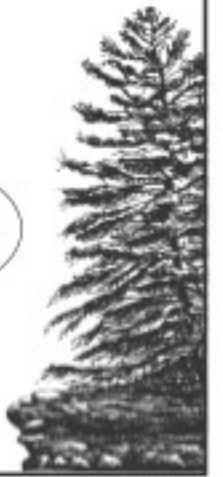




# New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield

## HALLOWEEN 2015... *and Ghostly Memories of Halloween Past*

By Jodi Rothe

Continuing a popular tradition of the New Marlborough Town Library, on Friday, October 23, at 6:00 p.m. there will be the annual Halloween party at the New Marlborough Meeting House. Librarian Deb O'Brien is in charge, and since this is her favorite holiday of the year, she will dig deep into the remarkable collection of decorations that she stores at the library. (Note: Deb's closest friends know that instead of a Christmas present she'd rather receive a dancing skeleton, a scary ghoul, or a witch on a broom – hint hint.)

When asked about her personal childhood memories of Halloween, Deb laughs and says she can't remember a single one. Before her family bought and ran the Southfield Store when she was twelve, they lived on a farm and no one ever came calling for trick or treat. But whatever the reason for all those missed Halloweens, she's making up for it now, and kids can expect a fantastic party at the Meeting House this year.



Halloween party at Church Hall, 2014

photo by Melissa Zdziarski

To that end she has hired The Nutshell Playhouse to present a special adventure called *PIRATES*, which they describe as a “swash-buckling adventure featuring bold buccaneers, a mysterious map with a riddle, a cursed treasure, a visit to a secret island where lives a pirate ghost, and a magical journey to the bottom of the sea.” This bold tale features mime, music, masks, and

delightful puppets created by Clothespin Puppets. The performance features Berkshire County actors Alexia Trainor, Mark Hohlstein, and Chris Brophy, with live music by Don Jordan.

For refreshments, children can expect such goodies as “spooky eyes” cupcakes and a special Halloween ghoulish punch – recipe unknown at press time.

As if that isn't enough, the children of New Marlborough have another delightful adventure in store on Saturday, October 31. Following trick or treating in Southfield (which usually begins at 5:00 p.m. and ends at 7:00 p.m. as announced by the Board of Selectmen) Melissa Zdziarski, Cassie Keeley, and Jennie Percy are inviting children and their parents to “a magical Halloween enchanted forest” at the Church Hall in Southfield. As it can get crowded, residents without children are welcome to come see the enchanted forest

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illustration by Ann Getsinger

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the hour before trick or treating ends.

And now for memories of Halloweens past: Local artist Ann Getsinger recalls: "Back in the early nineties, when I'd only lived here a few years, the New Marlborough Village Association threw a Halloween party in the basement of the Meeting House. Everyone in town was invited. At that time the basement was more of a dank, dark cellar than the gallery it later became. Lots of people came wearing wonderful costumes, and there was music and dancing. (I particularly remember dancing with someone in a convincing gorilla costume.) The part I enjoyed the most was the late-night walk we all took in the cold night air down to the old cemetery. As we all approached the distinctive two old burial mounds in the pitch dark, mournful voices, groans, and howls rose up from behind some of the headstones. Sanjiban Sellew and his friends were behind that. (I'd guess Larry Burke and John McGinley were also part of it and I'd love to know who else.) It was good and scary, very impressive, and a ton of fun."

Other reminiscences from Gedney Farm innkeeper Leslie Miller – some of which seem to coincide with Ann's memory:

"One year, a group of locals (I particularly remember Sanjiban and John Sellew leading the charge) decided it would be fun to stage a Halloween walk down to the cemetery on Branch Road. A large group of parents and kids of varying ages took the walk, which I know seemed endless to the little ones. Once in the cemetery, several



Graveyard in front of Church Hall  
photo by Melissa Zdziarski

of the ancient tombstones came "alive" with haunting calls and eerie screeches. You couldn't really tell where the sounds were coming from, as they appeared to move around. A couple of the really little kids got pretty scared and wanted to go home. Needless to say, the return walk up the hill to Route 57 was done at a much faster pace!"

And as Leslie also recounts, "Finally, no memories of Halloween in New Marlborough would be complete without mention of the wonderful, warm, and generous parties that Karl and Marianne

Lipsky used to throw. It was an annual event that everyone looked forward to and they probably hosted these for twenty-plus years. Their cozy house was fully decorated in the most dramatic Halloween motif and what they served was legendary – Karl's famous Halloween punch, real food for all the kids (and their

parents) like mini hamburgers, sausages, spooky vegetables, hot chili, and endless desserts. They also held contests, skits and costume awards. It was always the PERFECT ending to every Halloween night of trick or treating. I truly miss Karl and Marianne, but the memories of their Halloween galas will live on with our kids for their entire lives." Let's hope that this Halloween of 2015 will create similar memories for the children and the townspeople of New Marlborough.

To recap, New Marlborough's Halloween begins on Friday, October 23, at 6:00 p.m. at the Meeting House – and ends on Halloween, October 31, at 7:00 p.m. at the Enchanted Forest in Southfield.

Start planning costumes now. And expect to see Librarian Deb in something that represents her status in New Marlborough as the "Queen of Halloween". She's been a pirate before – and perhaps will be a pirate again – but you'll have to see for yourselves what she is inspired to be this Halloween. □



The library is haunted at Halloween  
photo by Deb O'Brien



Rapt audience at library party, 2014  
photo by Deb O'Brien

## THE SHARING ECONOMY

### When it Makes Dollars and Sense to Cross Town Borders

by Joe Poindexter

If world economies are going global, why should New Marlborough keep going it alone?

A year ago, the Board of Selectmen, asking why indeed, began to investigate the concept of inter-town cooperation. In an exploratory meeting, Selectman Nat Yohalem and Sheffield Selectman David Smith and Town Administrator Rhonda LaBombard held what they called a Shared Services meeting and identified four targets of opportunity:

- ◆ Sharing equipment
- ◆ Sharing manpower
- ◆ Combined bidding
- ◆ Combined purchasing

Determined not to let these initiatives evaporate as just so many good intentions, they committed themselves to a regular monthly meeting, inviting representatives from surrounding towns – over the past year, Monterey, Mount Washington, Sandisfield, Otis, and Tyringham have sent people. This summer, the effort bore first fruit. New Marlborough and Sheffield agreed to the joint purchase of a \$120,000 mower that can trim uneven roadside terrain. The specialized equipment would have been a luxury for one town but is well suited for two. The purchase price and maintenance expenses of the machine – it's housed in New Marlborough – are split down the middle. The two Towns also submitted a joint bid for winter sand and salt, the idea being that greater volume would attract more competitive bid responses.

According to Mr. Yohalem, the same concept could apply to the combined purchase of, say, office supplies,

with the hope that bigger orders might result in deeper discounts. Sharing of manpower is somewhat trickier, since different towns have different employment policies. But one possibility could be the sharing of clerical help in the highway departments. "Every superintendent has said he could use help – maybe eight hours a week – with payroll, benefits, applying for Chapter 90 funds, and the like," says Mr. Yohalem.

A bit of serendipity led to another possible sharing of resources. To bolster a grant application to pay for the resurfacing of the Clayton Mill River Road, Mr. Yohalem approached Canaan First Selectman Doug Humes for a letter of support – the road is a main artery between the two towns. As the conversation was ending, Mr. Humes asked if New Marlborough needed a paver. Mr. Yohalem said yes and offered in trade the loan of a grader – along with someone to operate it. The details of that deal are still being worked out.

The Shared Services Committee continues to meet monthly. Invitations for the next meeting, October 20, have gone out to representatives of Tyringham, Monterey, Sandisfield, Canaan, Great Barrington, Egremont, Alford, and Mount Washington as well as Sheffield and New Marlborough. Those two are seeing an extra dividend. "It really has done a lot to bring the two towns together," says Mr. Yohalem. □



Side-road mower, co-owned by Sheffield and New Marlborough  
photo by Joe Poindexter

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## Town Business Is Your Business



### BOARD OF SELECTMEN

**August 31:** With all three selectmen present, the Board met with newly-appointed Solid Waste Coordinator Freddie Friedman to discuss ways to **improve safety and traffic flow at the transfer station.** The discussion was prompted by an accident that occurred there the previous week in which an SUV parked near the trash compactor backed up into a smaller car, shaking up an elderly passenger in the front seat. Also present for the discussion were Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring and transfer station attendant Alvin Stalker. As Selectman White noted, "There's a lot of backing up that goes on there, a lot of circling around and a lot of congestion. We need to make a plan to keep the flow of traffic moving," she said. "We understand the issues," Mr. Friedman responded, "Give us some time and we'll come back with a plan. We're going to test some ideas this coming weekend in terms of flow, but we're more concerned with safety than speed," he added. Among other changes being considered, he said, is the creation of a parking area "for those who want to chit-chat." He also mentioned the possibility of changing the transfer station's hours, adding that he expects to have all his recommendations ready for the Board's review by mid-October.

