



New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield

THE EMERGENCY SERVICES FUND WINDS DOWN

by Barry R. Shapiro

They don't wear fire fighter equipment when doing their jobs. They don't carry EMT supplies with them. But the leaders of the New Marlborough Township Volunteer Emergency Services Fund (ESF) have filled a critical role in helping our town's Fire Company and First Responders perform their life-saving work.

And now, the ESF is getting ready to dissolve.

"For thirty-four years, ESF has been a great example of a community coming together to support, in a variety of ways, essential town services," said Daniel Doern, president of the organization's board of directors. "Its mission has evolved over the years to help meet the financial needs of the Fire Company and the First Responders as those needs arose. Now that those organizations are fiscally self-sufficient and funded by other sources, ESF is no longer necessary."

Flash back to 1986 when the ESF was formed. Early solicitations of funds pulled no punches in describing the reasons why ESF was necessary: "We want to inform you of a severe problem in the financial condition of our volunteer Emergency Services...shoestring operations...only a tiny fraction of the Town's annual budget goes towards fire protection and...none at all to emergency medical service...a severe financial situation...ill-equipped... Rescue 1 is a 1965 converted bread truck...the Fire Company found their organization once again broke...your taxes do not pay for the operating costs of our volunteer firefighters and EMTs...the Fire Company cannot afford medical coverage for its volunteers or liability insurance, nor can it afford to keep up with state and federal mandated firefighter safety code up-grades."

One solicitation also pointed out a stunning fact: "Amazingly, over the last ten years, at least 75 percent of the households and businesses in the five villages and rural areas of New Marlborough have required the services of the New Marlborough Volunteer Fire Company or the Volunteer First Responders, or both!"

Larry Burke, one of the founders of the ESF, noted that, "We recognized that we needed to do something until such time as the Town could play a larger role in funding the Fire Company and First Responders. So, a group of us banded together in 1986, and, in March 1988, formally incorporated the New Marlborough Township Volunteer Emergency Services Fund, Inc., a tax exempt, charitable corporation, dedicated to raising funds for these critical organizations."

With an initial board of Neil Crawford (president), Larry Burke (treasurer and clerk), William Gillette, Paul Harvey, David Lowman, James Michelman, Howard Nourse, and Jim Stevens, the ESF described its purpose as promoting and providing a coordinated fundraising program for the emergency services in New Marlborough and administering funds raised on their behalf.

Much was accomplished in the early years of the ESF, and, between contributions from residents and the Town, \$280,000 was promptly raised and spent on protective turnout gear for firefighters, acquiring a fully-equipped 1988 four-wheel drive ambulance, purchasing large diameter hose and accessories for the fire trucks, and funding a major addition to the original firehouse. And much was done in the years that followed with funds raised to help sustain the operating expenses of the Fire Company and First Responders, thus alleviating the burden on taxpayers; to complete the Fire House addition; to create a sinking fund for future purchases; to re-fit the fire truck, to assist the First Responders to become an ambulance squad;

continued

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Emergency Services Fund, continued

to acquire the critical rescue equipment known as the Jaws of Life; and to provide funds for capital expenses such as protective gear, communications equipment and accessories related to firefighting and lifesaving.

In 2009, when the Fire Company acquired the property where the new firehouse now sits, the Company funded this expansion through a \$300,000 mortgage with Salisbury Bank, along with many community contributors, donations of materials and labor, and sweat equity. The facility is shared by both the Fire Company and the First Responders, which function collectively as New Marlborough Fire & Rescue. All payments on the mortgage were provided by funds raised annually by the ESF, along with earnings on its investments. In 2020, following two years of discussion and analysis, the ESF board decided that, to avoid the risk of increased interest rates in the future (the mortgage had a fixed rate for the first ten years and then converted to a variable rate) and for a variety of other financial reasons, it made sense to pay off the mortgage in full so the firehouse could be owned debt free.

"We had about \$225,000 in our account and needed to raise another \$15,000 to pay off the mortgage," said Mr. Doern. "We asked a member of our community, Louise Yohalem, to consult with us on our fundraising, which resulted in our quickly raising the necessary funds, and in August of this year, we paid off the mortgage in full. At that point, the board, which includes Maureen Krejci, Robert Dvorchik, Freddy Friedman, David Herrick, Joe Krejci, Rob Scott, and Tara White, decided that, with the strong support that the emergency services operations have now been receiving from the Town, and with the ability of the Fire Company and First Responders to do their own fundraising, the ESF had accomplished its mission and it was time to wind things up. I do note, however, that Bob Dvorchik, a Fire Company representative, did vote against our decision to close down, but he was the only one to do so." (Rob Scott, another

Fire Company representative, was not present at the meeting at which the vote was taken, nor were David Herrick or Freddy Friedman.)

Mr. Doern adds, "This newfound irrelevance can be seen as evidence of a job well done and great progress. I congratulate all those who worked so hard throughout the years to get the Fire Company and the First Responders important equipment, helped build the new firehouse, and secured and serviced the mortgage. I'm very proud of what everyone involved accomplished and I'm sure that residents will continue to support these great organizations. Certainly, all of us at ESF remain willing to help in our individual capacities."

The decision of the ESF board to close itself down has encountered some criticism, from Fire Chief Chuck Loring for one. "Don't misunderstand. I'm very grateful that the mortgage has been paid off. However, I don't understand why they voted to close down and I'm not real pleased," said Chief Loring. "I'm also disappointed in the way it went down and it doesn't make sense to me. There is the possibility of keeping and restarting ESF or maybe doing a minor name change with a new board that has the best interest of Fire and Rescue and the Town in mind. ESF has raised over a million dollars over the years that was not put on the tax rolls. I believe it has been one of the most important organizations in town."

So, it could be that the ESF may yet, in some newly reconstituted form, continue to raise funds for the Fire Company and the First Responders as in the past. Residents will need to watch their mailboxes to see if, in fact, their next solicitation for these vital services comes from a newly resurrected ESF or directly from the Fire Company and First Responders. □



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residents who would like one.



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your mask.)

