

# New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton ♦ Hartsville ♦ Mill River ♦ New Marlborough ♦ Southfield

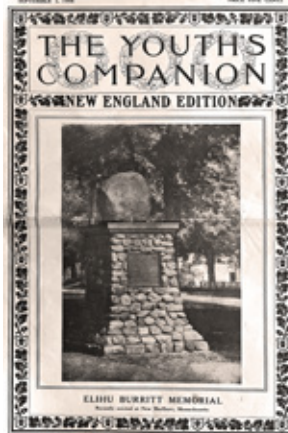
## WHO IS PATRICK BRENNEN?

By Judith Thompson

You probably have never heard of Patrick Brennen, but I guarantee you have seen much of his work around town. Patrick was born here in New Marlborough in 1871 to his Irish immigrant parents, James and Margaret Brennen. He was the youngest of six children. His mother died when he was only two years old, and his father never remarried, so we presume that his older siblings took a large part in caring for Patrick. The Brennen children were brought up in Mill River in the old Sisson house still standing up on Sisson Hill. He attended the school in Mill River through the eighth grade.

When the first town hall in Mill River burned down, the town voted to build again in the same spot. The present building has been standing there since 1903. Patrick Brennen was chosen as the builder, so most of you have been in a Patrick Brennen building.

This building quickly became the center of life in New Marlborough. In addition to town



Above, Patrick Brennen on the steps of the Old Inn; left, the original memorial to Elihu Burritt on the New Marlborough Village Green

business, it became an annex for the school. Many of the physical education classes were held there in the colder months. The students had their graduations, dances, and proms there. Musical presentations and plays resounded from the stage. This is where the school basketball team played, and it was the home of the champion Mill River semi-pro men's basketball team in the 1930s. There were many community and alumni dinners, as well as church suppers, in the basement where there was a complete kitchen facility. There were a lot of loud and raucous town meetings. It has served the town well for all these years, no matter what happens next.

Patrick did not stop building after the town hall. He was the architect and builder of the first library in Mill River, built in 1920 after Marcus Rogers facilitated funding from the Carnegie Foundation.

Patrick did much work for his neighbors at the bottom of Sisson Hill at the Ormsbees' home, Freeman Elms. When you drive by, notice the beautiful front porch added on by Patrick, as well as the two-story addition on the back of the house. The large barn across the road from the house was also Patrick's handiwork.

Patrick could have had a larger presence in Mill River in 1932 when the town was preparing to build what is now the New Marlborough Central School. An article in *The Berkshire Eagle* of June 18, 1932, gives us details. The town had budgeted \$35,000 for the project. Eighteen contractors submitted bids. Patrick bid \$32,900

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but R.H. Richard of Boston submitted the low bid of \$25,750. Losing out on this contract must have been a heartbreak for Patrick.

According to a letter written by Patrick's wife, Della, to the New Marlborough Bicentennial Commission in 1975, the Brennen family bought the Old Inn on the Green in 1921, and moved their family from their Sisson Hill home to New Marlborough Village. This was the first time that the Inn had been used as a private home since it was built about 1760. Patrick was working for the Bloodgood and Willetts family at that time. He had previously been the builder of their twenty-five-room great stone mansion, Mepal Manor, now occupied by the Center for Motivation and Change.

As if Brennen were not busy enough, he was appointed as postmaster in New Marlborough on October 25, 1921. He was fifty years old at this time. The post office was located at the Old Inn, so it is reasonable to assume that this was part of his motivation to relocate from Sisson Hill. He served until January 1925. In the mid-1920s they sold the building.

I found mention of him a few more times in the *Berkshire Eagle*, as the organizer of Old Home Days. This started as a Brennen family reunion at Gibson's Grove on Lake Buel every summer and morphed into an an-



The "New" town hall, built in 1903

Photos courtesy of New Marlborough Historical Society



The library in Mill River built in 1920; burned down in 1999

nual Mill River celebration, complete with the Turner and Cook Band from Southfield, which was a participated regularly in these events. A huge town gathering was held on the New Marlborough village green on August 29, 1908. The occasion was the unveiling of the Elihu Burritt monument that we can see today. The memorial was designed and built by – you guessed it – Patrick Brennen.

Patrick had certainly earned his retirement. He and Della had two daughters and a son living in Florida, where they joined them in the winters for many years. In 1957 they moved permanently to Gulf Port, Florida. He died at the St. Petersburg Hospital on January 27, 1960. He and Della had just celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary on January 15. In addition to his wife, Patrick was survived by all five of his children. He had two sons who both became carpenters and builders like their father. The youngest son, George, is listed among the World War II veterans from New Marlborough. His daughter, Frances, trained and worked as a nurse at the House of Mercy Hospital in Pittsfield. Patrick and Della Brennen are buried in the Memorial Park Cemetery in St. Petersburg, Florida.

By any standard Patrick had a well-lived life of eighty-eight years. □



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# OPEN HOUSE

**See the options for a proposed new town hall**

**Sunday, August 6 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

**VISIT CURRENT TOWN HALL at 807 Mill River Southfield Road (Option for Renovation)**

**VISIT ROBIN HALL at 36 Tamaridge Way (former Kolburne School, Option for Renovation)**

*See representation of option to build a new town hall*

**The Town Hall Planning Committee urges everyone to attend.**

**All are welcome. Your input is vital to our decision making.**

## THE YORK LAKE BEACH RENEWED

If the geese — and their calling cards — have discouraged visits to York Lake of late, take another look. Each year the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation tackles a property in need of refurbishment. This year, it was York Lake’s turn.

During most of the month of May, DCR conducted a thorough housecleaning at the Sandisfield State Forest facility. The crew began by removing 100 cubic yards of the tired old beach and replaced it with six truckloads of Mason sand, a clean, fine-grained material typically used in the production of mortar. Weeds have been removed from a newly demarcated swimming area. The cost, according to DCR Press Secretary Ilyse Wolberg: \$37,000. There is no lifeguard at York Lake, but bathrooms and chang-




*The newly refurbished York Lake beach*

*Photo by Joe Poindexter*

ing rooms are available, and Park Operations staff keeps an eye on the site for maintenance and cleanliness. It’s open from dawn to dusk, and dogs (but not booze) are allowed. (During a visit in mid-July, swimming was prohibited because of the level of bacteria in the lake, but DCR tests its swimming water weekly, and temporary closures are not uncommon.)


Next on the DCR radar: the York Lake dam, which has fallen into disrepair and is rated as “a significant hazard potential dam in poor condition.” It is, says Ms. Wolberg, “currently under a design contract to construct repairs that when complete would bring it into compliance with dam safety regulations.” □

*Joe Poindexter*



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## Town Business Is Your Business SELECT BOARD



**July 14:** The in-person meeting (also accessible via Zoom) opened with Selectmen Tara White, Bill West, and Beth Dean in attendance, together with Construct, Inc. Executive Director Jane Ralph, and Housing Director June Wolfe. Also present were Housing Committee members Peter Dunphy and Will Regan.

The first item on the agenda regarded a **dispute over a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) for Cassilis Farm, a property acquired by Construct, Inc. for conversion into affordable housing units.** At the time of the purchase, the Select Board agreed to devote \$212,000, half the funds it has received from the so-called ARPA program, toward the acquisition. In recognition, Construct agreed to consider a PILOT. Beyond that, recollections diverged, a misunderstanding that became the subject of an hour-long discussion.

Ms. Ralph said that she had understood that Construct would consider a PILOT once the renovation was complete and had begun to produce rental income. Ms. White responded that the Town had entered into an agreement “in good faith” and that she had expected Construct to begin annual payments of \$3,500 (reduced to about \$2,400 once a plot of undeveloped land on the property was sold and returned to the tax rolls) starting July 2023. “New Marlborough needs affordable housing, and we did this project because we were approached by the Housing Committee,” said Ms. Ralph. “We raised acquisition money, and with no income, it is counterintuitive to the way we operate to begin payments before we have income.”

Town Administrator Mari Enoch noted that a solar field located in New Marlborough had begun a PILOT only after the project had become operational. Mark Carson, attending via Zoom, stressed the importance of being kept up to date on the Cassilis conversion, and Ms. Ralph said Construct would do so on a quarterly basis. Will Regan pointed out that two buyers had walked away from a Cassilis purchase and that, had Construct not stepped in, the grand estate was in danger of serious deterioration.

In response to a statement from Jane Ralph that PILOTs typically come into play when an organization is using municipal services, Tara White said that Cassilis would, indeed, be served by such organizations as the Fire Department. In response, Ms. Ralph pointed out that affordable units at Cassilis will make it possible for Fire Department personnel to live in town and be readily available to respond to calls. Defending the re-

quest for a PILOT, Bill West said that he had heard from residents, themselves struggling to pay their taxes, who would look askance at Construct failing to contribute to the Town budget.