Separately, Selectman White noted **the Board is considering inaugurating a "bulky waste day"** at the transfer station for the disposal of large items like couches, chairs, and mattresses. She said she's already gotten pricing from Valley Roll-Off Dumpster Service for hauling the large items away: \$170 per haul and \$150 per ton, using either a 30- or 40-cubic-yard dumpster.

The Board voted to **award the paving contract for the Canaan Southfield Road to Tri-Town Paving of Lee, based on its low bid of \$180,168.** The contract also covers paving Sisson Hill Road South, which suffered heavy damage during last July's torrential rains. There were two other bidders for the job, LB Corporation, also of Lee, and Williams Paving of West Stockbridge.

Chairman Shalaby **summarized the five-year road repair plan** she and Highway Superintendent Loring have been working on. The approach they are taking, she explained, is to divide the town roads into four categories depending on their condition, and to come up with a cost estimate for fixing them. They will then match that total against all sources of funding available to the town over the next five fiscal years to include grants, Chapter 90 state funding, and the Highway Department budget, and then calculate the funding gap. Once that's done,

the Board will hold a joint meeting with the Finance Committee to discuss ways of funding the effort and put together a prioritized plan that can be presented to the voters at the Annual Town Meeting.

The Board reviewed and **approved a solicitation policy governing vendors who want to approach Town residents directly with their products and services.** The policy was drafted by Town Administrator Mari Enoch, with input from Police Chief Graham Frank. Among other things, it would require solicitors to register with the police department at least two days before approaching residents in their homes and to identify themselves with a picture ID provided by their employer.

Selectman Yohalem reported **on the Board's recent joint meeting with the Town's ad hoc broadband committee and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI).** Assuming the voters approve the plan, **MBI would do all the construction to wire the town, both public and private roads; the build-out would take approximately two-and-a-half years from the time the construction bond is approved.** "We had the option of doing just the public roads, but all of us felt we wanted every home in town to have the opportunity to get broadband if the owners wanted it," he explained. He said there are still unanswered questions MBI has to respond to: foremost among these is an accurate cost of the build-out. Once that's in hand, the Town can determine the amount of the bond, including financing and legal fees. He said the Town also needs an accurate per-foot cost from MBI for running fiber from the road to the home. The build-out will include the first 115 feet of driveway but beyond that the homeowner would have to pay, and that cost would be dependent on whether there are utility poles already in place or usable underground conduit. MBI promised answers to both questions by the middle of September.

Mr. Yohalem said MBI is willing to provide the town at no cost with a list of people it can contact for financial and legal advice in preparing the bond and will assist in selecting an operator, helping the town with the Request for Proposals (RFP) and evaluating the proposals. "While in the end it will be our decision," he said, "they will make a recommendation." He also said the town is looking at three potential system operators; Fiber Connect, which in addition to operating the system would give the town \$500,000 in exchange for a percentage ownership in the system; Crocker Communications, which did not offer funding in exchange for an ownership stake (and was more or less ruled out because of it); and WiredWest,

which as a cooperative, would own the system in the name of the twenty or thirty towns comprising the co-op, including New Marlborough. He concluded by saying that once the ad hoc committee receives answers to its questions, it should be in a position to go forward with a recommendation to the Board. The selectmen agreed that it also made sense for the Town to explore ways of collaborating with other towns going through the same process, particularly with regard to devising a common RFP and using the same legal and financial advisors to evaluate contract drafts and business plans. A letter to that effect will be going out from the Board to the other so-called underserved towns.

In a related update, Town Administrator Enoch noted for the record that the **Town has received a \$5,000 planning assistance grant from MBI that will be used for legal and financial consulting services for the broadband effort.**

Reporting on his most recent shared services meeting, Selectman Yohalem said the Towns of Sheffield and New Marlborough will be reaching out to other area towns about taking a stake in the \$120,000 mower jointly purchased by the two towns. He said letters will be sent to as many as nine nearby South County towns to determine their interest. He also said he's discussing an "in-kind" agreement with the town of Canaan, Connecticut, to trade use of their paver in exchange for access to New Marlborough's grader. (For more on the shared services effort, see *The Sharing Economy* on page 3).

**September 9:** The Board held a special Wednesday morning meeting to **set its goals for the 2016 fiscal year.** The meeting was convened at 10:00 a.m. with all three selectmen present. Working from a list put together by Chairman Shalaby, the Board agreed on six goals, as follows:

- Finish filling Town Hall positions and appointing backup staff for each position. This, Ms. Shalaby noted, is basically complete, with the exception of appointing a backup for Town Accountant Tara White's position.

- Finish and adopt revisions to the Town's personnel policies, an effort that was begun last November with the appointment of a personnel policy committee headed by Owen Hoberman. The committee produced a draft in April and has made revisions since, but the revised policies have never been reviewed and adopted by the Board. As Ms. Shalaby has previously noted, "This is something that feels like it keeps getting pushed back and forth."
- Clarify roles of Town employees, including the drafting of job descriptions for each position.
- Codify, by putting into writing financial policies and procedures. This the Board will do at a joint meeting with the Finance Committee, at a date that has not yet been set.
- Develop a broadband direction for the Town, including determining the amount of the bond that will be needed for the build-out and selecting a system operator so a complete package can be presented to the voters at a Special Town Meeting to be held in the spring.
- Complete the five-year road repair plan and present it to the voters at the Annual Town Meeting.

**September 15:** With all three selectmen present, the first order of business was to approve the minutes from the meetings held on August 3, 17, and 31. The Board then convened a utility pole hearing with National Grid, which was seeking approval to install what is known as a stub pole on the Hartsville New Marlborough Road near Adsit Crosby Road to provide support to a utility pole that's currently cabled to a tree that's dying. By unanimous vote, the Board approved the request.

With Highway Superintendent Loring's blessing, the Board **awarded the winter materials contract for washed sand to Joe Wilkinson Excavating.** The contract had been held up because of supply concerns stemming from last winter when the Wilkinson firm ran out of sand and the Town had to buy additional sand from J. Donovan & Son. But Mr. Loring said he was confident Wilkinson has resolved its supply issues and will be able to meet

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the Town's needs. In addition, Mr. Wilkinson has agreed to reimburse the Town for cost over-runs associated with the Donovan purchase. The contract price for this year's sand is \$9.50 per ton, or \$12 per ton delivered.

Mr. Loring also gave an update on the Clayton Mill River Road culvert project, which he said is not going to happen this year as originally planned. He said Stantec Consulting Services, the engineering firm on the project, was so late in completing the engineering design that it's unlikely the work can be completed before winter sets in. The project has had a checkered history. The engineering contract was awarded in the summer of 2013, with the expectation that work would begin in 2014. But unanticipated permitting issues, along with several staffing changes at Stantec, contributed to delaying the project until this year. The plan now, according to Mr. Loring, is to rebid the job in March and hopefully complete the work next summer. Said Selectman White, "This is extremely disappointing."

In other disappointing bridge news, Mr. Loring said **work to replace the Hadsell Street bridge appears to have been put off for yet another year** and won't be started until 2017. The bridge, which was closed in 2011 and is on the state's so-called accelerated bridge replacement list, was originally set to be replaced this year. Stantec is the engineering consultant for that project, too.

The Board authorized the Highway Department to hire a full-time temporary employee to fill in for an employee who has been out on leave since the first week in July and is not expected back until November.