PLANNING FOR THE NOVEMBER ELECTION

Based on an unusually large turn-out for the September 1 primary election, Town Clerk Kathy Chretien is anticipating heavy turn-out for the general presidential election on November 3. There were 461 total votes cast in the primary, over 200 of which were mail-in ballots, as opposed to the more usual total of 200 primary votes. Ms. Chretien says that New Marlborough's usual turn-out for a presidential election is 900 votes; she already has over 300 requests for mail-in ballots, with more requests arriving every day. Completed mail-in ballots can be deposited in the secure box outside the Town Hall entrance. She is hoping that a second secure box, specifically for ballots, can be installed before the election. It is important to note that mail-in ballots must be received at Town Hall by the time that polls close at 8:00 p.m. on November 3; a postmark is not sufficient. When the mail-in and absentee ballots arrive at Town Hall, they are stamped with the date and time, initialed, and entered in the state computer. They are stored there securely until election day, when they are opened and entered into the ballot tabulator to count the votes.

In-person voting for the primary election was limited to two voters at a time. Some people had to wait a short time to be admitted, but in general everything

went smoothly. Anticipating a much higher turn-out on November 3, however, Ms. Chretien is hoping that the voting booths can be rearranged to allow four voters at a time. The traffic pattern for election day has been worked out to comply with handicapped access: Use the parking lot entrance by the front corner, enter Town Hall, vote, leave Town Hall by the same door, and walk around the building to the right, back to the car. There will be traffic control at the door to make sure that those entering and leaving Town Hall remain six feet apart. Walking around the building will ensure that those leaving the site will not be encountering those arriving to vote.

The last day to register to vote, for those not already on the voter rolls, is October 24. Early in-person voting will take place October 17 through October 30, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Weekend voting hours are 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 17 and 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 18. Early voting on October 24 is 2:00 – 4:00; those registering to vote can also do so from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. On Sunday, October 25, voting is from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Voters wishing to track the status of their ballot may do so by going to mass.gov/trackmyballot – Google Search, and then clicking on Track My Ballot: Search. Voters with questions about procedures or their own circumstances can reach Ms. Chretien at kchretien@newmarlboroughma.gov, or at 413-229-8278. □

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A Virtual Public Listening Session for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan (MVP) will be held

Monday, October 5, at 6:00 p.m.
Call-in information will be
posted on the Town website.



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BOARD OF SELECTMEN



August 31: With all three selectmen, plus Town Administrator Mari Enoch and Administrative Secretary Sharon Fleck attending via teleconference, the meeting opened with the approval of the addition of two utility poles on New Marlborough Southfield Road, near its intersection with Tamaridge Way. As explained by Steven Hayward of National Grid, the poles are needed to support two existing poles that are failing.

With Police Chief Graham Frank unable to attend the meeting to defend a requested salary increase for Officer John Mullen, the matter was postponed to a September 4 session called specifically for that purpose.

The selectmen agreed to a new three-year electric service agreement with Dynergy Energy Services that pegs the price of electric power at 0.0995 cents a kilowatt hour, or 0.09768 per kilowatt hour for residents who opt in to this pricing structure. This represents a state-mandated increase of about 2 percent over the previous rate to pay for a transition to clean energy.

Chairman Tara White then moved briskly through the next four agenda items, all of which confirmed appointments to Town committees. The current members of the Designer Selection Committee, Leslie Armstrong, Scott Walker, Mari Enoch, and Richard Long, were appointed to its successor, the Design Review Committee, now that a designer has been chosen. Ms. White volunteered to serve as the Board's liaison to the Commission on Disabilities. Jonathan James, who had received the enthusiastic endorsement of the Planning Board, was appointed to that body until the next Town election in May 2021. And Mark Carson, the newest selectman, was coaxed ("I haven't volunteered for anything yet, so I guess it's my turn") to join Elizabeth

Rosenberg and Nanci Worthington on the Citizen Advisory Committee. The group hears complaints — they can come from either residents or contractors — that may arise from grant-sponsored housing rehab projects.

Next, the selectmen okayed a request, pursuant to approval from Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring, from Charter Communications to dig trenches for fiber-optic cable in three locations: Campbell Falls Road at Berkshire Woods, Hadsell Street at the intersection of Umpachene Falls Road, and Clayton Four Corners. The trenches will be less than three feet deep, which would have necessitated a formal permit, but deep enough so as not to interfere with road repair.

A request by David Herrick that the liquor license assigned to the Mill River General Store when it was owned by Jessica Holcomb be revoked — so that it could be reassigned to the store under his ownership — was postponed to its meeting of September 28. This will allow time for a required public hearing on the matter to be advertised and held.

The proceedings ground to a halt as the selectmen sorted through which of the minutes of a dozen previous meetings could be approved, or had already been approved, or hadn't actually taken place. Mr. Long cautioned that state regulations call for minutes to be approved within thirty days of the meeting. The selectmen and Ms. Fleck, who prepares the original drafts, resolved to pick up the pace.

Mark Carson alerted the Board to the intention of the Planning Board (of which he is chairman) to create a bylaw that would allow the Police Department to ticket mis-parked cars, such as those that this summer could have impeded emergency vehicles on

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Umpachene Falls Road. Ms. Enoch informed him, however, that such a bylaw could be initiated by anyone in town and that it did not require a hearing. Unlike the zoning bylaws devised by the Planning Board, a ticketing bylaw would need only a simple majority and not a two-thirds vote for passage at a town meeting. The selectmen agreed they would address this issue.

September 4: The Board called a 9:30 a.m. meeting to respond to requests from Police Chief Graham Frank intended to assure adequate staffing of the Police Department. **A letter to the Board (in lieu of Chief Frank's appearance at the meeting, which was canceled because he is recovering from multiple injuries sustained in a fall) asks for a promotion of John Mullen to the position of departmental field training officer and an increase in annual compensation to \$55,000, or \$26.34 an hour.** (This represents a raise of \$3.99 per hour over Officer Mullen's previous pay rate.) The request was granted unanimously.

The Board then moved to the appointment of two part-time officers and three temporary officers to fill in when need arises. Heeding recommendations from the Department, which were followed up by interviews by the selectmen, **the Board voted to hire Ian N. Curtiss and Kadin G. Shaffiroff as part-time officers at a starting salary of \$17 an hour, to increase to \$19.80 an hour after satisfactorily completing a six-month probationary period.** The three temporary officers, at a rate of \$19.80 an hour, are Mike Ovitt, Malcolm McCain, and Brian Fahey. All appointments were to become effective starting September 6.

Following a request from Town Administrator Mari Enoch that Officer Mullen provide her with a weekly schedule of officers on duty, the meeting was adjourned.