Following further discussion, Ms. White made a motion to have **\$3,560.60, which would be reduced to \$2,422.48 when a vacant lot on the property is sold, begin accruing annually as of July 1 and be paid in the first three months after Cassilis had been issued a certificate of occupancy.** The agreement would run until June 30, 2026, after which a renegotiated PILOT would take effect. It passed unanimously.

Ms. Ralph said that she would take the proposal back to her board, which was to meet July 21. “It’s going to be a hard sell,” she said.

Moving on, John Valente, representing the Cable Advisory Committee, said that the Committee would apply for a grant from the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program to help maximize the town’s use of its fiber-optic system. The Board then agreed to compensate Chuck Loring for trips he takes as an ambulance driver, which lie outside the purview of his contract as fire chief. Other emergency responders, it was noted, are paid when they go out on calls.

Bill West gave a “shout out” to Administrative Secretary Michelle Castellano for her swift action in replacing the Town Hall’s refrigerator, which had broken down (David Shenk was the donor). Tara White reported that **an inspection of the Town Hall roof revealed that its slate was generally flaking and that a repair at the point of a leak would likely lead to further damage of the roof.** Consequently, she said, the slate will need to be removed and replaced with asphalt. The project may include a new sub-roof, depending on how badly it may have been damaged by leakage through the slate. If the Board elects not to invade the stabilization fund for a new roof, which would require a two-thirds vote at a town meeting, it could finance it with ARPA funds — \$214,000 remains in that account.

After agreeing to a two-year contract with Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad to answer calls when New Marlborough’s ambulance was not available — the rate is \$285 per call — the meeting was adjourned. □

Joe Poindexter

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

**July 20:** Commission members Doug Hyde, John Schreiber, and Freddy Friedman convened the month's meeting.

After approving the last two months' minutes, the Commission re-opened the hearing for the bundled Notice of Intent (NOI) submitted by the New Marlborough Highway Department for the maintenance of road culverts throughout town. The Massachusetts Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program (NHESP) intervened to say that they would like discretion when work involves endangered species habitat. The Highway Department agreed to do no work in sensitive areas without prior review and consultation with NHESP. The Commission will send a letter to NHESP to confirm their cooperation with this approach.

Tom Harvey, engineer and board president of Camp WaWa Segowea, continued the hearing for a Request for Determination of Applicability (RDA) involving foundation repairs at the camp's main lodge. At the request of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Mr. Harvey submitted a revised plan including the three floating temporary aluminum docks. DEP had requested that the camp secure proper licensing for the docks in order to process the RDA. The Commission reviewed the scope of work and parameters for construction which would minimize impact to the lake's bank, and approved the permit with the condition that the application for the dock licensing be submitted and obtained.

Chris Tryon of Berkshire Geo-Technologies, on behalf of his client Jack Tolin of 114 Downs Road, re-opened the NOI hearing for the construction of a dock and steps at Lake Buel. The pending review from NHESP concluded that there would be no detrimental impact to the species habitat. The Commission approved the project and asked for permission to visit the site during construction.

Emily Stockman of Stockman Associates presented an NOI for her client, Aroline Herzig, of 258 New Marlborough Hill Road. The scope of work includes construction of a single-family house, well, septic, and repairs to the existing driveway. Ms. Stockman reviewed the protection plan for the wood turtle, which applies to the entire two parcels and which has been active for several years per the request of NHESP. The Commission noted that the site construction had been engineered carefully to minimize impact to the site, and approved the NOI.

Mike Parsons of Kelly, Granger, Parsons and Associates presented an RDA for Billy Kennedy at 11 Mill River Great Barrington Road. At issue is a failed septic. Mr. Parsons described the challenges of the

site, given its proximity to the Konkapot River and the constraints in total area of the parcel. Mr. Parsons explained that the new system would utilize new technology involving a dual compartment septic tank and that locating the new system had a single viable location.

The Commission gave the permit a negative determination meaning no further permitting is necessary, including two conditions — that straw wattles be installed per the plan prior to construction, and that no material would be stock-piled on site.

Mr. Parsons then presented an RDA for Jenny Plasencia, a new property owner at 1193 Norfolk Road. At issue is the construction of a single-family house, well, and septic. The conversation focused on the existing driveway, which was never permitted by the Commission and should have been. After much discussion, it was agreed that an NOI should be submitted because the wetlands on the property, related to both the existing driveway and the possible house site, are not delineated. Accordingly, the RDA was given a positive determination.

Next, the Commission returned to the wetlands violation for Paul Cooper at 881 Stratford Road. During review of an NOI submitted for the installation of a new pickleball court, the Commission noticed two beach areas at the banks of Windemere Lake that had been created without proper permitting. To address that violation, Scott Morrison of Eco-Tech and Michael Schafer of Huntley Associates explained the remediation proposed for the beach areas. The landscape fabric at the beach areas will be adjusted to lessen the risk of erosion and the understory between the two areas will be planted with native shrubbery. There was consensus that all violations had been addressed.

Shannon Boomsma of White Engineering presented an NOI for Brittany Bailey, owner of the Grange Hall in Hartsville, to construct a parking lot, new septic, well, and handicapped ramp.

Ms. Boomsma explained how the installation of a sediment forebay and rain garden would mitigate any runoff from the new eleven-stall parking area to the site's intermittent stream. The parking area will be built at grade. Recognizing that the entire site is in the flood plain, both the new septic at the front of the building and the handicapped ramp will not involve any significant fill, and compensatory storage for runoff will be provided by the new rain garden. Two abutters were on hand to express concerns that the stream is perennial, not intermittent, and would be impacted by additional runoff, and that there is a highway storm drain located at the proposed curb cut to the new parking lot. All parties agreed to continue the hearing until

*continued*

next month when the status of the stream will be confirmed and the highway department will be consulted about the storm drain.

Ms. Boomsma then spoke on behalf of the Certificate of Compliance for the NOI by Steven Litvack at 156 Woodleigh Avenue. The Commission had taken issue with the fact that when the driveway was constructed, it was expanded from the original permitted layout. All parties agreed that a reasonable resolution would be that additional native plantings be added at the wetland borders and that the existing lawn areas be replaced with native plantings. Ms. Boomsma agreed, and proposed that the two certificates of compliance be withdrawn and resubmitted after the site work is completed.

Next the Commission reviewed the Certificate of Compliance submitted for Helen Maher at 164 Woodleigh Ave. The Commission noted that the requested plantings were substantial and in place, and accepted the certificate.

Ms. Boomsma then asked the Commission for an

extension to the order of conditions issued to James Kimball at 1162 Clayton Mill River Road. After confirming that the original permit had been properly renewed several times, the Commission allowed the extension.

Finally, Brian Siter returned to the Commission to address the violation issued to Lauren Smith at 35 Stratford Road. He reviewed a draft site plan for revegetation of an area proximal to Windemere Lake and explained that the NOI was not yet completed. The Commission asked that the NOI be submitted at next month's meeting.

The mail was reviewed. The Commission agreed to pay membership dues to the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions. Given the increased volume of permitting requests to the Conservation Commission, the members agreed to ask that the Select Board consider hiring a conservation agent to assist the Commission.

The next meeting was scheduled for August 17. □

Martha Bryan

## CALLING ALL PETS!

The annual Elihu Burritt Day Pet Parade will take place on Saturday, August 19, on the New Marlborough Green, and we're looking for pets of all shapes and sizes, species and breeds. Come on down and join the fun!

We line up at 12:45 p.m. for a 1:00 start in front of the Meeting House on the New Marlborough Green. We then parade around the green, led by our own Ben Harms and his variety of instruments. Costumes for pets and their humans are highly encouraged, but are not mandatory. Ribbons are awarded for many categories, including: Best Costume, Most Unusual Pet, Smallest Pet, Liveliest Pet, Best Groomed Pet, etc. Pets we've had in the past include dogs, cats, goats, sheep, bunnies, donkeys, and horses. Do you have an

unusual pet? Bring it on down! The more the merrier when it comes to pets! You help us make the parade a success, so don't be shy. No registration necessary. Just show up.

Don't have a pet, but would like to be a judge? We are looking for kids and adults of all ages to hand out the prize ribbons. Please be in touch if you or anyone you know would like to be a judge. Each judge gets to pick a winner in their assigned category and will hand out the blue ribbon. It's super easy and so much fun!

We hope to see you there!