Selectman White distributed to the Board a **draft of a letter she wrote in response to the home rule petition introduced in the Massachusetts State House by Representative William (Smitty) Pignatelli giving Lee the right to levy a 3 cent-a-gallon tax on gasoline sold in the town, the revenue from which would be used to repair the town's roads and bridges.** Lee, which currently has six gas stations plus two on the Massachusetts Turnpike, would not be the only town to

benefit. Representative Pignatelli is also sponsoring a bill to extend the local gas tax provision to all 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth. As Ms. White says in her draft, which is addressed not only to Mr. Pignatelli, but also to State Senator Ben Downing who co-sponsored the bill, Governor Charlie Baker, and other notable state office holders, "While this is certainly a great way for cities and towns to generate much-needed revenue for the repair of roads and bridges, it doesn't help those towns that do not have any gas stations," and goes on to point out that New Marlborough, while not having any gas stations, does have eighty-nine miles of roads, twenty-three bridges, and no state roads; the Chapter 90 state funding it receives "will never keep up with the escalating cost of roadwork and bridge repairs." In discussing the draft with the Board, Ms. White said that if Lee implements a gas tax it will have "a snowball effect on other towns that have gas stations because they'll all see it as a way of financing their infrastructure, too, while we end up paying maybe 3 cents more a gallon for our gas in Great Barrington without getting any benefit." Said Mr. Yohalem, "I think it's a terrific letter; you did a very good job, but I would make one change, and that is to add a sentence at the end saying, "Therefore we ask that you increase our Chapter 90 funding in the current and future years."

The Board received a letter dated September 3, 2015, from Board of Assessors Chairman Marsha Pshenishny saying **the assessors' stipends are being allocated incorrectly.** According to the letter, which was also signed by Assessor Wendy Miller, the chairman should be receiving \$2,200.44, while the other two members should be getting \$1,899.78. "The way it was allocated this year I took a pay cut of \$200.44," Ms. Pshenishny writes, "and the other two members got a raise." And indeed, in previous years the chair apparently has been given a slightly higher amount than the other two members of the board. However, as Town Administrator Mari Enoch pointed out, the voters approved stipends of \$2,000 for each assessor at last May's Annual Meeting, and according to Massachusetts General Law the only way to change it would be by a two-thirds vote at a special town meeting. "The law is pretty clear," agreed Mr. Yohalem, "the Town cannot pay different amounts than the amounts allocated in the warrant." So instead, he suggested the assessors work it out among themselves. "They each get the \$2,000, and if two of them feel they are overcompensated then they can remit \$100 each to the chair. I don't see any other way."

Finally before adjourning, the Board approved a one-day liquor license for La Cantina 229 restaurant for a private party to be held on Saturday, September 25. □

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## THE VIEW FROM THE BOARD

A monthly column from the chairman of the Board of Selectmen on concerns and issues the Board would like to share with the town.

There has been quite a bit of anxiety, interest, and even frustration about the status of a broadband effort. Most questions are: What do you think is going to happen? When will we decide? What do you think we should do? While the Board and Finance Committee may eventually develop opinions on the effort, we see an obligation to be informed, thorough, inclusive, and diligent.

As a Board, we have decided the following:

- Being an issue of complexity, involving an unprecedented amount of money (\$3.4 million) in an industry New Marlborough has never explored, we believe that this decision is deserving of a Special Town Meeting, rather than being handled at the Annual Town Meeting. A focused meeting will give us time to present a plan, deliberate, and vote.
- The Board has an obligation to demonstrate a reasonable due diligence effort. As voting citizens decide whether or not to pursue a fiber network, they should have a plan before them. A Special Town Meeting will therefore not be held until we have designated what will be done with a fiber network. The two major decisions to make are: 1) who will build a network and 2) who will operate it.
- Because there are no other interested parties and government funding is tied to the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, MBI is the obvious choice to manage construction of a network (i.e. build it via contractors).
- The process by which we select an operator will be done by way of formal requests for proposals (RFPs).
- Before the Special Town Meeting, with legal counsel and a financial advisor, we will have in place the basic terms of contracts (term sheets) with a designated operator and builder.

- We will avoid having a Special Town Meeting during the winter months when the weather may make it difficult for some citizens to attend.
- The MBI has granted us \$5,000 to use toward expertise in this process. Most of the funding is likely to be used for legal advice on contracts.
- We will be contacting other towns to determine where we might gain efficiency and knowledge through cooperation. The cost of the legal and financial advice is estimated at \$50,000. We received a grant of \$5,000 for this purpose and believe we can substantially reduce the balance by sharing it with other towns.

While the Board of Selectmen is obligated to choose a builder and an operator, it is up to our voting citizens decide whether the project is in the best interest of New Marlborough. A two-thirds vote will be needed for approval. This is an issue for our legislative body (voters at Town Meeting). Because this is an issue that directly and personally affects us all, please do your part as a member of our legislative body: get informed and participate! We hope to see you at the Special Town Meeting and hear from you in the meantime. □

Michele Shalaby, Chairman, Board of Selectmen

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## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

**August 29:** Commission members Ned Wilson and John Schreiber convened the meeting.

Mike Parsons of Kelly, Granger, and Parsons addressed the Commission on behalf of his client, Victor Mulholland of 123 Bock Way on Lake Buel. The permit, a Request for Determination (RDA), was for upgrading the existing subsurface septic system, including replacing a cesspool. The Commission recalled that three anonymous complaints to the Commission, noting the unpermitted removal of three mature oak trees, were for activity taken on this property. The Commission agreed that the septic work, while in the buffer zone to the lake, would not alter the resource. The permit was approved with conditions for mitigating the felled trees requiring replacement with three oaks and three white pines.

Next up was Robert Beusman of 813 Canaan Southfield

Road proposing an RDA for the removal of three mature white pines near a building on his property. Before any discussion got started, the Commission agreed to a request to extend the hearing until next month when the Commission will have received comments from the Department of Environmental Protection on the activity.

With the formal agenda taken care of, the Commission reviewed the mail and approved the minutes for last month's meeting with a few minor edits. It was noted that the Order of Conditions for Notices of Intent for both Warner Stuckey and Roman Kropp had been recorded at the Registry of Deeds. Finally, a Forest Cutting Plan for the Norfolk Nominee Trust on 1584 Norfolk Road was received.

The next meeting was scheduled for September 26. □

Martha Bryan

## PROTECTIVE BY-LAW CLARIFICATION:

### *Grandfathered Property Uses*

The Planning Board has been reviewing the Town's existing Protective By-Laws (adopted in 1966) and the proposed revision to the Protective By-laws that failed to pass at a Special Town Meeting in 2013. One part of the proposal that many opposed was not new. These are the regulations frequently spoken of as "grandfather" clauses.

These are provisions intended to protect property owners' rights concerning the use of their property. Strangely, the term had a more ominous origin around the right to vote. Shortly after the Civil War ended, a number of southern states, finding they could not pass a law prohibiting "blacks" the vote because of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, did pass laws that indicated that only if your grandfather voted before the amendment (1867), then you could vote. Quite obviously, few, if any, "black grandfathers" had voted.

Fortunately, times changed and the term acquired a new and beneficent meaning. In our Protective By-laws, for as long as an established use of a property is continued, it can be conveyed to a relative or other prospective owner. If a use is changed, or abandoned for more than two years, this "grandfathered" by-right use is lost. However, by appealing to the Board of Selectmen for a special permit, it can be reinstated.

The intent of this regulation is to protect the right to continuity of enterprise without undue oversight by Town government. Since the grandfather clauses were part of our Protective By-laws, unchanged in the revision, the "nay" vote on the revisions did not alter them. They can still be found in section 3.5, subsections 1 through 4, of our existing Protective By-laws. □

Charlie Parton, member, Planning Board

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# GRAVE MESSAGES

While some of the verses are reassuring:

*His mind was tranquil and serene  
No horror in his looks were seen  
The Savior's smile dispelled the gloom  
And smoothed his passage to his tomb*

Others are more than a bit gloomy:

*Alas, reality, how sad the tale  
When told the listening ear  
That all that's dear or youthful must  
With death oblivion share*

And still others a not so subtle reminder of mortality:

*Behold my friend as you pass by  
I'm here in dust as you must lie  
As I am now so you must be  
Prepare for death & follow me*

One by one, these mournful quatrains are emerging from the grime and lichen-covered past, as volunteers apply elbow grease and specially-formulated detergent to the headstones of our town's oldest burying ground, the New Marlborough Village Cemetery. Now in its third year, a project to arrest the decline of 18th and 19th century headstones is showing results.

After two years working side by side with a team of professional



Photo by Ari Korpiwara



David Hosford shows off his handiwork. photos by Joe Poindexter



Liam, Nan, and Charlotte Smith tackle centuries of grime.

conservators, the New Marlborough Historical Society struck out on its own. In late August and then again in mid-September, volunteers – under the stewardship of Society Vice President John Schreiber and with a generous assist from Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring, who provided a large container of water – scrubbed down more than a dozen stones, revealing not only the messages above but also the expressive handiwork of the stone carvers of the day. Stones once encrusted with lichen, mildew, and dust now gleam marble white or slate black on a hillside of the New Marlborough Village Cemetery. Visitors to the cemetery will experience the thrill of the past redeemed.