The newly appointed officers::

The proceedings ground to a halt as the selectmen sorted through which of the minutes of a dozen previous meetings could be approved, or had already been approved, or hadn't actually taken place.

Ian N. Curtiss currently serves as a part-time officer with the Tolland Police Department.

Kadin G. Shaffiroff completed entry-level training at the Western Massachusetts Police Academy last February.

Brian Fahey, who once worked as a patrolman in New Marlborough, is now a full-time sergeant in Monterey but is willing to fill in during the two days a week he has off to meet the needs of the New Marlborough Police Department.

Malcolm McCain works part-time for the Egremont Police Department.

Mike Ovitt currently serves as a part-time officer with the Sheffield Police Department.

Joe Poindexter

September 14: With all three selectmen on the call, Tara White reminded everyone the meeting was being recorded by Administrative Secretary Sharon Fleck for transcription, and also by Free Conference.

She then opened the meeting at 6:02 p.m. Others on the call included Administrative Secretary Sharon Fleck, Officer John Mullen, Animal Control Officer Cassie Keeley, Animal Inspector/Director of Senior Services Prudence Spaulding, Samantha Halley, Jonathan Suters, Denise Ulick, Peter Platt, and Paul Brassard.

The first agenda item was to review the dangerous dog order issued to Jonathan Suters and Samantha Halley of Hartsville New Marlborough Road for their dog Luna. Ms. Keeley stated the Suters were covering all medical expenses for Denise Ulick's dog Viola, and then provided an update of her inspection at the Suter residence pursuant to the order. Ms. Keeley said the Suters had heavy hearts about what happened and were trying as hard as they could to meet all the requirements, which include microchipping and muzzling the dog, and fencing as tall as six feet and extending two feet underground. Some questions remained about the

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extent of roofing needed over the dog's run area, and Ms. Keeley and the Board agreed to revisit that section of the order to clarify what will be required. A concern expressed by Prue Spaulding over the dog's being sufficiently protected from inclement weather was allayed by Ms. Halley's saying that Luna is mainly not an outside dog and stays inside when the family is not at home. The Board asked Ms. Ulick whether she had any comments or objections to the order, to which she replied she had none.

In her role as Animal Inspector, Mrs. Spaulding then reported to the Board that the public should be made aware of two rabid raccoons in town earlier this month. She said there had been an outbreak of rabies in town eighteen years ago that subsided, but in light of this recent event, residents should be cautious and avoid contact with any wild animals. She went on to suggest that second homeowners who bring their pets here should be advised to bring their rabies certificates with them when visiting the area. The Board agreed to post the information about rabies and thanked Mrs. Spaulding for all her work.

Moving onto the next item, Mrs. Spaulding, who is also the Director of Senior Services, informed the Board that the Southern Berkshire Elderly Transportation Corporation will cease business as of September 30. For thirty-six years, SBETC had provided door-to-door transportation for people over fifty-five and those who were disabled to doctor's appointments and for shopping. Mrs. Spaulding said sixteen seniors from New Marlborough took advantage of this service over the past year and she has started discussions with the Senior Center of Sheffield, who have their own transportation system. Ms. White thanked Prue Spaulding for the update and asked her to keep the Board apprised of the discussions.

The next item on the agenda was parking in Southfield

Village. Officer John Mullen explained that on weekends there isn't enough parking for people who are visiting the Southfield Store so customers park on the road. He said that residents have called and complained about people parking on their lawns and vehicles potentially blocking fire and emergency vehicle access.

Peter Platt, the owner of the Southfield Store, stated he hasn't heard complaints from residents around the Southfield Store, and besides, residents themselves park on the road. He stated Officer Mullen had asked him to come out of the store, where he pointed out two vehicles parked on East Hill Road. He asked Mr. Platt to ask those customers to move their cars or he would ticket them. Mr. Platt said, with the current Covid 19 situation, people are mostly just stopping to get their takeout order and leave quickly. He said there are

some customers who sit outside at a table, but for the most part they pick up their food and leave. He then said that he doubted that anyone was actually complaining, because as soon as Chief Frank was incapacitated, Officer Mullen came by, saying people can't park on the road. He asked why he was being bothered and stated the Board should be supporting businesses in town. Officer Mullen responded that the police department doesn't go anywhere to bother anyone, and that it only responds to a call or complaint.

The Board discussed placing no parking signs on the road in that area, and Mr. Long asked that the Highway Department be contacted to see what the clearance is on that road regarding parking and emergency vehicles. He also suggested having a traffic study done there, and assured Mr. Platt that the Board would do what it could to assist the store and to ensure safety. He added that it is not Mr. Platt's job to enforce parking rules; however, it would be good public relations to let people know where parking is allowed.

Unlike the zoning bylaws devised by the Planning Board, a ticketing bylaw would need only a simple majority and not a two-thirds vote for passage at a town meeting.

SUSAN M. SMITH
Attorney At Law

38 Mahaiwe Street, Suite 1 Telephone: (413) 528-4300
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Ms. White recommended waiting and monitoring the situation as the summer season is slowing down, but, after further discussion, the Board decided waiting won't fix the problem which, if addressed now, would be helpful next year when things get busy again.

Mr. Platt reiterated that he feels he is being harassed by Officer Mullen. He said, "I'm being targeted, and you have your hands over your eyes if you can't see that." He said the Town should look also at the Mill River General Store and Cantina 229. He continued, saying people are parking and walking up and down Route 57 and crossing the road and nobody's bothering them. He told the Board not to single out the Southfield Store for a traffic study but instead the Town should do it for everyone.

Officer Mullen said he was on a call with a complaint from a resident who lives in the Southfield area and there have been other complaints, too. He said there were some complaints at the Mill River Store back when it was open and there were also some minor fender benders with people backing out of the lot in front of the store. He said there haven't been any complaints received by the Police Department regarding Cantina 229. Returning to the issue of parking around the Southfield Store, he asked if the Board wanted photo evidence and stated there were two residents complaining of cars parking on their lawns. Ms. White said she noticed one house with reflectors placed along their property line and wondered if they did that to deter parking.

Toward the end of this discussion, Mr. Platt said he felt that Chief Frank knows this is not a big deal and the whole issue will go away when he comes back. But Ms. White said that since the issue had been brought forward, the Board was obliged to address it.

