villager: During Prohibition, the hotel, which was said to straddle the Massachusetts-Connecticut border, served liquor but evaded detection during raids by rolling the liquor barrel across the state line and out of the jurisdiction of the inspector.

The sense of a close-knit community continued with schooling. After kindergarten in Ashley Falls, Michelle went to first through fourth grades at New Marlborough Central, which she remembers with great affection. "It was a privilege to go to a nice little school where you knew everyone," she says. She had a particular fondness

for Roberta Roy, her fourth-grade teacher, with whom she corresponds — via Facebook — to this day. Middle school and high school, with much larger classes and kids from all over the District, was a less intimate experience,



Michelle's grandfather, Harry Green

but Michelle, a good student, was focused on her coursework. She has a talent for languages — she's still fluent in French and Spanish — and she graduated with honors.

She was also goal-oriented. When Mount Everett High School offered an eleven-day trip to Paris and Madrid, Michelle was determined to go and saved up from waitressing jobs at Subway and McDonald's in Canaan to afford it. At seventeen, she got her driver's license — and her first car. "If you didn't have a car, you were cut off from the rest of the

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world," she says. The car was not the '87 Chrysler LeBaron chosen for her by her father — "I did not want a big boat," she says — but a much cooler '90 Plymouth Sundance. She knew her own mind, and though it was twice the money, it was her money. "I made every payment," she says.

Michelle married at the Southfield Church shortly after graduating high school — she and her husband divorced in 2002 — and had a daughter, Katelyn, when she was twenty-one. She attended Berkshire Community College for a year and in 2000 began work at Geer Village Senior Community in Canaan, advancing to the position of senior accounts receivable. Though she remained at Geer for fifteen years, she realized that her true calling was in patient care. Re-enrolling at Berkshire Community College, Michelle was certified as a Licensed Practical Nurse in June 2016 and received a degree in health science the following December. She continues to attend classes at BCC, working toward a bachelor's degree in science in nursing.

Michelle and her partner, Ed Harvey, now live in the house that was originally owned by her maternal grandparents, Harry and Bessie Green. The Greens deeded the house to Michelle's parents and moved to a place on Clayton Mill River Road just a mile away. That house is now occupied by Michelle's mother, Virginia, and brother James.

As of this writing, it appears that the next



Francis, left, and Harold Rood flank Bessie Leffingwell Green, Michelle's grandmother.



Virginia Green Dawson, Michelle's Mom

generation of Dawsons is determined to break away from Clayton. Katelyn graduated Mount Everett High School in June and is bound for Warren Wilson College in Asheville, North Carolina, where she plans to major in pharmacology. She expects the degree to lead to a career, she's not sure where — as long as it is not named Clayton.

Katelyn's resolve reminds Michelle of a promise she, herself, made at age eighteen. "I am so out of here," she recalls telling herself. "I am going to move to the city." But shortly after high school, a trip to Manhattan with a friend dimmed her enthusiasm for the urban life. "It was dirty, no one was nice, and there were a lot of homeless people," she recalls. "We were two young girls without money but we still had a place to live, so that was a kind of a shock."

Or maybe settling down in Clayton has had more to do with the lasting connections Michelle has made with her hometown. In June 2008, she joined New Marlborough Fire and Rescue as an emergency medical technician. Her ten-year service is being recognized with two awards: this year she was

named both the New Marlborough EMT of Year and Basic Life Support Provider of the Year. This award, sponsored by Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad, will send Michelle to an EMT seminar of her choice, scheduled this year at venues all across the United States, as far off as Alaska.

Don't worry — she'll be back. □

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MEMORIAL DAY 2018

Memorial Day dawned cool and cloudy, but dry, and the Memorial Day festivities proceeded smoothly. The Mount Everett band, 120 members strong, was impressive as they made their way through a long day of appearances in the towns of the school district. New to the parade this year was Town Treasurer Marilyn Fracasso and her two brightly-decorated horses. The gymnasts of Gymnastics Unlimited brought up the rear and performed at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Parade organizer David Hastings introduced the ceremony's participants: Barry Shapiro reminded the crowd that in addition to honoring our service members, it is critically important to ensure that they receive the necessary support services to return to civilian life; student Odegaard Fields described his participation in the statewide Project 351 where eighth-graders donated a day of service to community organizations; the Community Chorus, directed by Robert Olsen, presented four patriotic songs; and the veterans all received a poppy in honor of their service.



photos by Larry Burke



photo by Marjorie Shapiro

NEW ENGLAND STONE WALLS

The stone walls in the northeast of the United States, laid end-to-end, would circle the earth," said Kevin Gardner — before pausing and then adding, "ten times." The season's opening First Friday program of the New Marlborough Historical Society was full of such revelations, as members and friends of the Society received a brief history of the role of this unique artifact of rural New England history.