The Historical Society will hold two or three cemetery restoration days next year. □

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## GEDNEY FARM

### *A Tale of Serendipity and Hard Work*

By Barry R. Shapiro

*This is the third in an occasional series about the landmark buildings in New Marlborough and the people who make them special.*

On a lonely, windy, and frigid night last winter, New Marlborough residents Eugene and Maria Cleary stepped out of the dark, desolate Gedney Farm parking lot and into the reception area of the Farm's restaurant. As is so often the case in midwinter, the roads on the drive over were deserted. They looked around at the warmly lit room, took in the scent of well-prepared food and listened to the murmur of contented voices from the crowded dining room. Maria smiled, turned to Eugene and said, "So this is where everyone is!"

The story of how the husband-and-wife team of Brad Wagstaff and Leslie Miller came to own the Farm and transform some dilapidated buildings into a community gathering place, renowned wedding destination, highly rated inn and restaurant, and active farmers' market is more serendipitous than most may realize.

Let's start with Captain John Gedney who, as far as we can tell, never lived in the Berkshires and certainly never owned the farm here that bears his family name. Born in 1695, Gedney, a sea captain and loyalist to the British crown during the Revolutionary War, resided, along with a large clan of Gedneys, in what is now Westchester, New York. The family's expansive property holdings ranged from Mamaroneck to White Plains. (One can still find sites bearing the Gedney name today.) A 116-acre Westchester farm, which John Gedney bought for 400 pounds, still bore his name when it was purchased from his heirs by New Marlborough resident Howard Willets in the late 19th century.

In 1905, Howard Willets, apparently enjoying the ownership of farms, decided to purchase the New Marlborough farm that today bears the Gedney name. The farm was owned by the Daley family which had operated it since 1875; it was known then and to some longtime residents is still known as the "Daley place."

After purchasing the farm, Willets constructed the two historic, Normandy-style barns which today constitute the inn and banquet rooms, respectively. Today's inn (located on the right as you drive into the property) was the dairy barn housing registered Jersey cattle; the banquet

room and restaurant building (located on the left) was the horse barn, housing giant Percheron stallions. The horse stalls can still be seen in the restaurant. "These buildings were built in the grand style," said Brad. "The gambrel roof on each was slate, all corners in the cupolas were mitered and it was quite expensive to build." The farm remained in the Willets family until 1940 when it was repurchased by the Daley family.

Jump ahead to 1980. Brad and Leslie are operating the Old Inn on the Green, just down the road from the farm. One day, out for a walk, they decided, on little

more than a whim, to purchase the farm, then owned by the Knudsen family. "The purchase was definitely serendipitous," said Leslie. "We weren't sure what we were going to do with it."

Brad, who remarked that he had "always wanted a farm," managed to obtain a loan from the Federal Land Bank and purchased the 120-acre farm for \$160,000. The loan terms, however, stipulated that he "must milk cows," something about which Brad knew nothing. Not dissuaded, Brad went to work for Henry Eggenberger at his dairy

farm on Brewer Hill Road to get some training in the basics of dairy farming. Some months later, feeling that he was ready, Brad bought Henry's herd and went into the dairy business, a venture which lasted for only six or seven years when the financial exigencies of farming made it impossible to continue.

"I was very sorry to see the farm close," said Leslie. "Brad had worked very hard at it. All of the milk was used at the Old Inn which I was running while Brad ran the farm. We also raised sheep at the farm which we served at the Inn. It was unfortunate that we couldn't keep it going."

With the farm closed, Brad and Leslie needed to figure out what to do with it. The Old Inn was doing so well that their decision was almost made for them: they decided to expand their hospitality business by converting the dairy barn into an inn. The project was mammoth.

"The barn has over 5,000 square feet and had been used solely by forty-eight cows. Taking that amount of space and turning it into an attractive inn was daunting," said Brad. "We turned to Bob Swain, a Boston-based architect specializing in the renovation of large spaces



Brad Wagstaff and Leslie Miller

photo by Barry R. Shapiro

like this, and in ten minutes he came up with some wonderful designs which achieved our objectives. Bob's designs integrate the most distinctive stylistic elements and architectural features of two different eras. We've preserved the original architectural features of the barn with wonderful contemporary interior space."

"We wanted people to have the feeling of being in a barn and still have lovely accommodations," added Leslie. "We know we succeeded. Happily, when we renovated the barn, we were able to preserve all of the original framing, much of which is visible from the guest rooms."

In 1989, the inn at Gedney Farm welcomed its first guests to its sixteen guest rooms, tastefully painted with classic milk paint colors picked by Leslie along with Pam Hardcastle and Cynthia Atwood. The trio also collaborated on decorating and furnishing the guest rooms, all of which are different from each other. Barn beams remain visible in the halls and even through some windows

in the upstairs guest bathrooms, just as Brad and Leslie had hoped. Artifacts, like the stanchions to hold cows' heads while being milked, can be found in the halls. The closet rods are the reclaimed pipeline which used to carry the milk. "We used as many original elements as possible," Leslie noted proudly.

Brad and Leslie had no plans to do anything with the old horse barn adjacent to the newly renovated inn. The barn, however, was in such a state of disrepair that a risk manager for the farm's insurance company, who visited the place shortly after the inn renovation was completed, gave Brad and Leslie an ultimatum: either fix up the horse barn, or take it down, or face cancellation of their liability policy.

"This was the last thing we needed," commented Brad. "We had just sunk most of our money into the dairy barn renovation, we were tired and starting another renovation was not what we planned to do at that point."

It was then that serendipitous fate once again intervened. A woman out for a drive in the country saw

the dilapidated barn. She pulled in, introduced herself to Brad, asked to see the barn and told Brad on the spot that she wanted to have her daughter's wedding there. Brad was stunned but took a deposit check (which he agreed not to cash) and told her he would have to figure out if he could accommodate her. One week later, the identical thing happened. Another woman driving by saw the

barn, stopped Brad, insisted on having her daughter's wedding there and pressed another deposit check into Brad's hands. Interestingly one woman wanted the barn cleaned up a bit; the other seemed fine with the way it was.

"I was astounded," said Brad. "The barn was a huge mess. There were no horses there but there was, shall I say, their 'residue.' I turned to Leslie and said, 'I think we're in the wedding business.' Bob Swain

came back, we started on the renovation, and the rest, as they say, is history."

Today, twenty-five years later, the Farm has hosted almost 700 weddings, with a record forty-one weddings held or to be held in 2015. "Weddings are a major source of revenue for us and we are thrilled with the success we've had and the many happy couples who have been married here," said Leslie. "Brides

can take the raw canvas of the dining rooms and create whatever they want. We love working with them. In season, their guests fill our Inn most weekends with overflow at the Old Inn, the Red Lion or at motels in the Great Barrington area."

Three years ago, seeing a need and desiring to keep their employees busy and the site active during the winter months, Brad and Leslie opened the popular restaurant into which Eugene and Maria Cleary stepped on that cold winter night.

"We are so grateful to the community for their support of the restaurant," said Leslie. "It's attracted lots of local interest and

it's great to keep our wonderful staff employed and the building open, lit, and alive year-round. We're very proud of the work which our chef, Rob Brunell, and sous chef,



Top: Entrance with party barn on left and inn on right

Center: Dining room which incorporates the horse stalls from the original barn

Lower: Framing in the catering barn photos by Barry R. Shapiro

Evan Valente, have done. They have taken our cuisine to a whole new level with great quality and use lots of local ingredients, which is very important to us.”

As many locals know, the Farm now features a popular farmers’ market on Friday evenings, with many of the patrons settling on the Farm’s patio to enjoy cocktails and hors d’oeuvres from the newly constructed Argentinian grill, which Brad and Leslie added just this year.

“We are thrilled with the reception that the market and grill have received and we’re very proud of James Love, our dining room manager, for the amazing work he has done in his other capacity of grounds manager,” said Leslie. “Our grounds, which keep getting more and more beautiful, reflect his vision.”

Both Brad and Leslie were also effusive in their praise of Mike Smith who has been with them as general manager for twenty-eight years. “Mike was hired when we were first framing the dairy barn,” said Brad.

“There is nothing that Mike can’t handle and we are so fortunate to have him with us. We’d be lost without him. He’s been here so long that he recently gave a tour to the recently engaged daughter of a couple who were themselves married here years ago and who was considering have her own wedding here!”