The next order of business had to do with the continuing question over the liquor license for the Mill River General Store, issued to former store owner Jessica

Holcomb. David Herrick, who is currently running the store, had written a letter to the Board requesting that the license be revoked, as Ms. Holcomb no longer has control of the premises for which the license is assigned. Chairman White stated that Town Counsel advised the Board that it has the legal right to revoke the license, since it goes with the location, not the person. She explained that, if someone else wants a liquor license at that location, they will have to start a new process and make an application for a new license. **The Board unanimously agreed to revoke the alcohol license granted to Ms. Holcomb for the Mill River General Store.**

The Board then moved to appoint Christopher Hassett to the Lake Buel Preservation District until June 30, 2021, and Ms. Fleck as the temporary procurement officer for a MassWorks bid opening scheduled for Wednesday, September 16 at 1:00 p.m., while the town administrator, Ms. Enoch, is on vacation.

Town Administrator updates prepared by Ms. Enoch were read by Ms. White, starting with the notification that culvert work has started on Route 57 and detour notices have been posted on the Town website, emailed to residents, and posted on Maggie's List.

The Board then offered congratulations to Highway Department employee Dan Bonetti, who earned his Commonwealth of Massachusetts Hoisting License. As agreed when Mr. Bonetti was hired, with this license, his salary will increase \$.50 per hour bringing his new hourly rate to \$19.80. Next on the report, Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring and Town Administrator Mari Enoch attended a preconstruction meeting for the Campbell Falls Road Bridge which will be replaced by the state's Department of Transportation. The forty-foot bridge, built in 1938, will retain its existing abutments and the work is expected to be completed in late October of next year. The repairs will necessitate

In her role as Animal Inspector, Mrs. Spaulding reported to the Board that the public should be made aware of two rabid raccoons in town earlier this month.



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a road closure and detour, and the Board reiterated its request that the bridge not be closed in winter months due to the poor condition of the detour road. The total cost of the repair is \$988,000.

Congratulations were also given to the Fire Department and to Robert Dvorchik in particular for his efforts in securing a grant from the Southern Berkshire Emergency Medical Services Foundation for an all-terrain trailer costing \$6,172. This vehicle will allow for transport of backboarded patients from accidents occurring on hiking and snowmobile trails, and will be towed by the existing Fire Department's ATV.

The final administrative update was a reminder that there will be a virtual public listening session on Monday, October 5, at 6:00 p.m. to review the Municipal

Vulnerability Program Plan. Login information will be posted and the public is encouraged to participate.

The Board discussed how it would proceed after the MassWorks bid opening is conducted next Thursday, and decided to wait to schedule a meeting on the bid. Tom Stalker reminded the Board that the public bid meeting was not in an acceptable location for disabled people. Ms. White stated that, if necessary, the bid opening could be held outside. Mr. Stalker then asked whether town insurance covered the fire department building, which is leased by a third party, and Mr. Long assured him that the insurance was appropriate. The meeting was then adjourned at 7:50 p.m. □

Sandra Fusco-Walker

THE PLANNING BOARD

The September 9 meeting of the Planning Board got underway at 7:04 p.m. with Chairman Mark Carson, members Bob Hartt, Paul Marcel, and, attending his first meeting as the newest member of the Board, Jonathan James. With no mail to sort through and no minutes of past meetings to attend to, the group got right into the first item of business – a review of the Town's junk car bylaw. Paul Marcel had done some research on the subject and noted that New Marlborough's bylaw requires six complaints to be lodged before action could be initiated to dispose of junk cars. He felt that fewer complaints, perhaps just one, should be all that is needed to start the process. He had looked over the bylaws of the surrounding towns and found that Sheffield's was the best – a concise, one-page document. "We should emulate this one," he suggested. It even includes junk boats – "ones

that haven't seen water in probably twenty years" – in the bylaw. Mark Carson asked that the other members review Sheffield's language for further discussion, and perhaps action, at the next meeting.

The next item for discussion was to have been on "Dark Sky" bylaws, but this was put off until the next meeting, as a presentation on the subject was not yet prepared. Mr. Carson then finished off a previous question on the issuing of parking tickets, saying it was more in the bailiwick of the Board of Selectmen than the Planning Board. Then, after a few minutes of discussion on road washouts and the potential role of the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program, along with some welcoming remarks to Mr. James, the meeting was adjourned, the very model of brevity, at 7:23 p.m. □

Larry Burke

Thank You to Our Contributors:

Bertrand Garbassi; Thomas M. Callahan; Arlyn & Owen Hoberman; Lee Backer & Joan Elmer; Vera Edelman; Anita Fleury; Richard Flintoft, a gift for Marianne Wilkeson; Houry Schmeizl; Ron & Veronica Yapple



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CONSERVATION COMMISSION

August 29: Commission members, Freddy Friedman, John Schreiber, Nanci Worthington, and Dave Herrick conducted the month's meeting via conference call. The meeting began with the continued public hearing for the Notice of Intent by the Town of New Marlborough and the Umpachene Falls Park Commission. Shannon Boomsma from White Engineering reviewed the five work areas in the park and the proposed restoration to areas along the riverbank deteriorating due to erosion. The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program and the Department of Environmental Protection both submitted comments on the work. A biologist will evaluate the habitat of the wood turtle in the river area, after which work may proceed. The permit was approved by the Commission with one condition: that the new stone used for restoration match the color of the existing area stone.

Next, the Commission reviewed the Enforcement Order (EO) issued to Grass Market LLC under the continued hearing for the Request For Determination (RDA) by Margaret and Joseph Koerner of 2128 Canaan Southfield Road. The attorney for the Koerners, Emily Renshaw of Morgan, Lewis, and Bocklus LLP, was on the call to submit her client's continuing concern about the operations of a neighboring gravel pit and the roadway access to the pit area. The Commission explained that since they have not yet received permission from the property owner to visit the site, verification of compliance to the EO cannot be obtained. Commission member Freddy Friedman reported that he met with the contractor to review the conditions for compliance necessary to address the EO. The hearing was continued until the Commission received further information.

The Commission then reviewed the RDA from the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery at 240 Hatchery Road. Oak Point Associates has proposed a phased, three-year

project to construct a new multi-purpose building which would consolidate the several existing buildings scattered on the site. The Commission agreed that the plan would have a net positive result reducing the impervious surfaces and reducing the impact to the buffer zone of the wetland. The Commission determined that no further permitting was necessary.