Linda Fass and Kathy Potoski

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## ELIHU BURRITT DAY 2023

New Marlborough's biggest all-day festival, the 47th Elihu Burritt Day, will take place from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. on the Village Green (Route 57) on Saturday, August 19, rain or shine. The eagerly-awaited White Elephant Tent will share the green with craft vendors and a variety of local food vendors. From 11:00 a.m. to noon, Roger the Jester returns to delight us all. At noon, Representative Smity Pignatelli will present the Elihu Burritt Award to Tom Brazie, New Marlborough's own "Farmer Tom," who will be taking a brief break from providing his beloved all-day hay rides. The delightful pet parade, led by piper and drummer Ben Harms, will kick off at 1:00 p.m. Once again, check out, and vote for your favorite antique car. And new this year: Test your aim at the corn hole. Admission to this grand day is free!

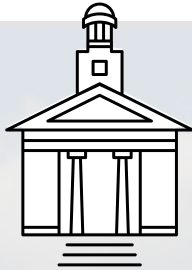
The second event of the day is the New Marlbor-

ough Fire Company's Annual Pig Roast and Block Dance at the Firehouse in Southfield. Dinner is served from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., followed by dancing and the drawing for the Company's annual Grand Raffle. Music to be provided again this year by DJ Mark Santella.

This year's Grand Raffle top prize is a \$2,500 eBike Package from Berkshire Bike & Board in Great Barrington (or \$2,000 cash). Other prizes include \$500 cash and \$250 cash.

Dinner tickets are \$20 each. Raffle tickets are \$10 each. All tickets are available at [www.nmfirecompany.org](http://www.nmfirecompany.org), the Mill River General Store, or from any Fire Company member.

These two great events are sponsored by the New Marlborough Cultural Council and The New Marlborough Volunteer Fire Company. □



## 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.

### UPCOMING:

**September 23: Wincenc – Nikkanen – Asteriadou: Trio Calore**

**October 7: Simon Winchester** with Chandra Prasad, Francine Prose, and André Bernard.

Tickets available Online!  
[nmmeetinghouse.org](http://nmmeetinghouse.org) | 413.229.5045

## COFFEE ON THE SPOT

### Without the Grind

Luckily for us coffee cultists, the familiar tale of a greedy NYC landlord pushing out a family business for higher profit pushed Asio and Angela Highwater to the open arms of the Berkshires. Leaving Brooklyn in 2021, arriving eventually in Mill River, and opening their coffee truck, Best Damn Espresso, on July 4, was not a straight path. But good ideas don't spring up out of nowhere, and the ingredients that have brought this bright red mobile beacon of caffeinated joy are deeply rooted. What do people love about a neighborhood coffee shop? The ritual, and the social experience. Add a really high-quality coffee to that formula, and you have a culture. The former WTF Coffee Lab in Fort Greene Brooklyn incorporated all those elements, and the lab became a testing ground for the experience we can now have in New Marlborough.

Asio Highwater, as a bartender, first fell in love with the vessels available to coffee drinkers. He appreciated the containers and forms that are used to make hand-crafted coffee. At WTF, they created "one-cup-at-a-time experiences," offering a variety of methods for brewing coffee, from the Aeropress and Coffee Socks to the kyoto drip. "Bartending is about pride, performance, and the custom experience of each cocktail tasted and made to order," Asio says enthusiastically.



Angela and Asio in their workplace

photo by Kenzie Fields


wheels puts the quality and consistency that a \$5-\$7 drink deserves, on display.

The truck, a former New Jersey Fire Department beach patrol vehicle turned ice cream truck, was the only truck Asio and Angela came across that could accommodate an espresso machine facing the customer window. "Never have your back to the customer – that is a thing in bartending," Asio knew this was the right truck for every aspect of their business model. Being mobile allows for concentrated experiences that are customizable for specific venues and locations. It allows Asio and Angela full control over their workdays and full engagement with their audience, providing real neighborhood coffee shop culture without the toll on family life, and without ever worrying about a declining customer experience as shifts change or employment be-



Their truck allows them great flexibility

photo by Kenzie Fields



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comes unpredictable. Total freedom, and total control, is now within reach as a small business in the food and beverage world.

So far, I have had a caffe latte with regular whole milk, an iced matcha latte with oatmilk, a coffee milkshake, and hot maple latte from the truck. I would repeat each of those, happily, only changing my order in the future so I can say I have tried everything. Next on my list is the shakerato, an espresso shaken in a cocktail shaker with ice, and a little simple syrup, if you like, to taste. Espresso is served with a small chaser of sparkling

water, an elevated and refreshing experience. Asio and Angela encourage customers to bring their own cups if you want to avoid disposable containers. Best Damn Espresso has been at the Mill River General Store Sundays from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and in Great Barrington on Tuesdays and Fridays. Fans of the coffee truck can become followers by signing up for text message notifications from Best Damn Espresso – learning a day in advance of times and locations. Text “BDE” to 844-659-1203. □

*Kenzie Fields*

## THE NEW MARLBOROUGH FARM DINNER

### *Saving Friday Night and the Planet, one Plate at a Time*

By Zoë Kogan

By the time Friday rolls around, I'd give my gold tooth for a home-cooked meal. Thankfully, dreams are coming true at The New Marlborough Farm Dinner. Every Friday from June through November (5:00 – 8:00 p.m.), Maggie Mae Arian is cooking up The Farm New Marlborough's grass-fed, sustainably-farmed meat with local organic produce. And the price of these farm-to-table dinners is intentionally reasonable, because affordability is one of Chef Maggie Mae's priorities.

Where else around here can you get farm-raised meat, local vegetables, a beverage, and a homemade dessert for \$16 or less? I inhaled a delicious plate of three tacos (carnitas, chicken, and grilled vegetables) with homemade hot sauce salsa, a side cabbage salad, and a key lime cookie. Prior to cooking at the Farm, Maggie Mae spent three years running a wood-fired sourdough bakery on an organic farm in the Poconos, shaping 600 loaves of bread a day.

The New Marlborough Farm Dinner is located at 343 New Marlborough Southfield Road. There's also a self-serve farm store where you can purchase your farm-raised meat for the week. In addition, The Farm New Marlborough also offers home delivery of its farm-raised chickens, pigs, and beef, as well as next-day pickup. The farm store is open from dawn till dusk, seven days a week. If you're staying for dinner, pic-



*Maggie Mae Arian and Dan Pollack are hard at work.*  
Photo by Ingo Schweers

nic tables with tents offer plenty of seating for large groups, with space for children to run and play while you ignore them. Enjoy the views surrounding the farm or take your food to go.

But there is so much more to The Farm New Marlborough and the story behind it. Eating on the farm and speaking with Chef Maggie Mae and Farmer Tom Brazie, I learned how little I know about the sourcing of what I eat. Of course, we all know supporting local farms is the right thing to do (it's on my tote bag after all) but in truth, growing up in Flatbush, Brooklyn, I had no connection to where my food came from besides the crinkling of my Twinkie package, which clearly came from my grandmother's pantry. So why is it important as a community to support small local farms? And why is The New Marlborough Farm Dinner more than a meal?

How do we collectively stop contributing to the climate crisis when we just want a burger and some fries? As Tom Brazie says, “Buy as much as you can from small local farms. Vote with your food dollar.”

Both Maggie and Tom see The Farm New Marlborough as a place for our community to connect with where our food comes from. The Friday Night Dinner there is more than a meal: It's a call to action that's also delicious. □



*This week's crowd was over 100!*

Photo by Pam Arian

# A TRIP TO THE NEW MARLBOROUGH FARMERS' MARKET

By Clara Shapiro

From inside the car, I can hear music. Muffled, mellow rock and the scrape of another type of rock — gravel — as my grandfather parks outside the Old Inn on the Green. Peering out the window, I see the white and blue caps of tents, ten or so in total, scattered in a loose semi-circle across the Green. It's not yet 11:00 a.m., but the sun is already beating down. I see a few people milling about or ducking into the shade of a tent to chat with a vendor. The brightness of this warm Saturday and the cheerfulness of the village makes me think of the mega-hit rap song "Come to the Fair" from my favorite era, the 1920s: "The sun is a-shining to welcome the day, Heigh-ho! come to the fair! The folk are all singing so merry and gay, Heigh-ho! come to the fair! All the stalls on the green are as fine as can be, With trinkets and tokens so pretty to see..."