The Farm is also a major employer in town. In the height of the season, the Farm has forty-five employees with a staff of six employed full time year round.

Brad, a Detroit native, and Leslie, who grew up in New York City, live in the yellow farm house to the left of the driveway leading into the Farm with their dog, Clark.



They are very proud of what they have built. “We took two derelict buildings, a real eyesore from the road, and have made them into something very special,” said Brad.

“We love everything about what we do and everything about our lives here,” said Leslie. “We’ve hosted so many wonderful local people and visitors, including such diverse names as the Icelandic singer, Bjork, Caroline Kennedy, and Meryl Streep, who attended Bill Crofut’s

1999 memorial service along with about 400 other people, the largest crowd we ever had here. We consider ourselves very lucky.”

The couple, married in 1980, have two children, Laura, age 31, who lives in New York City and, following in her parents’ footsteps, is in the hospitality business working for the NoMad Hotel, and James, age 30, who is in the energy business and now studying for his MBA at Wharton.

And how did the farm come to be called Gedney Farm when Gedney had no

connection to New Marlborough other than the fact that Willets who owned the land also owned the White Plains-based Gedney Farm? “Simple,” said Brad. “Leslie and I were quite close to descendants of the Willets family, including Granny Willets. We liked the connection which Howard Willets had to New Marlborough and the Westchester Gedney Farm. I also liked the name ‘Gedney’ so I named our place Gedney Farm. Simple as that.”

Simple it may be, but the name is now synonymous with a highly popular destination in our town, a destination which became what it is largely as a result of chance and the hard work of its owners. □

## A REQUEST FROM THE HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT

Leaves and grass cuttings make for good compost but bad road drainage. So during your fall cleanup, pile your yard debris in an out-of-the-way spot for next year’s gardening. Leaves and lawn debris blown into the road clog ditches, culverts, and catch basins. This causes pooling and wash-outs and a lot of extra work for the

highway crew. If you take care of your leaves, we can do a better job of taking care of your roads. Thanks for your cooperation – and thanks for passing the word to your neighbors and whoever may be helping with their fall cleanup. □

*Chuck Loring*

## SNOWBIRD ALERT!

Southfield postal customers recently received a note from Postal Clerk Kelly Hall. Part of her note is relevant to many readers of the NM5VN, wherever you get your mail, and deserves to be stressed here. If you are going away this winter, say to Florida or Arizona to escape our northeastern weather, please let us know so that we can temporarily change your mailing address. Because we are a non-profit organization and are treated to a lower postage rate by the United States Postal Service, the 5VN is not forwardable. And not only will

you not receive the paper, but we will be charged an additional \$.59 per issue that the post office won’t deliver. So everybody loses except the Postal Service. You lose the paper. We lose some cash.

You can reach us easily at 413-229-2369, or drop a note to P.O. Box 243, Southfield, MA, 01259, or email us at [deeuell@yahoo.com](mailto:deeuell@yahoo.com). Let us know when you’re leaving, what your temporary/winter address will be, and, if possible, when you expect to return. Thank you. And have a warm winter! □

## OPENING OF NEW MARLBOROUGH ARTISTS ON DISPLAY

The annual New Marlborough Artists show at the Meeting House Gallery in New Marlborough opened on August 28. The show will continue until October 4; gallery hours are 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. □



photos by Larry Burke

Above: Sheila Baird peruses Hope Schreiber's amazing photos of bats. Left: Peter Steinglass (left) and Walter Simons, posing with Walter's painting that Peter has just purchased.



## NEWS FROM THE LAND TRUST

Land Trust volunteers have continued the work of the four browsing goats clearing the Crosby and Robbins Paper Mill site in Mill River. Meeting weekly and equipped with various hand tools – shovels,

mattocks, loppers, clippers, and the miraculous weed wrench – volunteers are set on ridding the site of barberry, multiflora rose, and other unwanted plant growth. Persistence has paid off as the foundation of the once-active paper mill has emerged. Plans continue to develop about the future use of the site; determined so far is that the stone ruins are miraculous, testament to the tenacity shown by mill builders of one hundred and seventy years ago. Plans are in the making for how best to make the history accessible to the public and the landscape inviting to the community. □



On a spectacular early fall day at the Dry Hill lookout Land Trust hikers look for migrating hawks with the assistance of Rene Wendell of the Trustees of Reservations.

photos by Martha Bryan



Site clearing continues to reveal the ruins of the Crosby and Robbins Mill on the Konkapot River.

Martha Bryan

### Church Social Scheduled

Our Lady of the Valley Parish, 99 Maple Ave in Sheffield, will be hosting a wine and beer tasting social on Sunday afternoon, October 25 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Parish Hall in Sheffield. Please join us for a fun and relaxing afternoon to sample local wines and beer, along with delicious appetizers, desserts, coffee, and tea. An admission donation of \$15 is suggested.

## UPCOMING: Events Calendar for October and November

**October 3: Award-Winning Authors**, Simon Winchester asks ex-patriates Madhur Jaffrey (from India), and Peter Godwin (from Zimbabwe) "Why America?" 4:30 p.m. at the Meeting House, \$15, \$10 to members of the Village Association; a book-signing and reception with the authors follows.

**October 4: History Hike at Questing**, 10:00 a.m. to noon, a mile-and-a-half exploration of a pre-Colonial settlement on Leffingwell Hill with John Schreiber, sponsored by the New Marlborough Land Trust; the Trustees of Reservations property is located 0.6 of a mile south of Route 57 on New Marlborough Hill Road; register at [nmlandtrust@gmail.com](mailto:nmlandtrust@gmail.com) or by calling 229-8633

**October 10: Make Your Own Scarecrow**, 1:00 p.m. at the New Marlborough Public Library — and bring your own scare-clothing

**October 15: Cultural Council grant application deadline** — If your organization serves a worthy local cause, the New Marlborough Cultural Council may want to help; find an application at [www.mass-culture.org](http://www.mass-culture.org) or at the New Marlborough Public Library

**October 23: Halloween Party**, at the witching hour of 6:00 p.m. at the New Marlborough Meeting House; show off your Halloween costume and enjoy a performance of *PIRATES* by the Nutshell Playhouse

**October 25: Wine and beer tasting social** at Our Lady of the Valley Parish Hall, 99 Maple Avenue, Sheffield, 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Suggested donation \$15.

**October 31: Halloween Party** at the Southfield Church Hall at 7:00 p.m., at the conclusion of trick-or-treating. Come to see the enchanted forest; those without children are welcome to come before 7:00 to enjoy it – it gets crowded.

**November 21: Pre-Thanksgiving Pie-sale**, 10:00 a.m. at the New Marlborough Public Library; take home a pie and help support the library

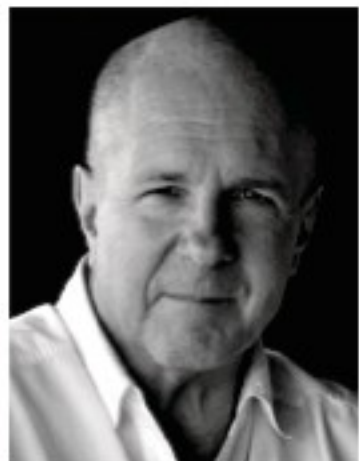
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### **October 3 Award-Winning Authors: Why America?** with host Simon Winchester

*Madhur Jaffrey (from India)  
and Peter Godwin (from Zimbabwe)*  
discuss the reasons they have chosen to settle and  
write thousands of miles from their homeland, in the  
United States. A stimulating and intriguing afternoon in  
the company of these remarkable people.

*A reception and book signing follows in the Meeting House Gallery*

**FOR TICKETS & INFORMATION: [www.newmarlborough.org](http://www.newmarlborough.org)**

**(413) 229-2785**

## TO HOLD A HUMMINGBIRD

By Barry R. Shapiro

Sometimes the most extraordinary events occur at the most ordinary moments.

At about 4:00 p.m. a few weeks ago I pulled the car into the garage, completing my pickup of the grandkids from their more or less daily summertime activities during their visit with us. Clara and Gabe ran into the house to greet Margie and grab some afternoon snacks. I carried their backpacks into the house and returned to the garage to investigate a loud buzzing noise which I had heard near the garage window when I got out of the car.

It took only a moment to spot the very confused, scared, and exhausted hummingbird that was the source of the noise. The distressed bird had no doubt entered the garage through the open garage door and was now desperately trying to escape through the closed window, its wings a blur as it threw its tiny body repeatedly at the glass while ignoring the wide open garage door just feet away.