In a burst of wall-building energy, most stone walls were put up in a fifty-year span between 1775 and 1825 — both to fence in livestock and to clear fields for agricultural use. Their demise began with the invention of barbed wire and was nudged along over the centuries by natural causes — freezing and thawing, severe weather, even the occasional minor earthquake. Like aging humans, said Mr. Gardner, "stones want to lie down and stretch out." He went on to dispense a bit of wall-building technique — one over two and two over one, or better yet, one over five, and no stone stacks, which are inherently unstable. For a free-standing wall, the ideal height-to-width ratio is one to three-quarters; for a retaining wall, it's one to one.

Mr. Gardner, a master stone mason, continues to build walls himself, in and around Hopkinton, New Hampshire, where, as Society board member David Hosford said in an introduction, he has lived his entire life. ("Not yet," Mr. Gardner interjected.) He is also author of two books, *Stone Building, an instructional manual*, and *The Granite Kiss*, a book, intended, according to Mr. Gardner, for two kinds of readers: "those who would like to build a stone wall and those who would not."



Kevin Gardner talks about stone walls — and builds one.
photo by Joe Poindexter

As he spoke, Mr. Gardner fussed over a pile of small stones poured onto the table in front of him, moving them quickly from one place to another. It didn't take long to see what was going on: He was building a miniature wall — talking all the while and never once referring to it. In a bravura contrapuntal performance, his words provided one lesson, his hands another.

The First Friday programs will resume on July 6 (7:30 p.m. in the Meeting House Gallery) with a talk by Berkshire County Historical Society Director John Dickson on the county's first industrial revolution. The program is free and open to the public — with wine and cheese to follow the talk. □

Joe Poindexter

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ONE TOWN, FIVE VILLAGES

by David Travis

On Monday, May 28, the Memorial Day Kickball Tournament was born at the New Marlborough Central School. Fueled by Flour Bin Gal's sausages and energized and emceed by young announcer and deejay Odie Fields, six multi-generational teams representing the five villages of New Marlborough and the town of Monterey good-naturedly competed for bragging rights—and a commemorative photo on the wall of the Mill River Store—in what may well turn out to be a treasured town tradition.

The impetus for the event was a memorial gift celebrating John B. Ormsbee, given to the New Marlborough Central School by the Ormsbee family. Mr. Ormsbee's family was interested in making a lasting contribution and paying a meaningful tribute, and when Robert Miller and Anita Ormsbee observed that the NMC School's backstop was falling into disrepair, a seed of an idea began to take root. They soon decided to allocate the resources for a new backstop.

At a PTA meeting, when a discussion arose about how best to thank the Ormsbee family, Kenzie Fields suggested dedicating the field and hosting a town kickball tournament. Kickball is one of the children of NMC's favorite recess pastimes, and Memorial Day—a day when many are already gathered in town—seemed like a perfect opportunity for an inclusive community event that would help us all bond as neighbors in a new and light-hearted way.

After the Memorial Day parade and service in front of the town library, hundreds of New Marlborough and Monterey residents walked up to the school, where Ms. Fields led a ribbon-cutting ceremony on the shining new backstop, complete with the sign: "John B. Ormsbee Field". Mrs. Fields began the proceedings with an apt quotation from Thornton Wilder's play *Our Town*:

"We all know that something is eternal. And it ain't houses and it ain't names, and it ain't earth, and it ain't even the stars... everybody knows in their bones that something is eternal, and that something has to do with human beings. All the greatest people ever lived have been telling us that for five thousand years and yet you'd be surprised how people are always losing hold of it. There's something way down deep that's eternal about every human being."

The kickball tournament, briskly and efficiently ref-



The Mill River kickball team limbers up, and the Ormsbee clan gathers to dedicate the newly renovated field.

ereed by NMC teacher Jaimi-Lyn Schieb, was a sight to behold. The hometown team from Mill River was remarkable for its team spirit, led by their stalwart captain, brash young newcomer Tammi Lei; many of the players had stayed up late on Sunday night emblazoning their team jerseys with custom designs featuring their mascot, a millstone. Despite their matching athletic socks, Mill River fell to Monterey's

photo by Joe Penderexter

formidable team in the first matchup.

Village teams without full representation were supplemented by substitutes from other teams. Several interlopers from across the border in Connecticut were even given the opportunity to lend their talents to the effort. The final contest, a three-inning, twenty-minute cliff-hanger, resulted in a tie, 2-2, and both teams were declared victorious.