The song is right. One by one, each stall draws me in with the charm of its vendors and their distinct wares — jams and soaps, cheesecakes and knitwear, cutting boards and cucumbers, some more pickled than others. Merry's Berries and Pickles is my first stop. Merry Abolafia, who is small, white-haired, and very strong, points out the different flavors of jam — strawberry rhubarb, fig, pineapple apricot, and lekvar, a



Merry Abolafia with her berries Photos by Clara Shapiro

name that intimidates me until I find out it is made of prunes. In the midst of the jam jars, Merry has propped up a framed picture of a waving Queen Elizabeth II. The caption reads: "Queen Elizabeth II's former private chef says she ate jam sandwiches every day since age five." Merry's own jam story goes quite far back, too. "I love making jams, and sweet things... I did it as a hobby,"

she said, "and Prue [Spaulding] kept saying, 'You need to come to the Farmers' Market,' and I kept saying, 'No! Not for me, I'm not doing it!' And finally she beat me up and I said, okay, I'll do it once, and I loved it." That was four years ago.

Visiting other stalls, I discover that joining the Farmers' Market, whether by chance or by strong-willed friends, is a shared experience among the vendors. "Some friends of mine were selling things at the market, and they said, 'You should come by and try and sell!'" said Bill Haines, a tough, yet friendly-looking man in a blue Hawaiian-style shirt whose table displayed a collection of handmade cutting boards, charcuterie boards, one lazy Susan, and



Anita and Brittany-Renee Kergaravat with their handicrafts display

soaps. "I make all these things myself in my shop in Sandisfield," he explained. "This is kind of just a hobby job for me. There used to be [a Farmers' Market] over in Sandisfield. It never really worked, but this is nice. Three hours on a Saturday, it's a good thing to do!"

Traveling around to other stalls, I discover that, though the variety of wares is great, common to all the vendors is a true enjoyment both of their crafts and the place they gather to sell them. At one shady table heaped with colorful crocheted trivets, pastel-dyed kitchen towels, crocheted headbands shaped like crowns, and tiny, smiling pixie dolls with artificial flowers for skirts dangling like ornaments from hooks, I meet Anita and Peter Kergaravat and their daughter, Brittany-Renee. Mother and daughter oversee the handicrafts table while Peter, with his woodwork, captains a neighboring station. "We love it here," Anita told me. "I plan my vacations to come back here and be

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here on Saturdays.”

She and others mentioned, however, that this summer’s Farmer’s Market had been dampened by the weather. “Last year it was perfect every single week,” she said.

“But this year we had a lot of rain.” Other vendors suspected that the spate of bad weather might be partly to blame for keeping customers at home. “Today’s been pretty quiet. It’s been busier at other times,” local mystery author Leslie Wheeler said, peering out from behind her big stacks of books. “Sometimes it’s the weather and sometimes people are doing other things. But I enjoy it.”

The customers I see strolling around the stalls seem to be enjoying the Market, too. I accost a couple of fit-looking young fellows wearing dark sunglasses to verify this impression. They introduce themselves as Chip and Sean, visitors to the Farmer’s Market from Monterey on their way to the Southfield Store. “I love that it’s all very local, handmade things,” Sean said. “We’ve gotten some books here before, one of the cutting boards, and Chip’s gotten some Merry’s Berries. And the vendors are all very friendly.”

Not only friendly, but I find that as I pass by, people are willing to share with me their stories as well as their goods. The stories they will tell for free. I walk over to Prue Spaulding’s chair as she is telling a small audience the secret to good butterscotch (four hours of stirring), and I linger to hear her recount the story of her mother growing up as an orphaned teen in England and pass-



Sun welcomes the day on the New Marlborough Village Green

took out the heel fourteen times. But look! I don’t take it out anymore!” I look. The socks, draped over a nearby rack, are perfect.

As I move to the next stall, nearing the end of my circuit, I am eating a sandwich, bursting with egg, cheese, red and orange peppers, and crispy sausage. This is the signature breakfast sandwich of the Two Sisters, Ginny and Dot, camped on the other side of the Green. The aroma of sizzling eggs and meat had lured me over.

Ginny and Dot stand side by side in matching aprons that read “Two Sisters.” Ginny explains the origin story: “I was a waitress for twenty years and my sister before me,” she said, as Dot nods. “We’d done restaurant work forever. And then I worked in a nursing home and I wanted to come back and do this. And they offered me a space here. I’ve lived in New Marlborough all my life, and I wanted to come back.

The atmosphere is wonderful!” The cheery sisters had only one complaint — the business. “We want to get more people to come.” Heigh, ho! Come to the Fair!

“Come on down!” Ginny said. “Walk through, talk to us, have fun. We had some music playing before.” And if you’re still unconvinced, “You can sample homemade hummus!” □



Merry with her jams, and her tribute to Queen Elizabeth II

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## STARS ARE DESCENDING ON NEW MARLBOROUGH

(In August and Early September)

By Barry R. Shapiro

You don't have to go to Hollywood to spend an afternoon with a renowned star of film and stage.

You don't have to go to England to see the London premiere of a fantastic musical.

You don't need to go to Carnegie Hall to listen to an internationally known pianist.

All you have to do is show up at the New Marlborough Meeting House on August 12 when film star, Karen Allen, who played the iconic role of Marion Ravenwood in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and the newly released *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny*, and has starred and worked with luminaries such as Steven Spielberg, Harrison Ford and Jeff Bridges, will discuss her life and career as an actor and director, her connections to the Berkshires and her popular store on Railroad Street in Great Barrington, Karen Allen Fiber Arts.

You then need to come back two weeks later on August 26, when Alison Larkin, internationally acclaimed



Above, Karen Allen and below, Alison Larkin

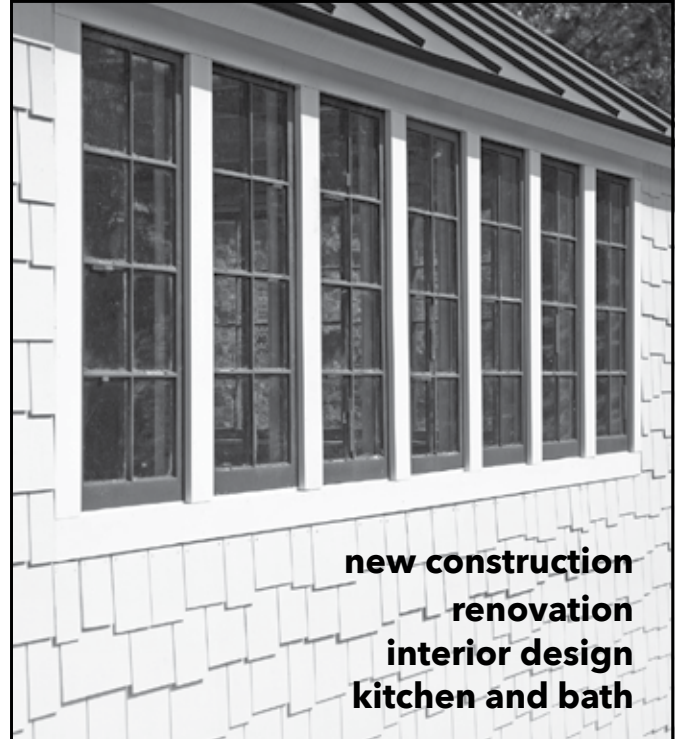


comedienne, award-winning audiobook narrator, and bestselling author of *The English American*, will entertain and perform excerpts from her autobiographical, life-affirming show about love and loss, *Grief, the Musical...a Comedy*, which will receive its London premiere at the Soho Theatre on November 6.

And finally, you need to get yourself back to the Meeting House on September 2 to be moved by the great pianist, Simone Dinnerstein, who returns to us by popular demand. Called by *The Washington Post* "an artist of strikingly original ideas and irrefutable integrity," Ms. Dinnerstein has an exciting program planned and the chance to hear this remarkable artist in the intimate setting of

the Meeting House should not be missed.

Tickets for these shows as well as additional programs later in September and October are on sale now at: [nmmeetinghouse.org](http://nmmeetinghouse.org) and are going fast. □



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## Upcoming: Events Calendar for August and September

**August 6: Town Hall Planning Open House**, with Planning Committee members present at Robin Hall (an administrative building at the former Kolburne School on New Marlborough Southfield Road) and the current Town Hall to explain options it is considering for an ADA-compliant facility; 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**August 12: Actor/Director Karen Allen**, sharing highlights of her career in an interview with Barry R. Shapiro, 4:30 p.m. at the Meeting House, \$30, \$25 for Meeting House members

**August 19: Elihu Burritt Day: 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** on the New Marlborough Village Green, followed by the **Fire Department Annual Pig Roast**, at the Firehouse in Southfield, 5:00 p.m. until the band goes home

**August 26: Alison Larkin**; comedian, award-winning audio book narrator, and novelist, will preview excerpts from her new autobiographical show, *Grief ... a Comedy*. 4:30 p.m. at the Meeting House, \$30, \$25 for Meeting House members

**August 28: Motion/Emotion's final day**, the Meeting House Gallery's second show of the season ends its four-week run

**September 1: New Marlborough Artists**, opening reception of the annual show of local talent, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Meeting House Gallery; on display Saturdays and Sundays, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., until October 8.