I tried once or twice without success to gently shoo it away from the glass with some folded pages of an old newspaper, very concerned that I would inadvertently harm its delicate little body and have to live with the terrible consequences. Before I could consider another way of encouraging it to fly out the open door, it suddenly collapsed onto the window sill, its right wing extended upwards and its left wing folded under it. I cringed, as I feared that I might have broken its wing. I very slowly began to put my hand around it, but it eluded my tentative grasp, flew up, and once again attacked the glass. It did so, however, for only a moment before it again collapsed, this time becoming ensnared in a small spider web in the upper corner of the window.

And, incredibly, there it hung. One tiny bird, its right wing hanging above it, caught in the web as if it were weightless. Forlorn, immobile, and totally spent.

This was my chance. As if grasping the most expensive

and fragile Fabergé egg, I carefully closed my right hand around the unmoving bird. It was like grasping nothing – nothing but air and spirit. It did not struggle or even move as I pulled it free from the web. We looked at each other and I whispered some words to reassure it.

I really can't remember what I said. The little bird didn't move and stared back at me.

I held the bird in front of me and walked out, facing west, the late afternoon sun in my face. I thought of calling the grandkids to see the miracle of a hummingbird in Gramps' hand but decided not to do so for two reasons. First, I didn't know what would happen when I released it (not a good idea to have two young grandkids see it fall to the ground, unable to fly) and, second, I figured the faster the bird could fly away, the happier it would be.

I held my breath and opened my hand, making an oh-so-gentle tossing motion and praying that the bird would zoom away. It was not as if I had much experience capturing and releasing hummingbirds.

It dropped straight down.

But only for a moment. Then, as if some internal engine had fired, its little wings began a blurred frenzy of activity. It hung in the air for a fraction of a second and flew away as if nothing had happened to it.

There I stood, relieved that our encounter had ended with the bird apparently unharmed, and euphoric that I had experienced what is probably a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to commune with and provide help to a woodland sprite that most of us witness only in its gymnastic flights through our backyards.

I change the food in the hummingbird feeder a little more frequently now, and clean it more often. I also look at the daily display of dive-bombing hummingbirds at our feeder very differently. One of them, I know, is the little bird that I held, and who has in turn changed something in me in ways I still can't quite grasp. □



photo by Barry R. Shapiro

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# AMAZING AND BEAUTIFUL...

## But more than "footprints"

By Scottie Mills

Anyone who has visited Umpachene Falls lately will have seen the amazing rock-balancing sculptures that have been appearing in growing numbers. Having not witnessed their construction, I can only imagine the time, patience, and imagination it required to create such masterpieces. However, the sign says "please help the park... taking nothing but pictures and leaving nothing but footprints."



When I look at the falls now, I have a visceral reaction to the idea that the natural beauty, which I have loved all my life, is gone.



I have been going to Umpachene for more than sixty years! When I was young, before it was public land, my grandmother ("Nana" Sellew) would take us there for picnics because she knew the owners. Later on I would go with boyfriends, then with my children, then with my grandchildren and many others. I am so grateful to the Town of New Marlborough for keeping the park beautiful and accessible. I remember when there was a custodian who checked to see if you were really a resident of the town before you could use the park. Now the Park Commission is less visible but still does a wonderful job in keeping the place lovely for all to enjoy.



Umpachene Falls has always been part of my life. We have fished the same pools for minnows and crayfish, sent boats (sticks and pinecones) happily down to the sea, slid down rocks until we wore holes in the backsides of our bathing suits, had each new generation "initiated" by daring to go under and behind the lower falls. I

have often gone down there after storms to see the torrential swollen streams and see what changes nature has made: new patterns, new flotsam, new piles of rocks and logs. In the winter the ever-changing ice formations are truly awe-inspiring. Umpachene is nature at her best!

This spring I went with my extended family on a river trip in Canyonlands National Park wilderness in Utah. It was a "leave no trace" trip which entailed not leaving the obvious but also not even leaving charcoal from fires, our own human waste, or even the smallest cookie crumbs. One of our friends loved rock-balancing. He built an amazing tower. We took many dramatic photos at different times of day. When we were leaving camp he reluctantly but dutifully disassembled the sculpture and gently placed the rocks back in their natural state.

Amen.  
Umpachene Falls...  
leave no trace?



photos by Scottie Mills

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## OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

*Editor's Note: With Jon Swan's retirement from the job of putting this page together, Larry Burke herein takes on the pleasant task of presenting the observations of our readers on the comings and goings of our feathered and four-legged friends. He kicks off this month's page by presenting the comments of a frequent past contributor... himself.*

**Larry Burke** of South Sandisfield Road writes: "In the wee hours of this morning, September 17, our sleep was shattered by the banshee sounds of a pack of **coyotes**, probably within fifty feet of our window. Their intense shrieking carried on for nearly two minutes, gradually receding into the distance as the critters carried their hysterics off into the field below the house. This time of year the coyotes come right up into the yard, even in full daylight, to dine on the fallen apples and pears, leaving their fruit-filled calling cards all over, and driving our two dogs slightly crazy.

"While I have no recent photos to support my claims, we have had an impressive inventory of winged and furry creatures through August and into September. Most mornings I am awakened by two **crows**, one of whom says, "Caw caw caw caw." The other responds, "Caaaw, caaaw, caaaw." This conversation can go on for some time. One morning recently however, the crows were beaten to the punch by the lovely clacking, rattling call of a **sandhill crane** soaring over the house. Earlier in July we had seen a pair of cranes foraging in the field to the north of the house, but I could not get close enough to take a decent photograph. Other sightings include three juvenile hawks, probably **red-shouldered hawks**, which have been chasing each other around the property for the last two weeks, alighting on fence posts and swooping from tree branch to tree branch. Our flock of young chickens is justifiably nervous. There have been what seems to be an unusual number of **barred owls** hooting away at night. A multigenerational family of around thirty **wild turkeys** is seen making its rounds almost every day. A crowd of fledgling **yellow-bellied sapsuckers** is busily drilling away on already-well-perforated tree trunks. Several pairs of what appear to be **green-winged teal** have been enjoying the pond weeds, as has a very large **beaver** which is fond of the pond lily flower buds. The **ruby-throated hummingbirds** are enjoying a bumper crop of jewel weed. All in all, the non-humans up our way are having a great late summer, it seems."



photo by Don Beauchamp



photo by Don Beauchamp



**Don Beauchamp** reports in from Clayton: "On August 24, a small **white-tailed deer** crossed our yard, taking his time. He had five-inch spikes. On September 2, a **rock pigeon** landed on the back of my pickup and seemed in no hurry to leave. On September 6, a **dragon fly** landed on the stem of a day lily, at one point flying right up in my face before returning to the stem. The seedpod was gone, so maybe he was resting."

**Liz Goodman**, also from the Clayton section of town, has seen on a number of occasions, a large **snapping turtle**: "She comes out of the pond, makes her way onto the lawn, grabs an apple, and takes it back into the pond."

**Ed Harvey** came upon another apple eater, this time a **porcupine** perched contentedly in a wild apple tree, 'sitting in the catbird seat,' as Red Barber used to say. Porcupines can be pretty darned cute to observe and to listen to... from a distance, that is.

**Michele Shalaby** sent along this photo of the family pooch, Minnie, taken two years ago – a cautionary tale to those of us who venture too close to Mr. Quill Pig. Michelle writes, "This was Minnie's third attack on a porcupine, and it was the most aggressive one. The veterinarian spent hours removing hundreds of quills from her face, inside her mouth, in her nostrils, and on her front paws. The next day, when we brought her home from the vet, she looked as if nothing had happened! She never did learn but after this attack she physically declined of old age and is no longer with us." Rest in peace, Millie.