In the youth division, four teams comprised of players aged 7-14 from all of the villages contended for the title. Thanks to solid kicking, astute fielding, and smart baserunning, one of the teams edged out the other three.

Tom Brazie, New Marlborough team captain, was found rehashing the event the following week at the farm stand with the event organizer, and it seems The Second Annual New Marlborough Town Kickball Tournament is already on the 2019 calendar. The event will continue to be a fitting tribute to John B. Ormsbee, a pillar of our community, for whom community, fun, and good sportsmanship were always top priorities. □

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OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

First up, a correction: Last month I mis-identified the bird shown here as an **American redstart**, but **Doug Hyde** took one look at the *nm5vn.org* digital version and knew it was actually an eastern towhee, which he informed Joe Poindexter, is a rarer sighting than the redstart. Thanks for that catch, Doug.



photo by Larry Burke

Correction: Eastern towhee

Recent wildlife appearances include a very impressive tom turkey, photographed by **Judy Thompson** on May 28 at her home on Knight Road. "This Tom was in my yard for the whole day courting a hen. I just caught him at the right time." Also on Knight Road and just a few days later, **Nat Yohalem** sent along a photo of a young porcupine. Later that day, **Louise Yohalem** fleshed out the picture a bit more: "Apparently, my phone sent the picture from Nat's email. I am the photographer! It was very cute. My grandson, his friend, and I watched it scamper up and down the tree."



photo by Judy Thompson

Amorous tom turkey

Just around the corner from Knight Road, **Nicole Campanale** wrote in on June 12 to say, "While eating dinner on our porch this evening, Will, Jake, and Silka Levin and I all saw a **bobcat** crouching in the field, and then run off towards the woods."

From **Diane Nerwen** on June 4: "I had the pleasure of seeing a lovely **red fox** on Norfolk Road yesterday. It was a beauty, and close enough for me to get a pic with my phone without leaving my car."



photo by Diane Nerwen

Classic red fox

Down along the Konkapot in the Clayton area, **Ed Harvey** captured, photographically speaking, a young **beaver** swimming along with a delectable morsel in its mouth. And also from Clayton, **Don Beauchamp** writes, "I've been trying to take a photo of male grosbeak that comes right up to my window, he like wants to tell me something, but can't get a good shot of him. Meanwhile, my favorite bird (the hummingbird) just poses all the time."



photo by Ed Harvey

Beaver carrying lunch

Finally, here's a joint effort from **Dan Menaker** (reporter) and **Katherine Bouton** (photographer), on one of the many **black bear** sightings in the last month, this one on June 12. Dan writes, "Yogi, Jr., visits our back yard. We have a compost box out by our vegetable garden (which is fenced around), and the bear checked it out, but apparently it didn't meet his olfactory standards. He then approached the back of our house – I mean maybe six or seven yards away – probably with his eye on our bird feeder. But the dogs (indoors) were in a frenzy, and maybe that deterred him. He ambled away. (PS: Anyone want to renovate a barn, gratis?)"



photo by Louise Yohalem

Scampering porcupine



photo by Katherine Bouton

Black bear checking out the yard



photo by Don Beauchamp

Favorite hummingbird

Compiled by Larry Burke lburke2@me.com

BOUNDARIES: ART SHOW WITH AN EDGE

July 28 - August 26

The second exhibition of the 2018 season in the New Marlborough Meeting House Gallery is an Invitational Mixed Media show with the theme Boundaries. There will be a wine and hors d'oeuvres opening reception with the artists on Friday, July 27, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Terry Wise is one of twenty-four artists taking part in this show. Born in upstate New York, she now lives and works in Stockbridge. She lived in Indiana for several years while attending Indiana University and received her BFA in textile design there in 1976. She met and married her husband in Indiana and embarked on a successful career as a textile designer. Terry and her family moved back east in the mid-1980s and settled in Stockbridge.

While raising her children, she did freelance art work for local cultural institutions and got to know the art and artists around her. She did several stints teaching, and decided to sign up for a painting class in 1995. Painting has turned out to be the perfect medium of expression for her creativity and zest for life.

Although still life remains her favorite genre, her love of textiles and training as a textile designer is often apparent in her compositions. She uses block-printed repeat patterns throughout her paintings as a means of creating texture, warmth, and depth of color. Domestic objects like plates and chairs become



*Pattern Language, by Terry Wise.
Oil on canvas, 24" x 18"*

metaphors for family, personalities and relationships. Her work also reflects her love of nature's beauty.

Terry's current work can have many layers. She keeps building up the layers of paint and often paints over one image and replaces it with another as she sees where the composite is going. As she matures, she feels her work is getting more experimental, and she looks forward to venturing into the "great unknown."