**September 2: Pianist Simone Dinnerstein**, performing works by Schubert, Schumann, and others, 4:30 p.m. at the Meeting House, \$30, \$25 for Meeting House members

**September 9: Melissa Clark and Madhur Jaffrey**, cookbook authors, discuss changes in food culture — and what they are cooking right now; 4:30 p.m. at the Meeting House, \$30, \$25 for Meeting House members

**September 23: The Trio Calore**, Carol Wincenc, flute, Kurt Nikkanen, violin, and Maria Asteriadou, piano, in works by Melanie Bonis, Franz Doppler, Bohuslav Martinu, J.S. Bach, and Nino Rota, 4:30 p.m. at the Meeting House, \$30, \$25 for Meeting House members

### September 1 - October 8

**Opening Reception  
Friday, September 1, 5-7 p.m.**

In 1998, the Meeting House Gallery hosted its very first exhibit, a show of works by artists residing in New Marlborough. It is a tradition that has continued (with the exception of 2020, year one of the Covid pandemic) every year since. This show is a celebration of the rich creativity that surrounds us in New Marlborough. Join us!

*Meeting House*  
GALLERY

NOTE NEW HOURS for this show:  
Saturday, Sunday 11 am - 4 pm

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25<sup>th</sup> Annual  
New Marlborough  
Artists Show





## 2023 ELIHU BURRITT AWARD TO TOM BRAZIE

By Robbi Hartt

At this year's celebration on August 19, the New Marlborough Cultural Council will present the 19th annual Elihu Burritt Award to Tom Brazie and The Farm New Marlborough "in grateful appreciation and recognition for many years of hard work, dedication, stewardship and generous community involvement in the Town of New Marlborough." Elihu Burritt's thirst for learning, love of writing, and determination to do good and build community are clearly exemplified in this year's honoree. (See article about him on page 20.)

You may know Tom as the guy you see chasing cows along Route 57 to move them to new pastures, as the friendly tractor driver pulling a hay wagon filled with happy kids, as the farmer poet sharing soulful tales of everyday farm life, or as the welcoming face at the Friday night farm dinners – but it's hard to imagine anyone in New Marlborough not knowing him.

"When Wendy Miller first told me I'd been chosen, it was a huge surprise," Tom admits. "It took me a minute to come to terms with it, thinking of all the people that deserve this award, those who've been honored in the past, and all the elders in the community who shaped who I am. There are a lot of silent people that make this community spin around."

Tom Brazie's family and farming roots in this community date back to the mid-1700s. He remembers attending Grange dinners and Legion Hall events with his family — simple affairs that were about building community, much like his Friday night farm dinners, where the invitation is to "just come and enjoy."



Tom with his daughter, Figgy

Photo by Tom Brazie

Tom's own farming practice began with tending a garden and owning a milking cow and a few chickens. "I had been working toward farming all my life," he says. But for years his main occupation was running a landscaping business.

The catalyst for shifting gears from landscaping to farming came in 2012. "Watching *Food, Inc.* [a documentary examining corporate "agribusiness" farming in the U.S. and exposing its devastating impact on the animals, employees, environment, and consumers] was a life-changing event for me," he explains. "Learning about Joel Salatin

and his Polyface rotational/regenerative farm made so much sense to me. I started reading and studying and thought, 'This guy's talking to me.'"

The premise behind rotational grazing is that first the cattle graze, eating the grasses and leaving their natural fertilizer behind, followed by the chickens, which eat the grubs and fly larvae, eliminating parasites and spreading the cow manure. Without the chickens' involvement, the cows won't eat the grass where their manure was for a year, but with the chickens, the same pasture is ready for grazing in three weeks. This system of managing the animals and land is healthier and more sustainable for everyone involved – especially for those who eat the nutrition-filled byproducts.

In 2017 the inspiration to farm turned into action. "My landscaping shop burned and I lost everything," Tom explains. "I was starting at the beginning either way, by rebuilding my existing business or starting a new one, so I decided to farm." The New Marlborough Land Trust had just bought land and Tom had signed a formal lease agreement with them the year before. "When my shop burned, Martha Bryan encouraged me to look at the Kolburne School property through a different lens," he recalls. "The land was in really rough shape, but I found an investor (Frank Kern, who still holds my mortgage) and decided to commit to farming."

Tom owns or leases "various pieces of land postage-stamped around the village," with the old Kolburne property serving as the hub that ties them together. "Elizabeth [Tom's sister] and I started rotational grazing that first year, and we've been seeing the effects ever since." In the early days, there were eight cows (compared to seventy today) moved from one pasture to another by trailer. The building that currently hous-

### SUSAN M. SMITH Attorney At Law

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*The crowd at a Friday Night Dinner*

*Photo by Robbi Hartt*

es the farm store was part of the original Stanley farm until the 1950s, but Tom notes “We actually fit better into the school.” The old gym now stores hay, and the old dorm houses animals. “We’ve been figuring things out as we go,” he notes, adding “but it’s worked out amazingly well.”

What’s the best part of farming? Tom says, “I couldn’t begin to say. Every step is rewarding, from seeing a new calf or piglet being born, to watching the animals click their heels with excitement as we move them from one pasture to another, to walking the fence line and seeing all the work they’ve done and how the land has responded to their actions.”

“The Friday night dinners are also rewarding,” he adds, “and the young people who work on the farm bring so much joy.” The Friday night farm dinners, prepared by Maggie Arian, have been growing in popularity each week, with nearly 100 people at the most recent dinner! Taking on new people and showing them the ropes is also hugely fulfilling for him. “There’s a job for every age. As soon as they can walk, kids are an asset and there are meaningful ways for them to participate. Ask a four-year-old to help collect the eggs from the henhouse one day and they’ll beg you to let them do it the next day.” School children visit the farm regularly and are often the ones who insist their parents buy food from the farm.

“There are only two people besides me [Honora and Emelia Fedell] officially doing chores each day,” he continues, “But the animals do most of the work – that includes two groups of cattle, two flocks of egg-laying chickens, meat chickens, and a whole lot of pigs!” In addition to the animals, friends and family members also lend a hand.

How has farming changed over the past three years? “Prior to Covid, the farm was growing at a really nice pace,” he notes, with 85 percent of the business coming from restaurants and wholesale. “But that came to a screeching halt when everything closed.” In 2021 and 2022, he tried to get back into those markets, but it wasn’t easy. “This year, everything we sell is focused at the farm, with the exception of the meat sold at the Mill River General Store and eggs sold at the Berkshire Food Co-op. We’ve decreased production and are solely relying on the community,” he explains. Beyond feeding the New Marlborough community, Tom feeds a growing flock of musicians in the off-season, making monthly trips to Boston to deliver meat to thirty to forty members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and other musical groups. That demand has crescendoed and now requires two delivery locations in Boston.



*Finishing a tour of The Farm*

*Photo by Robbi Hartt*

“We farm just under 500 acres currently, but I own roughly 170,” he states. “The rest is based on a lease or a handshake.” He uses a forty-five-day rotation cycle that allows the animals to graze and fertilize the soil, the hay to grow and get mowed, and the fields to be ready for feeding again within that time. “Every year that the animals work, they improve things for the next year. My focus is the land – everything else is a byproduct.”

“Everybody has a story about a farm somewhere in their past. In New Marlborough, that place is here,” he concludes. With grateful appreciation, the Cultural Council and community recognize and honor Tom Brazie and The Farm New Marlborough for creating that place and feeding us all – mind, body, and spirit.

“Love, Peace and Chicken Grease.” □

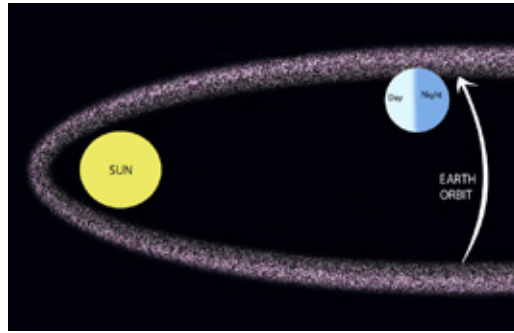
# THE NIGHT SKY

By Ruben Kier

August and autumn will bring New Marlborough a feast of meteors in three major showers. The combination of little to no moon and our area's pristine dark skies will reveal the best meteor displays this decade! During this time, the four outer planets, all gas giants, will take turns reaching "opposition," when they are closest to earth and visible all night. And in October, we will catch the edge of a partial solar eclipse.