Compiled by Larry Burke, lburke2@me.com



photo by Ed Harvey



photo by Michele Shalaby

## THE LOG

### POLICE DEPARTMENT (SELECTED ENTRIES)

- Aug. 3 6:04 p.m. Hotchkiss Road resident reports that an apparently intoxicated driver from Sandisfield, having, in a fit of pique, thrown his car keys into the woods, has asked for assistance in finding his keys; the keys cannot be found, the car is towed, and the driver is given "courtesy transport" to his residence
- 7:40 p.m. Driver reports a tree limb on power lines on Route 57; National Grid notified
- Aug. 4 8:59 a.m. Hayes Hill Road resident reports his suspicion, based on a rear window screen that appeared to have been tampered with, that a neighbor's house had been burgled
- 2:19 p.m. Tree on power lines on Mill River Great Barrington Road
- 2:21 p.m. Tree on power lines on Lake Buel Road
- Aug. 6 8:36 p.m. Owner of a rental on Lake Buel reports that his tenants are being harassed by a neighbor over parking issues
- 9:09 p.m. Driver arrested at his Clayton Mill River Road home following high-speed chase that originated on Home Road in Sheffield
- Aug. 7 7:57 p.m. Chevy S10 is stopped upon leaving gravel lot on Clayton Mill River Road after closing; driver and passenger, claiming to be employees of the gravel lot owner but apparently inebriated, are told to leave the vehicle and find alternative transportation to their homes
- Aug. 9 1:42 p.m. Lawn mower catches fire at a Hartsville New Marlborough Road residence
- Aug. 9 3:05 p.m. Lumbert Cross Road resident reports the theft of a chainsaw
- Aug. 12 3:14 p.m. Hartsville New Marlborough Road resident reports sign obscured with electrical tape
- Aug. 13 9:29 a.m. Cow loose on Corashire Road returned to owner
- Aug. 15 4:10 p.m. New Marlborough village resident arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol
- 10:47 p.m. Loud, alcohol-fueled party of under-age youths at a Lake Buel residence disbanded
- 11:00 p.m. Hotchkiss Road resident, reporting that he had broken up a party of trespassers on his property near the 1,000-Acre Swamp dam, requests weekend patrol checks of the area
- Aug. 17 11:52 a.m. Caller reports a large black bear on the back deck of his Mill River Southfield Road residence
- 12:20 p.m. Large black bear, apparently indifferent to banging pots and pans, reported rummaging in a dumpster in Mill River village
- Aug. 18 12:30 p.m. A small, black terrier found near the intersection of Clayton Mill River and Konkapot Roads; transported to an animal shelter in Egremont
- Aug. 27 11:53 a.m. Lake Buel resident reports that lawn damaged two weeks previously by a truck attempting to turn around still had not been repaired
- Aug. 29 12:52 p.m. Stray dog, snapping at all who approach it, reported abandoned in Southfield village



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**FIRE AND RESCUE****JULY:**

July 3	2:44 p.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call	July 18	8:37 a.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Search
July 4	7:51 a.m.	Canaan Southfield Road Medical Call	July 19	8:54 a.m.	Brewer Hill Road Medical Call
July 10	3:46 a.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Medical Call	July 21	11:24 a.m.	Hayes Hill Road Medical Call
July 11	9:06 a.m.	Foley Hill Road Medical Call	July 22		Hartsville New Marlborough Road Fire Alarm
July 14	3:58 p.m.	Hartsville Mill River Road Medical Call	July 22	4:37 p.m.	Foley Hill Road Fire Alarm
July 14	11:23 a.m.	Canaan Southfield Road Fire Alarm	July 23	11:01 a.m.	Mill River Great Barrington Road Bicycle Crash
July 15	11:32 p.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Disabled Vehicle	July 26	7:15 p.m.	Juniper Hill Road CO Alarm
July 17	10:51 a.m.	Hartsville Mill River Road Medical Call	July 26	9:16 p.m.	Konkapot Road Fire Alarm

**AUGUST:**

Aug. 1	4:20 p.m.	East Hill Road Dumpster Fire	Aug. 16	12:00 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Medical Call
Aug. 6	6:30 a.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Medical Call	Aug. 17	12:13 a.m.	Adsit Crosby Road Fire Alarm
Aug. 8		South Sandisfield Road Fire Alarm	Aug. 17	9:32 p.m.	Hartsville Mill River Road Medical Call
Aug. 9	9:25 a.m.	New Marlborough Southfield Road Medical Call	Aug. 19	11:42 a.m.	Calkins Cross Road Fire Alarm
Aug. 9	1:44 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Mower Fire	Aug. 24	4:42 p.m.	Lake Road Medical Call
Aug. 9	9:21 p.m.	Church Road Fire Alarm	Aug. 25	4:41 p.m.	Corashire Road Medical Call
Aug. 10	6:48 p.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call	Aug. 25	10:55 p.m.	Norfolk Road Medical Call
Aug. 11	6:38 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Wire on Fire	Aug. 26	11:54 a.m.	South Sandisfield Road MVA
Aug. 13	11:53 p.m.	Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call	Aug. 26	4:26 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Sandisfield LifeStar Landing
			Aug. 29	5:16 p.m.	Brewer Hill Road Fire Alarm
			Aug. 29	6:28 p.m.	Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call
			Aug. 31	4:50 p.m.	Peter Menaker Road Fire Alarm

**THANK YOU:** The members of the New Marlborough Fire Company wish to thank all who purchased raffle tickets, donated prizes, attended, or otherwise supported this year's Pig Roast and Block Dance. The rain held off until after dinners were served, and a great time was had by all. As always, Fire Company members appreciate the support, and we look forward to next year. See you at the Spring Dance, and mark your calendars for the 23rd Annual Pig Roast and Block Dance, to be held the third Saturday of August!

**A REMINDER:** Before wrapping up fall projects, and before winter sets in, please be sure that you have your 911 sign posted at the end of your driveway. For many reasons, chief among them to find your home, it is important to display a visible 911 number.

You may order 911 signs at the Mill River General Store. These signs, which are two-sided and highly visible, cost \$20. If you need help installing your 911 sign, call us. We will help. These 911 signs are preferred, but you may also display your own street number. Keep in mind:

- Numbers must be at least three inches tall and visible from the road.
- Numbers should be visible from both approaches to your driveway.
- They should be high enough so as not to be obscured by snowbanks or shrubs.

**THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS!**

Alicia Brazie; Patricia Sadera; Lee Backer & Joan Elmer; Marjorie Cohn & Peter Tarshis;  
and Larry & Nancy Bronstein

## Got Cows?

by Larry Burke

Farming, once so central to New Marlborough's economy, has been in decline since the end of World War II. The family-owned dairy farm virtually ceased to exist here by the late 1990's. Cows, which in an earlier time almost certainly outnumbered the human population here, have become somewhat rare roadside attractions. But the fields and pastures that once provided dairy products and meat still remain, and now a small but growing movement is afoot, (ahoof?), to bring cows and other livestock back on to those open spaces.

Through the initiative of a number of Berkshire County organizations, including the New Marlborough Land Trust, young men and women who desire to farm but who lack sufficient acreage of their own are being matched up with landowners who are willing and eager to see their picturesque but otherwise fallow fields put back into productive use. Jake and Silka Levin, who live on the Mill River Great Barrington Road, had long wished for animals on their property, but neither had the time or desire to take on the burden of raising livestock themselves. Jake was well aware, from his experience as a butcher in the community, and from his wider interest in the production of locally-grown food, that "access to land was the hardest thing for livestock farmers." Last spring he attended an event called The Berkshire Land Access Symposium, put together by the Berkshire Farmland Initiative, in collaboration with a New Hampshire-based group called Land for Good, as well as with The Greater Berkshire Agriculture Fund and Berkshire Grown. Martha Bryan, Executive Director of The New Marlborough Land Trust, was one of the organizers of this "meet and greet" occasion.

As an outcome of the symposium, Jake and Silka agreed to lease their pastureland to a young couple, Derek and Leslie Eshelman, who were just setting out in dairy farming. The terms of a lease, as Jake describes, can vary, but in his case, "...no money is exchanged, and it was a very relaxed agreement for a three-year period, with the mutual understanding that all expenses – fencing primarily – be borne by the farmers, as well as all care of the animals." As it turned out, the Eshelmans decided shortly thereafter to hold off on the dairy project, but the Levins have continued the arrangement with another farmer, Sean Stanton, who is currently keeping six heifers and two "retired" dairy cows on that pasture.



Jake with one of his "therapy cows"

photo by Larry Burke

Jake says that he and Silka view the Levin family land as being, "a little bit of a lab, or a playground, for us, for friends, and for liked-minded food producers." They see the likelihood of expanding the uses of their property to the raising of pigs and goats, as well as greater numbers of cows.

Asked to describe his experience as a landowner with bovine tenants, Jake responded, "The main thing is how easy it is, and how much fun. Just like some people have therapy dogs, my therapy pet is a cow! It feels so good to see them out there, and it's so good for the land."