Other artists participating in the exhibition include Lee Backer, Diane Barth, Pamela Berkeley, Jane Burke, Bart Elsback, Betsey Wells Farber, Ann Getsinger, Serena W. Granberry, Pat Hogan, Ann Jon, Meryl Joseph, Richard Kimball, Jake Levin, John Lipowitz, Nina

Lipowitz, Holly McNeely, Diane Nerwen, Julie Shapiro, Abbe Stahl Steinglass, Robin Tost, Joe Weaton, Barbara Winters, and Andrew Zdziarski.

The Meeting House Gallery is sponsored by the New Marlborough Village Association. It is located on Route 57 on the Village Green in New Marlborough and is open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. from July 28 to August 26. □

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Upcoming: Events Calendar for July and August

July 6: Industry in Berkshire County, a First Friday talk by historian John S. Dickson on how our forebears put water and human ingenuity to work, 7:30 p.m. in the Meeting House Gallery, refreshments after the talk, sponsored by the New Marlborough Historical Society and free and open to the public

July 7: Maureen Hosford Garden Tour, sponsored by the New Marlborough Cultural Council, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Self-guided tour; tickets containing garden descriptions and a map are \$20, available mid-June at the Mill River General Store, the New Marlborough Library, or from any Council member

July 14: White Elephant Collection for Burritt Day, at the Rooney House (opposite The Farm New Marlborough) on New Marlborough Southfield Road, 10:00 a.m. to noon

July 14: Book collection for library book sale on Elihu Burritt Day, Town Hall, 10:00 to noon

July 21: Book collection for library book sale on Elihu Burritt Day, Town Hall, 10:00 to noon

July 27: Boundaries, an invitational art show, opens with wine and hors d'oeuvres, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Meeting House Gallery, on view 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, until August 26

July 28: The Vera Quartet, Norfolk Music Festival Fellows and quartet-in-residence at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, 4:00 p.m. at the Southfield Church; admission is free — a collection to support the artists will be taken

August 3: A History of Hartsville, the fame, fortune, and flood of New Marlborough's northern-most village; a First Friday program sponsored by the New Marlborough Historical Society, free and open to the public, 7:30 p.m. in the Meeting House Gallery, wine and cheese to follow the program

August 4: White Elephant Collection for Burritt Day, at the Rooney House (opposite The Farm New Marlborough) on New Marlborough Southfield Road, 10:00 a.m. to noon

August 11: Last White Elephant Collection for Burritt Day, at the Rooney House (opposite The Farm New Marlborough) on New Marlborough Southfield Road, 10:00 a.m. to noon

August 18: Elihu Burritt Day, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on the New Marlborough Village Green, followed by the **Fire Department Pig Roast**, 5:00 p.m. to when the band goes home, at the Firehouse in Southfield Village

August 25: Tanglewood Marionettes brings Hansel and Gretel to life with large, hand-crafted marionettes; 2:00 p.m. at the New Marlborough Meeting House with SoCo Creamery ice cream after the performance; \$5 for adults, \$10 for the entire family — the season's first Music and More program

August 31: New Marlborough Artists, opening reception for the season's final show at the Meeting House Gallery with wine and hors d'oeuvres, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., on view Saturdays and Sundays (not Fridays) 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. until October 7

OUR TOWN'S FUTURE

With this issue, the 5 Village News continues a discussion of the future of New Marlborough — the challenges and opportunities toward building a socially and economically robust community. This month we hear from State Representative William (Smitty) Pignatelli.

Building on Our Strengths

By William (Smitty) Pignatelli

Now in my eighth term as State Representative of the 4th Berkshire District in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, I feel both personally and professionally aware of what our region has to offer and the areas in which we need more work. For many of us, our lives might be easier if we lived elsewhere; however, there is something about this place that keeps us here. I know it's true for me. I have called the Berkshires home my entire life. As a kid, I grew up in a tight-knit community where we considered each other family. This sense of community is why I decided to raise my family in the Berkshires and dedicate my adult life towards serving our community and the incredible people who live here.

My utmost favorite thing about the Berkshires is the individuality of each of its communities. The spirit of Great Barrington, for example, varies from that of Pittsfield, North Adams, Williamstown, Lenox, or Lee. Each has an identity that makes it invaluable to our county. Our region affords access to a wealth of natural attractions and outdoor recreation, such as the October Mountain State Forest, Beartown State Forest, and the forthcoming High Road Project, a series of interconnected walking and biking trails throughout the Berkshires. Add to this such invaluable cultural venues as the Norman Rockwell Museum, The Bidwell House, The Mahaiwe, Jacob's Pillow, MassMOCA, and of course, Tanglewood. I believe that building on our strengths of individuality, culture, nature, and innovation will help guide the Berkshires to its future.