**Meteor Showers:** Many comets or asteroids shed debris when they pass near the sun. Over thousands or millions of years, these fragments spread out in an elliptical orbiting stream comprised of millions of tiny rocks and iron "meteoroids." When the earth, moving 67,000 mph in its orbit around the sun, plows into one of these streams, these meteoroids burn up in our atmosphere as "shooting stars" (meteors). Most of these shooting stars are seen after midnight when our location on the earth rotates to the leading edge of the earth's orbit. Whichever constellation is rising around midnight will then appear as the source of the meteors, giving rise to meteor shower names such as the Perseids (arising from the constellation Perseus).

**The Perseid meteor shower** conveniently peaks after midnight on the Saturday and Sunday mornings of August 12 and 13, with 60 meteors per hour at its peak. A waning crescent moon will not be bright enough to ruin the show. The Perseids arise from



Orbiting debris trail of comet or asteroid.

Enhanced photos by Ruben Kier



Jupiter



Saturn, January 9, 2005

the dusty space debris of Comet Swift-Tuttle.

The **Leonid meteor** shower peaks after midnight after the waxing crescent moon sets on Saturday morning, November 18, with about fifteen meteors per hour. Although this shower has fewer shooting stars than the Perseids, you may see an occasional "fireball," which briefly flares brighter than any star. These meteors arise from Comet Tempel-Tuttle.

Perhaps the finest show of the year will be the **Geminids**, peaking after midnight, Thursday, December 14, with 120 meteors per hour at its peak. The new moon will not interfere at all. The shower originates from Asteroid 3200 Phaethon.

Plan your experience! Simply looking in the early night sky after sunset will be disappointing. Unless you are by nature a night owl, you may want to go to sleep early and set your alarm to midnight. Dress warmly, especially for the late autumn meteor showers. Recline in a lawn chair or Adirondack chair, ideally in a cozy sleeping bag. Face towards the east and allow your eyes 20 minutes to adjust to the dark. Avoid looking at any bright lights to protect your night vision, ideally using only a red flashlight to find your way around.

**Planets:** All four gas giants reach "opposition," which is their closest approach to earth, during the late summer and fall: **Saturn** on August 27, **Neptune** on September 19, **Jupiter** on November 3, and **Uranus** on November 13.

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Although technically visible all night at the time of opposition, the planets don't get to their highest point until around midnight. Even a small telescope should show that Saturn has a ring and that Jupiter has 4 moons in a line. Neptune and Uranus are very hard to see even by an experienced observer with a large telescope.



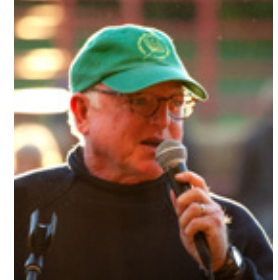
Early partial phase, annular solar eclipse. Ivins, Utah, May 20, 2012.

will occur with the moon near its farthest distance from the earth, so the entire sun will not be covered. This "annular" eclipse will only appear as a partial eclipse from New Marlborough, with up to 32 percent of the sun blocked at 1:22 p.m. Now may be the time to order safe eclipse glasses so you will be ready to enjoy the view. □



## NEW MARLBOROUGH LAND TRUST

The New Marlborough Land Trust has an exciting change in leadership. Our long-time president, Ian Devine, has stepped down from his leadership role, but will remain active on the board. As Ian said so clearly, change is good for the organization to keep things fresh. Paula M. Hatch took over as our president at the annual members meeting on July 8. Paula is the former director of



Ian Devine, stepping down as president

the Berkshire Bach Society and, previously, the South Berkshire Education Collaborative. Additionally, Sheila Baird and Robin Tost are stepping down from their positions as board members. Sheila has played a vital role on the board as our financial advisor and our secretary. Robin brought with her to the board a creative spirit and generous sense of humor. While they will no longer be serving as board members, they will still be playing active roles in supporting the New Marlborough Land Trust. Finally, the New Marlborough Land Trust is happy to announce the return of Martha Bryan to the board and her role as our Conservation Advisor.

All current and past members of the board have committed themselves to our mission:

"The New Marlborough Land Trust encourages and promotes the preservation of natural resources in the Town of New Marlborough to protect the Town's unique rural character. The Land Trust works in concert with the citizens and governing bodies of New Marlborough for the benefit of the environment, our local economy, community education, and future generations."

New Marlborough Land Trust Board of Directors:

- Paula M Hatch, President
- Leslie Miller, Vice President
- Michael Carmona, Treasurer
- Katherine Slingluff, Secretary
- Martha Bryan, Conservation Advisor
- Ian Devine

- Francoise Lartigue
- Jake Levin
- Gretchen Long
- Tes Reed
- Matthew Sheffer

Executive Director: Silvia Eggenberger

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The New Marlborough Land Trust owns and manages approximately 900 acres featuring miles of public hiking trails. Information: [www.nmlandtrust.org](http://www.nmlandtrust.org).



Martha Bryan

Stay tuned for announcements about our fall roadside clean up followed by lunch at the Old Inn on the Green, and *Reading the Land* with our very own Tes Reed, [www.tesreed.com](http://www.tesreed.com) on October 21. □

Silvia Eggenberger, Executive Director



## SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION WHO PAYS WHAT?

By Joe Poindexter

After more than two years of analysis, the 8 Town Regional School District Planning Board (RSD-PB) has finally drafted a recommendation consolidating the Southern Berkshire and Berkshire Hills Regional School Districts. Pending review by a legal team and the state Department of Education, the agreement calls for a single preK-12 district, 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. Current plans call for a vetted agreement to be sent back to the 8 Town Board for final approval by the end of August and then on to the select boards of the eight towns — Alford, Egremont, Monterey, New Marlborough, and Sheffield in the Southern Berkshire School District; Great Barrington, Stockbridge, and West Stockbridge in Berkshire Hills — in time for a vote at special town meetings this fall.

As a part of its study, RSDPB mapped a table of costs assuming the two districts follow through on consolidation. Berkshire Hills towns would be assessed 90 percent of the cost of a new high school building, less the expected aid from the state of 48.52 percent, for a net of 41.48 percent; the five in Southern Berkshire, 10 percent, less the expected regional incentive aid from the state of 6 percent, for a net of 4 percent. Starting in 2032, the cost burden would shift from the Berkshire Hills towns to the Southern Berkshire towns by 1 percent a year through 2038. Thereafter, Berkshire Hills towns would be paying 85.2 percent of the net debt service, Southern Berkshire towns, 14.8 percent.

As an illustration, the board used an assumed cost of a new high school of \$100 million, reduced by the anticipated support from the Massachusetts School Building Authority and a regional incentive aid grant. The resulting debt service on a twenty-five-year loan at 3.25 percent would result in \$2.45 million annually for

Berkshire Hills and \$236,000 for Southern Berkshire, starting in fiscal year 2026. In 2038, when the 1 percent shift per year is completed, Berkshire Hills towns would be paying \$2.3 million annually, Southern Berkshire, \$397,000.

Operating costs will be calculated using a five-year rolling average of the state-calculated “required local contribution.” The approved operating cost methodology also includes a “safety valve” cap that operates to ensure that no town’s operating assessment increases in any year by a percentage that is significantly higher than the increases in the other seven towns.

Based on projections performed by the research team, this formulation results in the following per-town annual operating assessments in fiscal year 2026, assuming a total annual cost of \$44,512,202:

• Alford	\$444,013
• Egremont	\$2,242,931
• Great Barrington	\$21,089,189
• Monterey	\$2,184,809
• New Marlborough	\$2,763,064
• Sheffield	\$8,644,426
• Stockbridge	\$3,680,629
• West Stockbridge	\$3,463,142

The Planning Board figures are only an estimate of eventual obligations, but they provide a rough idea of where we may be headed dollar-wise with regional school consolidation. □



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## OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

photo by Cornelia Webster



*Worker ants rescuing the immobile members of the brood from a flood (Go to [nm5vn.org](http://nm5vn.org) to see this in color, it makes a big difference)*

On July 10, in the midst of the tremendous rainstorm that inundated parts of New Marlborough, **Cornelia Webster** went out to inspect things along the edge of the Konkapot River, which flows through her property in Hartsville. Looking down at the soaked ground beneath her feet, she noticed an extraordinary act of... heroism?...self-preservation? Hundreds of **black ants**, having been flooded out of their nest, were scrambling up the blades of grass above the water, carrying with them the eggs of the next generation to safety. Cornelia took a short video clip with her smartphone, and the accompanying photo is a frame from that video. This action, which seems almost altruistic on the part of the worker ants, may in fact be a survival tactic. In an article by Annie Sneed in *Scientific American* from 2014, on a species of ant native to central Europe, when confronted by floodwaters, "...the worker ants collect the brood—immobile eggs, larvae and pupae—into a pile, and then another three or four layers of workers climb atop them and hold onto the babies with their mandibles. The queen assumes her place in the protected middle of the raft." In Cornelia's photograph, it does appear as though the ants in the center of the shot are massing into a potential raft. The article goes on to say that the eggs and larvae are particularly buoyant, making them all the more suitable as lifesavers. □

Compiled by Larry Burke;

send your wildlife sightings to him at [larryjburke@gmail.com](mailto:larryjburke@gmail.com)

### It's The Event Of The Year!

*It's The New Marlborough Cultural Council's*

## ELIHU BURRITT DAY WHITE ELEPHANT SALE!

The Cultural Council will be accepting your treasures for our August 19 sale as follows:

**Thursday, August 17, from 4:00 -7:00 p.m.**  
at 59 Farmview Drive, off Rte. 57, in New Marlborough

**Friday, August 18, from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**  
on the New Marlborough Village Green

We will not accept the following:

- Anything broken, torn, dirty, spotted, unusable
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- No electronics – no computers, printers, electric powered household goods.  
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- Bike or ski helmets, baby car seats
- Ice skates or roller skates/blades. Downhill or cross-country skis.