Another person with a great interest in the symbiosis between landowners and farmers is Tom Brazie, who has been farming part-time for a number of years, but is now concentrating on agriculture – particularly the raising of meat and poultry – as his primary life's work. Tom has the use of his family's fields on South Sandisfield Road, but the scope of his farming is outstripping the resources of that acreage, so he has been actively seeking out other land for pasturing his animals and harvesting hay for feed. At this point Tom has largely verbal agreements to use the Flying Cloud fields that are immediately adjacent to his property, as well as the use of a number of fields in Hartsville, Mill River, and New Marlborough Village. Most recently he has come to an agreement with the New Marlborough Land Trust to rotate grazing and haying in the field alongside the New Marlborough-Southfield Road, that the Land Trust owns. Tom's aim is to string together contiguous properties, in order to reduce the time and energy expended in transporting his livestock by trailer from one site to the next.

One of the primary goals of the New Marlborough Land Trust is to expand the practice of matching up farmers and landowners. Interested individuals may investigate the possibilities further by contacting Martha Bryan, or by going to [berkshiregrown.org](http://berkshiregrown.org) and clicking on the Berkshire Farmland Initiative in the Programs menu. This site has links to all of the organizations collaborating in this effort to revitalize agriculture in the Berkshires and beyond. □



## GRANT APPLICATIONS SOUGHT BY NEW MARLBOROUGH CULTURAL COUNCIL

The New Marlborough Cultural Council is pleased to announce that it is offering \$10,000 through its competitive grant process for programs in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences. Priority will be given to proposals from New Marlborough residents; projects or programs that directly benefit New Marlborough residents; creative work provided to New Marlborough residents; and events or creative work that will occur in New Marlborough. For the 2016 grant cycle, the Massachusetts Cultural Council is providing \$4,400 and the New Marlborough Cultural Council, \$5,600.

Grant proposals must be submitted on the standard LCC Grant Application available at <http://www.mass-culture.org>. Click on Applicants, and then click on New Marlborough for the local guidelines and forms. Forms may also be obtained at the New Marlborough Town Library. Only paper copies will be accepted. The deadline is Thursday, October 15, either by postmark to NMCC, P.O. Box 206, Mill River, MA 01244, or by hand delivery to the New Marlborough Town Library during its regular hours. □

Maureen Hosford

### For Sale by Owner

I own a seventeen-acre woodlot on Dry Hill in New Marlborough that is great for hunting, camping, or timber. The property has been in my family since 1870, and was originally the woodlot for my great-grandfather's farm, the former Red Fox Music Camp. I no longer live in the area and am unable to make use of the property. It is reasonably priced.  
Marybeth Pettit (518)429-8526

### New Marlborough Flu Clinic

Thursday October 8 12:30-1:30  
Mill River Town Offices  
Clinic is open to adults over age 18  
No Appointment necessary  
Bring Medicare and Mass Health Cards  
Fee: \$25.00 for non-Medicare/Mass Health  
Wear short sleeves



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*The Night Stages*, by Jane Urquhart  
*Speaking in Bones*, by Kathy Reichs  
*Come Rain or Come Shine*, by Jan Karon  
*Nature of the Beast*, by Louise Penny  
*Secondhand Souls*, by Christopher Moore  
*The End Game*, by Catherine Coulter  
*X*, by Sue Grafton  
*House of Thieves*, by Charles Belfoure

### Adult Nonfiction

*Elephant Company: The Inspiring Story of an Unlikely Hero and the Animals Who Helped Him Save Lives in World War II*, by Vicki Croke  
*Birding for the Curious: The Easiest Way for Anyone to Explore the Incredible World of Birds*, by Nate Swick

### Children's Fiction

*Island of Graves*, by Lisa McMann  
*Library of Souls: The Third Novel of Miss Peregrine's Peculiar Children*, by Ransom Riggs  
*Between the Lines*, by Jodi Picoult  
*Ice Breaker*, by Lian Tanner  
*Book Scavenger*, by Jennifer Chambliss Bertman  
*The Marvels*, by Brian Selznick

### Children's Nonfiction

*Poet: The Remarkable Story of Moses Horton*, by Don Tate  
*I'm Trying to Like Spiders: (It Isn't Easy)*, by Bethany Barton



### Fall Library Hours

Mon. Wed. Sat. 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.  
 Tues. Fri. 1:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.  
 Thurs. 1:30 – 5:30 p.m.  
 Winter hours begin November 1



## Family Fun! Make Your Own Scarecrow

At the New Marlborough Library  
 October 10 at 1:00 p.m. Rain or Shine

Bring your own old clothes  
 and we will provide the hay.  
 Cider & doughnuts will be served.

Pre-registration a must. Contact the library to reserve a spot-  
 Space is limited 229-6668



## Halloween Celebration

at the Meeting House  
 in New Marlborough Village  
 October 23 at 6:00 p.m.

Sponsored by the New Marlborough Library

Join us for a swashbuckling adventure as Nutshell  
 Playhouse presents: **PIRATES!**

This sea-faring adventure features mime, music,  
 masks and puppets created by Clothespin Puppets.  
 Refreshments will be served - Wear Your Costumes!  
 For more information contact the library: 229-6668



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# Contributions are needed to continue the paper!

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

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

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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 p.m.
- \* **Board of Health:** First Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.
- \* **Conservation Commission:** Last Saturday of the month at 9 a.m.
- \* **Board of Assessors:** Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
- \* **Fire Department training:** Every Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the fire station
- \* **Building Inspector:** Monday 5 - 7 p.m. Wednesday 8 - 10 a.m.
- \* **First Responders:** meeting/training: First and third Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the fire station
- \* **Cultural Council:** Second Thursday at 4:15 p.m at the library
- \* **Town Treasurer:** 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 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- \* **Dog and Animal Control Officer:** John Springstube 413-232-7038
- \* **Town Clerk:** 229-8278; 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. weekdays; Saturday by appointment
- \* **Town Hall:** 229-8116
- \* **Police:** Business office: 229-8161

**Emergency calls: Police, Fire, and Medical: 911**

## Transfer Station hours:

Wednesday: 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Sunday: 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

## PERMITS ARE DUE ON JULY 1

They are available at  
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## New Marlborough Highway Department

Located on Mill River-Southfield Rd.

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*We welcome advertisements from businesses owned by New Marlborough residents.*

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

## NM5VN Editorial Team

Barbara Lowman, issue editor; Diane Barth, designer;  
Martha Bryan, Jane Burke, Larry Burke, Kenzie Fields,  
David Lowman, Joe Poindexter, Jodi Rothe,  
Peter Schuyten, Barry Shapiro, Pam Stebbins,  
Jon Swan, Marianne Swan  
Contributing writers: Ann Getsinger,  
Mary Richie Smith, Tara White. Index: Donna Weaver

## New Marlborough 5 Village News

appears monthly,

also online at our new website! [www.NM5VN.org](http://www.NM5VN.org)

The next issue will be dated November 2015.

All copy must be submitted no later than October 15.

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

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- ♦ **Campbell Falls Carpentry:** Licensed and insured contracting at campbellfallscarpentry@gmail.com (413)229-6097 and (413)429-7677. Mass Contractors # 7614140, HIC# 170377
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- ♦ **Dellea:** Dellea.biz provides on-site Windows computer services to local residents, small businesses, town governments, and nonprofits throughout southern Berkshire County. (413)528-1141.
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- ♦ **DimisWorks.com:** Fine art, hand-painted paper, original designs, individually created; creative gardening, too! Dana Ehninger 413-258-4837.
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- ♦ **Project Bee** meets on the last Saturday of every month from 10:30 until noon at the New Marlborough Library in Mill River. See [www.projectbeeline.org](http://www.projectbeeline.org) or Project Bee on Facebook.
- ♦ **James Edelman:** General Contractor, Real Estate Sales. Best Results. Construction License #090773. Home Improvement Registration #152035. Real Estate Sales License #9086247. 413-528-0006 or cljvedelman@aol.com
- ♦ **Susan M. Smith:** Attorney At Law; Concentrating in the areas of Estate Planning, Estate Administration, Elder Law, Real Estate and Zoning Matters. [ssmithlaw@hughes.net](mailto:ssmithlaw@hughes.net) or 229-7080
- ♦ **Reiner White:** General Contractor; 413-229-8450
- ♦ **Woodruff Mountain Landscaping:** Excavation and landscape contracting, all forms of stone work and masonry, and outdoor services, including lawn mowing and yard work. 413-229-2919 [woodruffmountain@aol.com](mailto:woodruffmountain@aol.com)

To list your business here, contact Barbara Lowman 229-2369.