None of this, however, let's us ignore the hurdles to prosperity. Berkshire County will need to harness its innate qualities and further collaborate within our region and state to surmount the challenges we face: population decline, the absence of young families, and the uphill battle for valuable businesses to open and remain in our backyards.



William (Smitty) Pignatelli

By now, we are familiar with the story of General Electric shutting down divisions and laying off employees in the Berkshires between the 1970s and '90s. Unsurprisingly, the region's population has been in decline since that time, by more than 13 percent between 1970 and 2014. General Electric is not the only company to leave the Berkshires with fewer and fewer career opportunities. Sprague Electric and Rising Paper Mill, along with a number of other paper mills, a staple in the Berkshire economy, have also closed. The Berkshire

economy got a lift with the arrival of SABIC Innovative Plastics in Pittsfield, only to have it fizzle when the company decided to relocate down South.

The closure of so many manufacturing facilities and the resulting lack of employment opportunities for younger generations has led to an aging population. Today, the average age of a Berkshires resident is 45.4 years, compared to 39 for the rest of the Commonwealth. Compounding the problem is the fact that the younger generation has limited opportunities to expand workforce skills, and all are competing for the same limited set of job opportunities.

To counter the loss of such institutions, Massachusetts as a state needs to further recognize that the "Golden West," with its abundance of natural resources and cultural and scenic attractions, provides Massachusetts, more than our counterparts in the east may realize, with a unique economic opportunity. To retain and attract young families and skilled workers to the county, the state needs to increase its investment in the basic economic building blocks of workforce training and development and heightened educational opportunities.

A key roadblock to our ability to do this is our overall lack of adequate internet access, which in most of our

towns comes up short of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) minimum standard. Our sparse population has long discouraged such providers as Verizon and Charter Spectrum from finding cost-effective and profitable ways to provide robust broadband. But today's economy demands it. My office is contacted continually by constituents and business owners with issues related to connectivity. Increasing internet access across the region will give businesses and employers a greater incentive to relocate to and remain in the Berkshires, which is why I am thrilled that the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), through the support of the Baker-Polito Administration, is making real strides towards providing a gold standard of internet service to homes in the region.

Through regularly scheduled meetings at the State House under the leadership of my colleague, Representative Stephen Kulik, the outgoing Ways and Means vice chairman, MBI staff has had ample opportunity to discuss progress on the "Last-Mile" initiative, a multi-pronged process designed to set up connectivity to the home, with the Western Massachusetts legislative delegation. Since 2014, when MBI installed 1,200 miles of fiber-optic cable and equipment in the western region as part of the "Middle Mile," the state and towns have collectively pledged more than \$80 million to bring fiber-optic capacity to homes and businesses. As a result, we can expect our towns to meet the FCC minimum standard within the next two to three years. This will have an exponential effect on our region's economy. It will incentivize new businesses to put down roots in the Berkshires, and it will help our schools to better educate our children.

The county's shrinking population, particularly among the young, presents another challenge: funding excellent education. The so-called Foundation Budget was drawn into this question over three years

ago, and we are still grappling with it. The Chapter 70 formula, designed to meet each district's education needs by closing the gap between the calculated Foundation Budget and a town's individual budget, still comes up short when we consider the increased costs of educating the smaller number of students in our region. We are home to a number of highly dedicated educators, innovators, and universities, but if we want to retain this talent, we need to make sure our schools are equipped to produce quality learning experiences and environments for our students and our educators.

I cannot tell you the number of times first-time visitors from the eastern part of our state have told me, as they experienced the unique landscape of the Berkshires, how shocked they were that they were still in Massachusetts — almost as shocked as when they hear me explaining the difficulties we face in accessing something as basic as the internet in the 21st century. Given their surprise, it is no wonder that we are fighting such a difficult battle.

As we try to hold our own in a game whose rules were established for more economically thriving areas of the state, we need to continue to recognize, retain, and build on our strengths: our abundance of culture and our community-based values. We must appreciate the collective needs and resources within the region that make us increasingly sensitive to one another. Keeping our strong levels of self-advocacy, empathy, and ambition intact, nothing will prevent the Berkshires from attaining, even surpassing the glory days of the past. ❖

State Representative, William (Smitty) Pignatelli represents Berkshire County.