Next, the Commission reviewed the RDA for Sara Kiesel of 109 Mill River Great Barrington Road to install a new septic system at her residence. Kelly Granger and Parsons Associates issued septic drawings for the new system and the permit was given a negative determination meaning no further permitting was required.

Two associates from R. Levesque Associates were on the call to present an RDA for Robert Goyette of 120 Hillside Avenue to build a new house and septic system. The Commission noted that the new construction would result in a significant increase in the square footage of the existing three-season cottage by Lake Buel, but that it complied with the Wetlands Protection Act. The RDA was given a negative determination with one condition: that the new driveway be constructed with a permeable material to help manage runoff.

Lastly, the Commission reviewed the RDA for Daniel Mintz of Hayes Hill Road submitted by Mike Kulig of Berkshire Engineering. The permit included the construction of a pre-fab house and a new driveway. The permit was also given a negative determination, noting that, while some of the work is in the buffer zone, the work will not alter the wetland.

After reviewing and approving the minutes from last month's meeting, the Commission made two notations for upcoming agendas: to revisit the discussion of the Scenic Mountains Act and to convene a larger group of experts to discuss the size and scale of future development at Lake Buel. With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned. □

Martha Bryan



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CREATURE BREAD IS RISING

Creature Bread is on a boulev! Mill River resident Travis Brecher's bread business has been expanding as fast as his dough, due in part to his growing client base and in part to the growing community needs during the pandemic. His volume is currently at 350 – 400 loaves per week, with 150 loaves for Rubiner's Cheesemongers in Great Barrington and the rest for Mill River Farm, North Plain Farm, Farm Country Soup, and local farmers' markets (New Marlborough, Sheffield, and West Stockbridge). Along with this demand, Travis has increased his efficiency by installing a bigger oven that produces steam with a simple release valve and by creating a fully furnished bakery in his father's former furniture repair shop. The oven, obtained from a Baltimore bakery that was going out of business, along with the switch from cast iron Dutch ovens to thicker baking stones, has




Travis Brecher in his newly created bakery, with his new, larger oven in the background

photo by Robbi Hartt

helped him produce an even more delectable bread. "The biggest difference is in the bottom crust," he notes. The rattan proofing baskets and floor-to-ceiling baker's rack, which holds 160 loaves at a time, have also increased his efficiency.

As demands have risen, Travis has enlisted the help of his parents, Ron and Louise, more and more. "Both are a huge part of the business," he states, "they help immensely in the whole process." What began as a hobby has turned into a thriving local business in a very short time. Creature Bread has become our daily bread in New Marlborough! New customers may reach out to the retailers listed above for direct purchases or go to Travis's instagram account @creaturebread. creaturebread@gmail.com. All business is done by pre-order exclusively.

Robbi Hartt



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LAND TRUST NEWS

Progress even in the time of Covid-19! The Land Trust has completed a new trail at the Goodnow Preserve, thanks to our enthusiastic and generous volunteers. The roughly 2.5 mile loop

makes a new connection to the Hadsell Street open field and branches off the existing Carroll Mill loop down near the Konkapot River. The trail allows for a longer stroll along the river and wanders through a mixed hardwood forest of varied terrain. Generally, the trail is of moderate difficulty as there are two areas that are steep and require some heart and muscle. We are proud to offer diverse trail experiences for all abilities and varying masters of adventure.

Stay tuned this fall for increased trail signage at the Goodnow Preserve as well as new kiosks built by Will Levin, a New Marlborough woodworker, and installed at both the New Marlboro and Goodnow Preserves.

The Land Trust is constantly seeking ways that our properties might afford new opportunities for environmental education, especially for our younger generations. We have started a connection with Tes Reed, environmental and wilderness educator, and resident of New Marlborough. She recently led a band of “Boys in The Woods” to the Joffe Nature Sanctuary, their mission – “demolition and

destruction” of the invasive species to save and restore the wetland. Under Tes’s guidance, the boys attacked the thick covering of bittersweet, Japanese barberry, and honeysuckle. They inspired each other and were empowered by their accomplishments, resulting in a burn pile of invasives cut from mature trees. Their hard work made a difference to the habitat threatened by overwhelming invasive growth, and, as an added bonus, they spent a day in the woods away from computers and the challenges of remote learning.

Perhaps a silver lining to the pandemic is that the Land Trust can build a core project which provides opportunities for youth to get outdoors, learn from hands-on experience and contribute to stewarding our natural resources. We



Clean-up at the Joffe Nature Sanctuary: Before...



...and After!

photos by Tess Reed

welcome any ideas and assistance in pairing educators and students for work in the outdoors.

Future land conservation is in the hands of our youth. The Land Trust bets on Tes’s crew, pictured here in the woods at Joffe. The photos of the crew before and after the “job” tell the story of how time spent in nature and with friends inevitably changes and enriches both nature and human.

We sincerely hope that all ages are freely taking advantage of, and finding solace on, our trails. Do take notice that, if you venture into Thousand Acre Swamp, it is a huge territory and is relatively advanced hiking – take a friend and a compass for your safety. □

Martha Bryan

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A WORD FROM GRAHAM FRANK

Police Chief Graham Frank had a serious accident on August 30. Here he describes the injuries he suffered, and the beginning of his recovery.

"I fell roughly twenty feet from the top step of a two-person ladder stand. I was scouting out an area to bring my son for the opening day of bear season, which was the following Tuesday. I was alone and could not find my phone to call for help. Somehow I managed to walk to the house, where my stepbrother was home; he called 911.

"My injuries consisted of fractures of the bones in my spine from t2 to t5, fractures to ribs 2 through 9, ribs broken at the back where they connect to the spine, and multiple other fractures throughout. Ribs 5, 7, and 8 are displaced; I also had a collapsed lung and a grade 2 liver laceration. As serious as these injuries are, I've been told that I was actually lucky. Had I landed differently, I might be permanently handicapped, paralyzed, or have broken my neck.

"I was fortunate to be admitted to the Spaulding rehabilitation facility in Boston when I was released from the hospital about a week after the accident. This high-quality facility provided the rehabilitation for the victims of the Boston Marathon bombing. My doctor was excellent,

and by coincidence has a home in Sandisfield. I spent two weeks at Spaulding, where I was doing three to four hours of therapy a day.

"The transition in coming home on September 17 was a lot harder than I had thought it would be. I am doing well just trying to manage the pain. Mornings are the hardest; I need to keep moving around and working as much as possible. I have been overwhelmed with the support I've received from townspeople and surrounding communities. It definitely gives me strength with the healing process, which at times is extremely difficult.