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# AN INTERNATIONAL ADVOCATE FOR PEACE

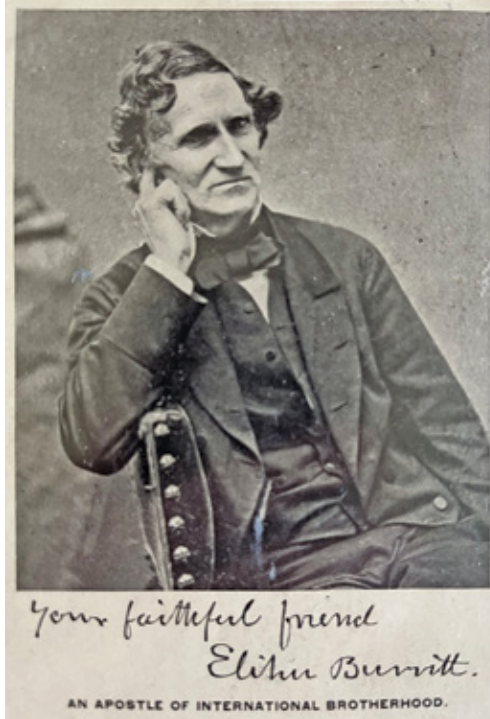
## The Man Behind Elihu Burritt Day

By John Schreiber

If you live in New Marlborough or visit in the summer, you know that for decades, the third Saturday of every August is Elihu Burritt Day. This day is time to mingle with family and friends, enjoy various artisans and food, perhaps visit the classic car show, and recognize the efforts of various villagers for their devotion to town affairs. But you may not know much about the man for whom the day is named, and why was his time in New Marlborough so important?

Elihu Burritt, born in 1810 in New Britain, Connecticut, was one of the best-known leaders of the anti-war movement of the 19th century. A blacksmith by trade, he was self-taught, since, following the death of his father, he needed to work rather than attend school. Despite his lack of a formal education, he was considered a gifted student and, amazingly, became proficient in more than twenty-five languages. His fluency in languages was perhaps motivated by his conviction that world peace could only be accomplished across multiple cultures.

Burritt's achievements were wide-ranging. They included the first formal educational programs on peace, the inclusion of the working class and common people in the dialogue about world peace, building dialogue and support with lectures, visits, commu-



Elihu Burritt

photos courtesy New Marlborough Historical Society

nity exchanges, linking peace to positive economic outcomes and improved trade so as to get buy-in from businesses. He strongly encouraged the participation of women in the peace societies. He traveled to Europe and met with leaders creating alignment across continents with his advocacy for peace. He was an expert in dissemination of his message using at times forty different newspapers to carry peace essays called the "Olive Leaf Mission." He was, as they say, way ahead of his time!

Burritt was the editor of the American Peace Society publication. He established the League of Universal Brotherhood, which encouraged schools and educators to teach the importance of peace rather than the glorification of the military and war. Innovative ideas included internationalism as a focus for peace,

peace education curricula, and building good will with community exchanges and visits across continents. By 1850, the Society had 70,000 signatures of members and more than a million readers advocating the disavowal of war to solve conflicts, an enormous number for that time. The Society was also abolitionist and condemned slavery, and promoted solidarity among all races. During the Civil War, Burritt advocated for immediate compensated emancipation of all enslaved persons and a cessation of hostilities, an idea that was



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not accepted by either side.

Burrirt spent several years in New Marlborough in the early 1830s where he worked as an apprentice at the Holmes Brass foundry located on the Umpachene River. Legend has it that he fell in love with Elizabeth Sheldon, who returned his love but was refused marriage to Burrirt by her parents.\* This was the impetus for him to

focus himself on learning as he taught himself new languages, formulated his vision for world peace, and gave local lectures about the joys of learning. He so impressed a wealthy man named William Lincoln in Worcester with a letter and his language abilities that Lincoln passed the letter on to the Governor of Massachusetts, Edward Everett. It was Governor Everett who dubbed Burrirt "The Learned Blacksmith."

Despite Burrirt's brief stay in New Marlborough, residents of the town recognized the profound impact their one-time neighbor had had on world peace and in 1908 erected a monument to him on the village green. The boulder that originally topped the monu-



The Elihu Burrirt Library at Central Connecticut State University

ment was later replaced with an anvil, which was thought to be more fitting for a "Learned Blacksmith."

As an advocate for peace, Burrirt's reputation extended far beyond New Marlborough. Three Quaker-based colleges (Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore) have an extensive collection of Burrirt's letters and documents in their libraries. In

addition, Central Connecticut State University has housed its impressive collection, including Burrirt writings, in what is named the "Elihu Burrirt Library." In 2023, 144 years after Burrirt's death in 1879, his advocacy for peace and his concept for public societies that educate and advocate for good will unfortunately remain as important today as they were when he first began to espouse them as a blacksmith in early 19th century New Marlborough. □

\*History of New Marlborough 1735-1943

Hadley Turner

Berkshire Courier Press, 1944, Pp 46-48

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# THE LOG

## Police Department (selected entries)

- June 1 5:12 a.m. An officer assists in apprehending a fugitive from justice in Hartsville.
- June 5 12:42 p.m. Tree on wires on Clayton Mill River Road.  
2:02 p.m. An officer informs visitors to Umpachene Falls Park of the prohibition against consuming alcohol there.
- June 6 2:42 p.m. A caller alerts the Department to a possible fire on Hartsville Mill River Road.
- June 7 2:40 a.m. A caller reports a possible break-in to her car parked at her New Marlborough Village residence.  
7:26 a.m. A caller reports that two vehicles at his Mill River residence have been broken into.  
6:53 p.m. A motorist reports a vehicle blocking a bridge on Campbell Falls Road.
- June 8 10:43 a.m. The animal control officer assists in transporting a goose injured on Sandy Brook Turnpike to a wildlife rehabilitation center.
- June 9 1:06 p.m. An officer assists a Southfield resident in dealing with a fawn that had been in his yard for two days.
- June 10 12:40 p.m. A Clayton resident reports that a box truck, backing onto his lawn, damaged the grass and took down some tree branches, then fled the scene into Connecticut.
- June 12 4:30 p.m. An officer removes a dead deer from South Sandisfield Road, then informs the Department of Public Works.
- June 14 10:25 p.m. A Mill River resident asks for assistance in transporting an individual who has overstayed what was intended to be a temporary visit, away from her property.
- June 15 4:23 p.m. Responding to complaints from Southfield residents, an officer advises drivers of Berkshire Spring Water trucks to reduce their speed when passing through the village.
- June 16 10:26 a.m. A caller informs the Department of an SUV driven by a juvenile apparently checking mailboxes on Cross Road to Canaan Valley Road.  
9:10 p.m. Called to the scene by a Southfield resident reporting sounds of an animal in distress, an officer dispatches an injured raccoon.
- June 18 9:56 a.m. An officer attempts to resolve a right-of-way issue regarding two properties in Mill River sharing a driveway.  
2:43 p.m. A Southfield resident complains of dirt bikes riding on South Sandisfield Road.
- June 20 3:39 p.m. A German shepherd is reported loose on Church Road in Mill River.  
3:40 p.m. A caller reports a trespasser on his Mill River village property.  
4:05 p.m. An officer assists a driver who has locked himself out of his vehicle on Mill River Great Barrington Road.
- June 21 5:25 p.m. Verizon and Spectrum are notified of a utility pole down on Clayton Mill River Road.
- June 23 12:51 p.m. Its owner is contacted to retrieve a chocolate lab loose in Mill River village.
- June 24 5:03 p.m. A caller reports a dog loose on Hartsville New Marlborough Road.
- June 25 9:13 p.m. A swimmer at York Lake is advised to leave, since the park closes at sunset.
- June 28 5:43 p.m. An officer dispatches a rabid raccoon at a Hartsville residence.
- June 30 12:03 a.m. A caller reports locking herself out of her vehicle in New Marlborough village.  
1:54 a.m. A tow is ordered for a vehicle that has collided with a tree on New Marlborough Hill Road.  
9:30 a.m. A maintenance worker reports vandalism to a portable outhouse at Umpachene Falls Park.  
8:18 p.m. A caller reports a goat loose in Southfield village.