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THE LOG

Police Department (selected entries)

- May 2 2:20 p.m. A Clayton Mill River Road resident reports a failed attempt to gain information about his bank account.
- May 4 5:20 p.m. Stopped for driving in both lanes on Route 57 and then parking in the middle of an intersection, the operator chalks up his erratic behavior to an argument with his wife about how to find their way to the Mass Turnpike.
- May 5 12:35 p.m. A caller reports a tree on wires near his Knight Road residence.
- 9:35 p.m. A caller alerts the Department to an apparently intoxicated pedestrian walking in the middle of the road near the intersection of Route 57 and South Sandisfield Road.
- May 7 3:58 p.m. Low-hanging wires reported on Clayton Mill River Road.
- May 9 10:21 a.m. A Campbell Falls resident reports a possible carbon-monoxide leak.
- May 11 10:07 p.m. Upon investigation, in assistance to Sheffield police, a Sheffield resident who, uncharacteristically, has missed an appointment with a therapist, is found dead in his home.
- 11:38 p.m. A rabid raccoon, reported in the vicinity of the Mill River General Store, is put down by an officer.
- May 14 3:04 p.m. The animal control officer is notified after a New Marlborough village resident reports that his dogs are running loose on Route 57.
- May 16 9:35 a.m. Officer, alerted to a baby raccoon that has wandered onto a porch on Konkapot Road, delivers the critter to a Great Barrington veterinarian.
- May 17 2:14 p.m. Investigating an apparently abandoned car near York Lake, officer determines that the owner is mushroom hunting.
- May 18 2:24 p.m. Two-car accident at the intersection of Mill River Southfield and Mill River Great Barrington Roads.
- 11:33 p.m. An officer calls in emergency services to assist a victim of smoke inhalation after a couch catches fire at a Hayes Hill residence.
- May 23 12:13 p.m. Officer responds to the report of a customer disturbance at Ormsbee Garage.
- May 25 9:02 a.m. Having been alerted by an Egremont resident that his iPhone, lost at a Great Barrington gas station and located by a phone app at an address on New Marlborough Branch Road, an office determines that the address does not exist.
- 11:36 a.m. Officer helps recover a dog that has run away from a Canaan Southfield Road residence.
- 4:01 p.m. Officer calls in a police cruiser to jump start a disabled vehicle at New Marlborough Central School.
- May 27 4:07 p.m. Officer assists a driver who has locked herself out of a rental car in Southfield.
- May 28 10:49 p.m. A Canaan Valley Road resident reports hearing shots fired nearby.
- May 30 5:42 a.m. State Police in Lee called in to address a domestic disturbance at a Mill River residence.
- 7:16 a.m. A Rhoades and Bailey Road resident reports an injured deer, possibly struck by a motor vehicle, in her driveway.
- 4:07 p.m. Officer assists a Southfield resident who has locked himself out of his truck.
- 9:13 p.m. A Clayton resident reports hearing two gunshots accompanied by a loud

Graham Frank, Chief of Police



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Fire and Rescue

May 4	10:01 a.m.	Shunpike Road Medical Call	May 23	12:22 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Monterey Medical Call
May 4	2:49 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Medical Call	May 25	4:42 a.m.	Konkapot Road Fire Alarm
May 4	8:42 p.m.	Hayes Hill Road Medical Call	May 26	10:22 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Norfolk, CT Structure Fire
May 5	1:35 a.m.	Brewer Hill Road CO Alarm	May 29	6:00 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call
May 9	10:25 a.m.	Campbell Falls Road CO Alarm	May 31	9:12 a.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call
May 11	11:42 a.m.	Rhoades and Bailey Road Medical Call	May 31	1:52 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Fire Alarm
May 13	2:15 a.m.	Campbell Falls Road Fire Alarm	May 31	7:04 p.m.	Downs Road Fire Alarm
May 15	6:21 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Fire Alarm			
May 18	9:34 p.m.	Brewer Hill Road Fire Alarm			
May 19	3:43 p.m.	Campbell Falls Road Medical Call			

Fire Company President David Smith

THE HADSELL STREET BRIDGE



Closed for seven years, the Hadsell Street bridge was re-opened on June 11!
photo by Joe Poindexter

We can finally stop counting: Eighty-four months after it was closed, the Hadsell Street bridge is once again open to traffic. On June 11, crewmen from Tully Construction of Southbridge, Massachusetts, installed a stop sign on the far end of the bridge

and packed up the large traffic cones that had been blocking bridge traffic since July 2011. As vehicles started crossing in the afternoon of the 11th, residents of Lumbert Cross Road cheered the unaccustomed quiet that came with the disappearance of detour signs directing traffic past their homes.