"I could never have imagined receiving so much support for an accident; the cards, texts, messages on Facebook, thoughts, and prayers have been amazing and humbling. I have always loved New Marlborough since I first started working here in 2009, and I am proud to serve such a great community. I could not ask for a better place to be, and I am very, very lucky." □



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AN INTERVIEW WITH LINDA GREENHOUSE

The New York Times's Supreme Court Analyst Is Coming to Music & More

The coronavirus has shuttered concert halls, art galleries, movie houses, culture in general throughout Berkshire County this summer — not to mention an entire slate of Music & More performances originally scheduled for August and September. But determination, and technology, have come to the rescue of the season's final event: a talk with *New York Times* Supreme Court columnist Linda Greenhouse. The program, with Simon Winchester handling the interview, will be streamed via Zoom, starting at 4:30 p.m., October 3. With the death on Friday, September 18, of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the relevance of the dialogue between Ms. Greenhouse, who wrote the obituary for the *Times*, and Mr. Winchester becomes all that much greater.

Following the controversy over last year's selection of Garrison Keillor, who had been accused of mistreatment by women on the staff of his "Prairie Home Companion," it was deemed important, says Mr. Winchester, "to have a woman this year." His suggestion of Ms. Greenhouse, a Pulitzer Prize winner and a professor at Yale Law School, was enthusiastically welcomed by the programming subcommittee of the New Marlborough Village Association, which produces Music & More. "They jumped at the choice," says Mr. Winchester, who added that Ms. Greenhouse responded in kind, saying "Absolutely, I'd love to."

To assist with the mechanics of a Zoom program, New Marlborough Village Association President Ben Harms contacted the *Berkshire Eagle*. Not only has the *Eagle* done a lot of this sort of thing, its publicity and advertising for the event promised to add a heap of new email addresses and potential new Village Association members.

Ms. Greenhouse's expertise on the Supreme Court notwithstanding, Mr. Winchester promises to range widely with his distinguished interviewee: her professional career, starting as a reporter in Albany, New York; her academic career; her views on the future of the nation's newspapers (as it happens, both she and Mr. Winchester serve on the advisory board of the *Eagle*); and, of course, her informed judgement on the chance of a legal challenge to the presidential election, not to mention the battle shaping up over the successor to Justice Ginsburg.

Linda Greenhouse, whose most recent book, *Just*

Music and More in partnership with the *Berkshire Eagle* presents

Conversation Series

LINDA GREENHOUSE

OCTOBER 3
4:30PM

SIMON WINCHESTER

a *Journalist, On the Press, Life and the Spaces Between*, was published in 2017, teaches a course on the Supreme Court, its role in government, how it functions, how it chooses cases, at Yale. Residents of New Haven, she and her lawyer husband, Eugene Fedell, have a home in Stockbridge, close enough to the village center to stroll into town each morning to pick up their copy of the *Times*.

For some, a country home provides a respite from career demands. Not Ms. Greenhouse. Although she is taking a year's sabbatical from her teaching, her authoritative voice on the Supreme Court is much in demand. In mid-September, for example, she devoted three entire days, via Zoom, speaking at conferences on jurisprudence: a global conclave of high-court judges in the morning, and a law school sponsored conference on the role of the courts in a time of crisis in the afternoon. She continues to write her bi-weekly column for the *Times*. And for a change of pace, she has taken to sending a poem each morning to a growing list of friends and college classmates, a practice that began early in the pandemic lockdown with a poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay on spring. (On a recent morning, it was "Snake" by D. H. Lawrence.)

The interview will be conducted from their respective homes. Ms. Greenhouse's in Stockbridge; Mr. Winchester's, when he is not traversing the globe for a book (his current opus, *Land: How the Hunger for Ownership Shaped the Modern World*, was shipped off to publisher HarperCollins in early September), in Sandisfield.

To register for the event, go to berkshireeagle.com/oct3 and, following the directions, fill in your name and email address. □

Joe Poindexter

NEIGHBORS



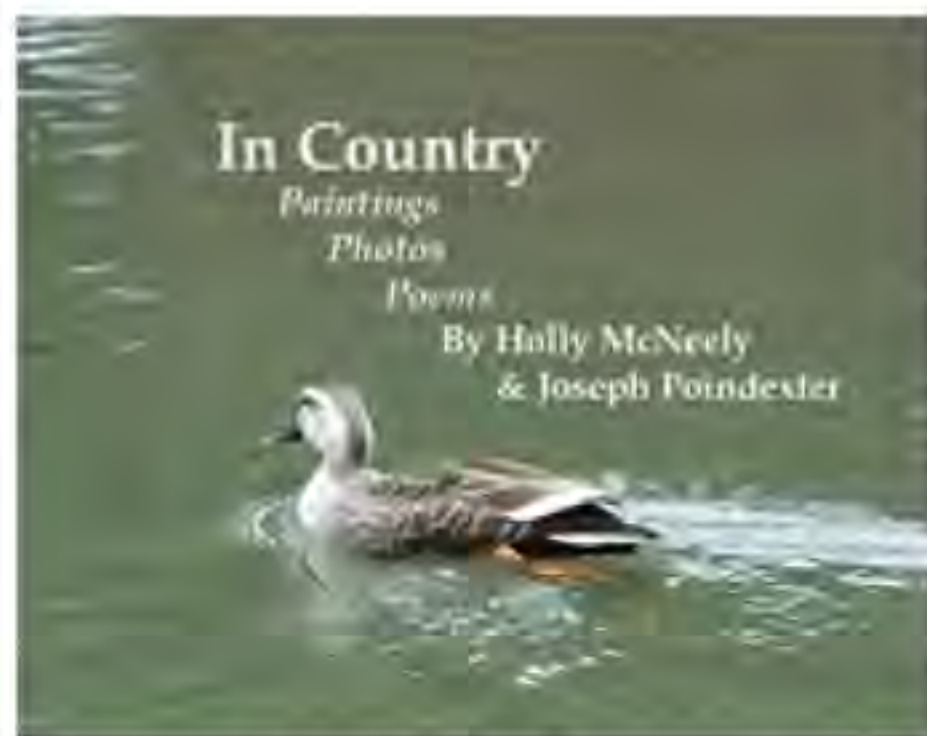
From **Larry Burke** in New Marlborough: “**Jane and I** had the huge pleasure of hosting our **daughter Carrie’s** wedding at our home on August 29. Carrie and her husband, **Yair Sanchez Molina**, met in Mexico City a year and a half ago. A good deal of traveling back and forth ensued, Carrie going to Mexico and Yair coming up here to Cambridge and New Marlborough. Things came to a halt visit-wise due to the pandemic; Carrie had to cancel a trip to Mexico in March, and a subsequent trip planned for Yair to Cambridge in May had to be postponed to August. They decided to make it official after many months of missing each other.