*Graham Frank, Chief of Police*

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# FIRE AND RESCUE

June 1	6:00 a.m.	Knight Road Medical Call	June 20	9:06 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call
June 5	10:04 a.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call	June 23	12:53 p.m.	Norfolk Road Fire Alarm
June 5	9:18 p.m.	Hadsell Street Medical Call	June 23	3:54 p.m.	Sisson Hill Road Medical Call
June 6	8:14 a.m.	Hayes Hill Road Chimney Fire	June 25	4:39 p.m.	Canaan Southfield Road Medical Call
June 7	9:25 a.m.	Stone Manor Drive Fire Alarm	June 27	12:56 p.m.	Norfolk Road Fire Alarm
June 9	5:25 a.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Fire Alarm	June 29	6:07 a.m.	Lakeside Road Medical Call
June 11	3:46 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road CO Alarm	June 29	8:30 p.m.	Brewer Hill Road Fire Alarm
June 12	3:30 a.m.	Mutual Aid to Monterey Medical Call	June 30	1:57 a.m.	New Marlborough Hill Road MVA
June 12	8:03 p.m.	Cross Road to Canaan Valley Road CO Alarm	June 30	12:21 p.m.	Norfolk Road Fire Alarm
June 13	11:05 a.m.	Shunpike Road Medical Call	<i>Fire Company President David Smith</i>		
June 15	12:30 a.m.	Shunpike Road Medical Call	Total number of calls in the first six months of 2023: eighty-nine, nineteen fewer than in the same period last year.		

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The New Marlborough Fire Company’s Annual Pig Roast and Block Dance will be held on Saturday, August 19, at the Firehouse in Southfield. Dinner is served from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., followed by dancing and the drawing for the Company’s annual Grand Raffle. DJ Mark Santella will again provide the music.

This year’s Grand Raffle top prize is a \$2,500 eBike Package from Berkshire Bike & Board in Great Barrington (or \$2000 cash). Cash prizes of \$500 and \$250 will also be awarded. Dinner tickets are \$20 each; raffle tickets, \$10 each, and only 1,000 tickets will be sold. All tickets are available at [www.nmfirecompany.org](http://www.nmfirecompany.org), the Mill River General Store, or from any Fire Company member. Call 413-229-8100 or 413-229-0291 for more information. □

*Fire Company President David Smith*

### Thank You to Our Contributors:

Karen Stiles Brusie, in memory of Bud and Martha Stiles and Cindy Allyn; Stephen & Julia Lee; Connie & Lee Sussman; Leonard & Hannah Golub; Charles Collins; Jerome & Henrietta Berko; Crozer Martin; Howard Sheldon; and Maria Black



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## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Corn, tomatoes, nectarines, and basil are classic flavors that sing of summer. There isn't much else to say except that this dish is delicious! Enjoy!

*Marjorie Shapiro*



photo by Barry Shapiro

### Grilled Scallops with Corn, Tomato, Nectarines and Basil

6 Servings

#### For the Dressing

3 tablespoons lime juice	3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 ½ teaspoons finely grated lime zest	Sea salt to taste
1/8 teaspoon chili powder	

#### For the Scallops and Nectarines

24 large sea scallops, patted dry	1 ½ cups fresh corn kernels
3 ripe but firm white or yellow nectarines, each sliced into 6 wedges	24 cherry tomatoes halved
Olive oil (used for brushing the scallops and nectarines)	1/3 cup basil leaves, thinly sliced
	Sea salt to taste

#### Basil Puree

3/4 cup basil leaves	Sea salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil	

#### Preparation

To prepare the dressing (can be prepared the day before)

- Whisk lime juice, lime zest, chili powder in a small bowl.
- Gradually whisk in oil. Season with salt and pepper.

To prepare the basil puree (can also be made the day before)

- Coarsely chop basil.
- Puree the basil and oil in a blender until smooth.
- Transfer to a small bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To prepare the scallops and nectarines

- Brush scallops and nectarines with olive oil, and then sprinkle with salt and pepper.
- Grill scallops over medium-high heat until slightly charred and cooked through, about 2 to 3 minutes per side.
- Grill nectarines until slightly charred, about 1 to 2 minutes per side.
- Transfer scallops and nectarines to a plate.

To assemble:

- Arrange four scallops each on 6 plates.
- Arrange nectarine wedges decoratively on the plate.
- Toss corn and 2 tablespoons dressing in medium bowl.
- In another bowl, toss tomatoes with 1 tablespoon dressing. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
- Spoon corn around scallops and nectarines. Scatter tomatoes over the corn.
- Drizzle some dressing over the scallops.
- Spoon some basil puree over the scallops and nectarines.
- Sprinkle sliced basil and a bit of sea salt over the dish and serve.



# SUMMER READING PROGRAM

With Covid precautions always on our minds, the New Marlborough Library held its summer reading club with a limited number of children and working outdoors as much as possible. Eleven children, ages 8 – 13, participated in the fun! This program is sponsored by the New Marlborough Friends of the Library. □



Far left, pottery with Jane Burke; left, terrariums with Scotty Salame; above, glow in the dark garden stones



Above, Book Beasts with Erika Crofut; right, tie die T-shirts; far right, BuildWave with Tim Merle




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**Artist Margaret Walsh Buchte Opening Reception**  
*Please join us for an opening reception*  
**August 6 from 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

Come browse and chat with the artist as you enjoy light refreshments. Margaret has been drawing and painting scenes of Berkshire County and beyond for thirty years. She tries to capture the essence, life, and beauty of a scene under dramatic light. She works in oils, acrylics, watercolors, pastels, charcoal, and graphite. Her exhibitions are viewed in solo and juried shows. She has been represented by the former Lenox Fine Art Gallery and the former Berkshire Art Gallery. Original artwork, matted sleeved prints, notecards with envelopes and postcards will be available for sale at the art show. A portion of all sales will be donated to the New Marlborough Friends of the Library. Margaret's website is [www.Margaret-Buchte.fineartamerica.com](http://www.Margaret-Buchte.fineartamerica.com) For more information on this and other upcoming shows, contact Caryn King at [caryn@carynking.com](mailto:caryn@carynking.com)


Don't worry, the 'New Book' List will be back... 



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE LIBRARY BOOKFEST**  
**New Marlborough Friends of the Library Annual Book and Bake Sale**  
**September 30 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Library**  
**Collection: September 29 from 11a.m. – 6 p.m. only!!**

The Friends will hold their annual book and bake sale at the library this year!

**Please join us for hayrides, face painting, tasty baked goods and delicious food prepared by The Two Sisters. All proceeds benefit library programming.**



## WHAT ARE YOU READING?

A column inspired by NM5VN founder Jon Swan, who started every long-distance phone conversation to family members with this question. In his honor, here is a representation of the variety of genres read by our town:

What are you reading?

Georgia and Harlowe, ages 4 and 6, Adsit Crosby Road:

*The Flower's Festival* by Elsa Beskow

Harlowe and Georgia's description: "This is a book about a girl who has to wait on the steps for her grandmother. The flowers invite her to The Flower's Festival. The Midsummer fairy drops some poppy-juice into her eyes to make her invisible, and she sees the flowers come to life getting ready for the midsummer festival." Harlowe's favorite illustration in the book is of the weeds trying to come along to the festival, but are stopped at the gate. Georgia's favorite flower is a peony; Harlowe loves Bleeding Hearts because they are "the perfect pink."

Harlowe and Georgia's rating: Love

Kenzie Fields

Two young children, a girl and a boy, are standing in a field of tall grass and wildflowers. The girl in the foreground is wearing red-rimmed glasses and a white shirt. She is holding a book titled "The Flower's Festival" which has a colorful illustration on the cover. The boy is standing behind her, also in a white shirt.

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:** Third Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m. or Zoom
- 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
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- Animal Control Officer:** Graham Frank, (413) 229-8161
- Town Clerk:** 229-8278; 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. weekdays; Saturday by appointment
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