The new bridge was a long time coming, but on the bright side, the commonwealth picked up the bill of \$1.1 million, with the Town paying only \$4,600 to secure right of ways. Next up: the Umpachene Falls Road bridge, then the so-called Iron Bridge leading north out of Southfield village (though it will have to await repairs to bridges on Lumbert Cross and Canaan Southfield Roads that will lie on a detour route during the closing of the Iron Bridge), and finally, a bridge on Campbell Falls Road. All this will give us seven or eight decades of structurally sound bridges — after which we no doubt will be zipping around in hovercraft and won't need them. □

Joe Poindexter

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RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Cooking, love it or hate it, we all have to do it, and while I love cooking, I am always running out of ideas. To help answer the most-asked question in many of our households, "Mum, what's for dinner?" the 5 Village News is offering a recipe of the month. One of the many benefits of living in a rural community is the availability of fresh produce, and New Marlborough boasts many small farms selling their eggs, meat, fruit, and vegetables at roadside stalls or at the markets.

Fiona Kerr

This month's recipe is from Francoise Lartigue, a familiar face to many in her role as one of the representatives of New Marlborough on the SBRSD School Committee.

For Fran, growing up, salads were ever-present at her dinner table — always served at the end of the meal and always perfectly coated in a homemade vinaigrette. Her parents arrived in this country in their 20s, a French chef and an English nanny planted in the deep south of Birmingham, Alabama. While the South had its own rich culinary traditions that her family experimented with while living there, the traditions of her parents' home countries were the ones that remained steadfast in her childhood home and the ones she is passing along to her own three children.



Francoise Lartigue's Breakfast Salad

Ingredients:

1 Head Frisee Lettuce	5 Tbsp Blue Cheese Crumbled
½ lb Lardons*	5 Tbsp Salted and Roasted Pumpkin Seeds
1 Avocado	5 Eggs**

*Lardons is just a fancy word for cubes of bacon

**Recipe serves 5; adjust recipe according to size of your family.

Directions:

- Cube bacon or pork belly into bite-size pieces and cook on stovetop till brown. Using a slotted spoon, remove from pan and leave to drain and cool on a paper towel-lined plate to remove excess fat.
- Wash and tear frisee into bite-size pieces; equally fill five bowls.
- Cube avocado and equally disperse amongst the five bowls.
- Sprinkle a Tbsp of blue cheese in each bowl.
- Sprinkle a Tbsp of pumpkin seeds in each bowl.
- Drizzle 1-2 Tbsp of Tarragon Vinaigrette and toss salad.
- Poach or fry your egg, making sure the yolk stays runny.
- Gently place egg on top of salad.
- Voila! Ready to dig in.

Visit a local Farmer's Market to find ingredients for your salad.

Maple Balsamic Vinaigrette

1 Cup Olive Oil
 ½ Cup Balsamic Vinegar
 2 Tbsp Dijon Mustard
 2 Tbsp Maple Syrup
 1 Teaspoon Salt
 Fresh ground pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a jar and shake OR use an immersion blender till ingredients are well blended. Taste and adjust according to your palate.

Dijon Vinaigrette

1 Cup Olive Oil
 ½ Cup White or Red Wine Vinegar
 2 Tbsp Dijon Mustard
 2 Tbsp Honey
 1 Teaspoon Salt
 1 Clove of Garlic minced

-OR-

1 Small Shallot minced

Combine all ingredients in a jar and shake OR use an immersion blender till ingredients are well blended. Taste and adjust according to your palate.

Tarragon Vinaigrette

½ Cup Olive Oil
 ¼ Cup White Wine Vinegar
 1 Tbsp chopped
 fresh Tarragon
 1 Tbsp chopped Shallot

Combine all ingredients in a jar and shake until well blended. Taste and adjust according to your palate.



First-grader Maya Bergman-Hoechster tripped the light fantastic, Kindergartner James Dawson in a bit of stand-up, and Myra Rodriguez, right, next to Jaime-Lyn Schieb, thanks the audience for its contributions to the relief fund for hurricane-lashed Puerto Rico.



"Wouldn't It Be Lovely," sang the kindergarten. Yes it was. The first grade ran off a Virginia Reel.

NEW MARLBOROUGH CENTRAL'S GOT TALENT

On June 14, the students of New Marlborough Central put on an exuberant display of singing, dancing, stand-up comedy, dramatic reading, magic, and music-making before a packed New Marlborough Meeting House. The talent show was assembled by early-K teacher Jaime Lyn Schieb as a fund raiser for victims of Hurricane Maria that slammed Puerto Rico last September. Starting with an early-K/kindergarten rendition of "Wouldn't It Be Lovely" and ending with a sing-out by the entire NMC student body (accompanied by fourth-grade guitarist Jack Sanzone, creator of the NMC band, Savage Llamas), the show raised \$690.

Next stop: Broadway.