“The wedding ceremony was limited in size, with just a few relatives and old friends, all socially-distanced, and with Yair’s family participating via Zoom from several locales in Mexico. The service itself was conducted in both English and Spanish, by virtue of the bilingual talents of Amy Linder-Lesser, a Justice of the Peace who lives in Lenox. The wedding day was one of the rare rainy days we’ve had this summer, but the sun came bursting out right on schedule and the ceremony went ahead outside, under our enormous old maple tree, just as Carrie had planned.”

Two New Marlborough residents “celebrated” their ninetieth birthdays in the era of Covid:

Jerry Stephens, of Southfield, turned ninety on August 14. With daughter Tiffany out of the country, his celebration was limited to his wife, Yvonne, their grandson Hunter, Hunter’s girlfriend Michaela, and friends Peter and Karla Alfano. Yvonne noted that thanks to Covid, three college graduations and their own sixtieth wedding anniversary went largely uncelebrated.

Anna Broggi, of Mill River, turned ninety on September 23. Her three sons organized a drive-by “party,” where Anna waved at the participants from her front yard and greeted them in their cars. Her family and her brothers and sisters stayed later for dinner, but as Anna summed it up, “You can’t do much these days.”



The quarantine and movement restrictions in the spring of 2020 caused three New Marlborough residents to act on projects that they had been thinking about, off and on, for some time.

Holly McNeely and Joe Poindexter were considering a way to combine their professional skill, hers as a graphic artist and book designer, his as a writer and editor. The arrival of two more grandchildren in October and December 2019, joining Leo, age four, provided the impetus for the creation of *In Country: Paintings, Photos, and Poems*. The book is dedicated to **Leo, Lyra, and Hugo**; they haven’t read it yet, but their parents and grandparents have.

Holly says that the premier rule of book design is that the text comes first, supported by the pictures or illustrations. She was able to lay out each of the pages using an on-line source, but connecting words and images was less clear-cut. Eventually, they decided there had to be an underlying thread just in the very fact they’ve been married to each other for forty-four years. Holly turned her individual layouts over to designer **Diane Barth**, who, using an on-line source, Lulu, converted the project into its final, printable form.

The title of **Louise Yohalem’s** memoir came to her many years ago as she was tucking her granddaughter, Maya, into bed: *Grandma, Tell Me a Story About When You Were a Little Girl*. About two years ago, Louise decided to write this memoir; she bought a laptop computer, wrote about seven pages...and stopped. Over the next couple of years she’d think of something to include, scribble it on a scrap of paper, and put it in the laptop’s case. In early March, she and her husband, Nat, had just returned from a road trip when the Northeast closed down due to the coronavirus. Louise had often told herself that when she retired, she’d write. This seemed like the time to do it.



photo by Larry Burke

Yair Sanchez Molina and Carrie Burke on their rainy-turned-sunny wedding day



So out came the laptop along with two years' worth of scribbled notes, and she set to work. Laborious as it was, she really enjoyed the process of writing and reliving a childhood growing up in a very different New York City. Louise pointed out, "I have two degrees in English literature, but had never undertaken creative writing. Now at age seventy-nine, I have finally published a book!"

She also credits **Diane Barth** with not only creating a publishable book, but also with reclaiming old family photographs to accompany the text. It is as much a family history as the memoir of a New York childhood. Her grandchildren, now ages twenty-two, twenty, and twenty, are thrilled with what they realize is an amazing gift for the whole family.

Tim Newman, who lives in Southfield, has directed a short film inspired by the poem, "On the Closing of the Theaters by Government Decree," written by another longtime Southfield resident, **Michael Brady**. The film celebrates the resilience of the arts in the Berkshires, and provides the viewer hope for the return of the many important arts and cultural centers in our county. The film can be seen at <https://youtu.be/gcrpeTSsJL4> □

compiled by Barbara Lowman: deeuuell@yahoo.com

OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

photo by Wendy Miller



A great blue heron making himself at home in the Millers' chicken coop

In last month's issue, we heard from **Nicole Campanale** about the **great blue heron** that was grazing on voles in the fields around her house. Apparently this is a thing, as **Wendy Miller** wrote in on September 13 about the heron at John's and her farm: "He has been at the Brookmede Farm for several weeks now surviving on **voles and mice**. He recently found his way into the chicken coop!"

New Marlborough village resident **John Schreiber** had this to say about the challenges of farming: "A **bear cub** nuked a piece of my corn field. Left half eaten corn everywhere. I caught him at it, and he ran off into woods. I was just able to get one quick photo of him in the distance. Other than that bit of excitement, I am hearing lots of **owls** hooting, and the last of the **hummingbirds** tanked up on our feeder and left town!"

Don Beauchamp checked in from Clayton to say his computer had crashed last month, which is why we hadn't heard from him. He says he is seeing what he believes are groups of female birds coming from the north, eating seeds for a day or two, and then moving on. He still has **orioles** coming by to drink sugar water. He ends by noting that, "There was also a nice small **bobcat** in the yard. I haven't seen any **bunnies** lately." Those two observations might just be related!