☐ The lithest of the lithe, first-graders Phoebe Tryon and Simone Waivers, and Elliott Flynn, grade two, singing "Believers"

Thank You to Our Contributors

Anthony & Marjorie Consolini; Katie Clifford; Mike & Kathy Giulian; Howard & Patricia Nourse

NEW ACQUISITIONS AT THE LIBRARY

Adult Fiction

Kudos, by Rachel Cusk
Twisted Prey, by John Sandford
The Honey Farm, by Harriet Alida Lye
Probable Claws: A Mrs. Murphy Mystery, by Rita Mae Brown
The Hellfire Club, by Jake Tapper
The 17th Suspect, by James Patterson

Adult Nonfiction

Eating from the Ground Up: Recipes for Simple, Perfect Vegetables, by Alana Chernila
Fascism: A Warning, by Madeline Albright
The Restless Wave: Good Times, Just Causes, Great Fights and Other Appreciations, by John McCain

Children's Fiction

Llama Llama Loves to Read, by Anna Dewdney
Grump: the (Fairly) True Tale of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, by Liesl Shurtliff

Children's Nonfiction

Otis and Will Discover the Deep: The Record-Setting Dive of the Bathysphere, by Barb Rosenstock
Yoga Frog, by Nora Carpenter

Books on CD

Fascism: A Warning, by Madeline Albright
The Restless Wave: Good Times, Just Causes, Great Fights and Other Appreciations, by John McCain

DVDs

<i>Call the Midwife Season 7</i>	<i>Marshall</i>
<i>Detectorists Season 3</i>	<i>Peter Rabbit</i>
<i>Game Night</i>	<i>Wrinkle in Time</i>
<i>Genius Season 1</i>	



Please join the New Marlborough Library on July 10 at 7:00 p.m. for the second of our summer documentary films: *The Music of Strangers*. From the director of the Oscar-winning documentary "20 Feet

from Stardom" comes the extraordinary story of the renowned international musical collective, The Silk Road Ensemble, created by legendary cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Space is limited - please RSVP to newmarlborough@gmail.com or 229-6668



Library Summer Hours

Mon. Wed. Sat. 10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
 Tues. & Fri. 1:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
 Thurs. 1:30 - 5:30 p.m.

The New Marlborough Friends of the Library will be collecting books for their annual book sale at the Town Hall on July 14 and July 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon.

Please NO ENCYCLOPEDIAS, MAGAZINES, READERS DIGEST CONDENSED BOOKS OR VHS TAPES.

Please ONLY ITEMS THAT ARE IN GOOD CONDITION.

DO NOT LEAVE ITEMS AT THE TOWN HALL AT ANY OTHER TIMES AND DO NOT LEAVE THEM AT THE LIBRARY

Local Mystery Author, Local Setting

The New Marlborough Library and the New Marlborough Land Trust invite you to a program, featuring a talk by local mystery author, Leslie Wheeler, about her new book, *Rattlesnake Hill*, set in a fictionalized New Marlborough, and a hike to a site used in the book on Saturday, July 21 at 10:00 a.m.

The event will begin with a talk at the New Marlborough Library in Mill River. It will be followed by a short hike to the nearby Carroll Mill, a Land Trust property, where two important scenes in the novel, including the climax, take place. At the mill site, Wheeler will read from one of these scenes. We will meet at the library in Mill River at 10:00 a.m. Please RSVP to Martha at nmlandtrust@gmail.com by July 16th if you plan to attend.

Copies of *Rattlesnake Hill* will be available for sale and signing by the author at the library.

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Town Times

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Building Inspector: Monday 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

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

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

Post Office: Mill River (413) 229-8582

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

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

Southfield (413) 229-8476

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Town Clerk: 229-8278; 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.

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

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

PERMITS ARE DUE JULY 1

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

Emergency calls:

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New Marlborough Highway Department

Located on Mill River-Southfield Rd.

Hours:

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

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(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, David Lowman, Joe Poindexter, Jodi Rothe, Peter Schuyten, Barry Shapiro, Pam Stebbins, Sandra Fusco-Walker
Contributing writers and artists: Ann Getsinger, Angus Kerr, Mary Richie Smith, Catherine Twing, Tara White, and Michele Shalaby. Index: Donna Weaver

New Marlborough 5 Village News

appears monthly,

also online at www.nm5vn.org

The next issue will be dated August 2018.

All copy must be submitted no later than July 17.

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

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- **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
- **Susan M. Smith:** Attorney At Law; Concentrating in the areas of Estate Planning, Estate Administration, Elder Law, Real Estate and Zoning Matters. ssmithlaw@barringtonlawoffice.com or (413)528-4300
- **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 (413)229-2369