On September 17, **LuAnn Bailey and Bill Smith**, who live right in the center of Hartsville, reported, "Last evening we had this unexpected visitor in our backyard." There have been a few other sightings of this massive **bull moose** along the Konkapot and around Lake Buel. Be careful driving in that part of town at night! □



photo by John Schreiber

A corn-loving bear cub

photo by LuAnn Bailey



A bull moose by the Konkapot in Hartsville



photo by John Schreiber

Three female hummingbirds at the filling station

Compiled by Larry Burke. Send your wildlife sightings and stories to lburke2@me.com

THE LOG

Police Department (selected entries)

- Aug. 1 11:23 p.m. Operator of an all-terrain vehicle injured on Hayes Hill Road near Clayton Mill River Road is transported by helicopter to Baystate Hospital in Springfield.
- Aug. 2 12:04 p.m. A caller requests assistance in ridding his Mill River Southfield Road residence of an invading raccoon.
- 12:17 p.m. An officer investigates a breaking and entering incident in which money and passports were stolen from a Norfolk Road residence.
- 10:44 p.m. A caller from the Old Inn on the Green reports the return of an uninvited guest, a black bear.
- Aug. 4 3:05 p.m. A caller reports that a tree has fallen on a vehicle at his Norfolk Road residence. This is the first of twenty-five calls over a twelve-day period alerting the Department to trees on wires, trees blocking roads and driveways, electrical outages (which in one case resulted in a resident being trapped inside an elevator in his house), and a tree stump on fire, all the result of tropical storm Isaias on August 4.
- Aug. 5 6:57 p.m. A caller reports a disturbance at her Pine Road residence.
- Aug. 7 10:08 a.m. An officer investigating a report of illegal dumping at a Lakeside Drive property determines that a bear is the guilty party.
- 10:57 a.m. Officer assists an employee of Camp Segowea to exit the property after an electric utility worker mistakenly used a secondary lock on the front gate.
- 5:17 p.m. A Hartsville Mill River Road resident alerts the Department to a scam caller representing himself as an officer of the Social Security Administration.
- Aug. 8 1:04 p.m. An officer reports multiple instances of illegal parking on Umpachene Falls Road.
- 9:16 p.m. The Department is alerted to a dispute at a New Marlborough village residence.
- Aug. 9 5:49 p.m. A caller reports that two donkeys are loose in the yard of her Alum Hill Road residence.
- 7:50 p.m. A Mill River Southfield Road resident requests help in getting her cat down from a tree.
- Aug. 10 8:16 a.m. A caller reports that a dozen cows are grazing in the yard of her Mill River Southfield Road residence.
- 10:04 a.m. Cows reported loose along Clayton Mill River Road.
- Aug. 12 1:25 p.m. An officer on patrol returns a stray dog to its home on Norfolk Road.
- Aug. 14 5:53 p.m. A caller reports that his vehicle is disabled at the side of Konkapot Road.
- Aug. 15 9:10 a.m. A caller reports an injured, disoriented skunk in the yard of her Mill River village residence.
- 11:38 a.m. A caller reports hearing gunshots she believes are coming from her Southfield village property.
- 2:40 p.m. East Hill Road residents are asked to desist from target practice after a neighbor complains of gunshots.
- 4:09 p.m. The disoriented skunk, now thought to be rabid, returns to a Mill River village residence.
- 7:58 p.m. The source of smoke, and a neighbor's complaint, turns out to be a campfire, which is extinguished.
- Aug. 16 3:59 p.m. A caller reports a two-car accident near the intersection of Mill River Great Barrington and County Roads.
- 9:16 p.m. A resident reports people with bright lights in the Clayton village cornfield, but when an officer arrives fifteen minutes later, lights and people are nowhere in evidence.
- 9:37 p.m. A musician playing at the entrance to the Clayton cornfield is asked to move on.
- Aug. 17 3:18 p.m. A Hatchery Road resident reports the presence of a sick raccoon; when the animal returns an hour and a half later, it is dispatched by an officer.
- Aug. 20 11:17 a.m. Officer assists a Hadsell Street resident whose lawnmower has ended up in his pond.
- Aug. 21 4:49 p.m. Following a complaint about a suspicious vehicle parked on a wood road on his New Marlborough Hill Road property, an officer determines that the "trespassers" are relatives of the caller.
- 6:21 p.m. A caller complains of a car repeatedly speeding past his East Hill Road residence.
- Aug. 22 12:26 p.m. An officer helps restore the peace at an Adsit Crosby Road residence.
- 12:47 p.m. The animal control officer is notified after a husky is reported loose on New Marlborough Hill Road.
- 10:56 p.m. Following a complaint from an East Hill Road resident, a neighbor is told to turn down the music.
- Aug. 23 5:53 p.m. A sick raccoon is dispatched on a Hartsville Mill River Road property.
- Aug. 24 12:05 p.m. A caller complains about trucks speeding past her Cross Road to Canaan Valley Road property.

- 3:43 p.m. Another sick raccoon report, this one from a New Marlborough Hill Road resident.
- Aug. 25 8:05 a.m. A Juniper Hill Road resident asks for help in ridding a snake from his house.
- Aug. 28 12:37 p.m. The animal control officer is called to test yet another strangely acting raccoon, dispatched at a Hartsville Mill River Road residence.
- Aug. 30 11:05 a.m. A Southfield resident complains of parked cars blocking traffic on East Hill Road.
- 1:11 p.m. A caller complains of persistent speeding of a farm truck past his Brewer Branch Road property.
- 1:31 p.m. A caller expresses her suspicions of a driver in a van that entered her driveway on Peter Menaker Road, then departed after stating he was looking for a different house.
- 5:46 p.m. The Department issues a BOLO (be on the lookout) to all county police units for a silver four-door Jeep, whose driver

- stated to a pedestrian on Clayton Mill River Road that he was attempting to run down dogs and people with his vehicle.
- Aug. 31 10:24 a.m. A Clayton resident alerts the Department to a scam caller seeking his Social Security Number.
- 3:11 p.m. The Department is notified that Connecticut State Police have located the Jeep whose driver had allegedly issued a threat to dogs and their owners; a female passenger in the Jeep claimed that a verbal dispute of the day before arose because the driver had to slam on his brakes to avoid hitting a dog that was walking in the road.
- 2:00 p.m. An Aberdeen Lane resident asks for help in freeing her 18-month-old who has locked herself in the family's car; five minutes later she calls back to report that the infant has figured out how to unlock the car herself.

Graham Frank, Chief of Police

FIRE AND RESCUE

- Aug. 1 11:38 p.m. Hayes Hill Road ATV Crash
- Aug. 3 11:39 a.m. Cross Road to Canaan Valley Road Medical Call
- Aug. 3 8:08 p.m. Hartsville New Marlborough Road Medical Call
- Aug. 4 Tropical Storm Isaias – 29 reports of trees/wires down
- Aug. 5 5:30 a.m. Norfolk Road Fire Alarm
- Aug. 5 7:52 a.m. Norfolk Road CO Alarm
- Aug. 5 8:55 a.m. Canaan Southfield Road Wires Down/Fire
- Aug. 5 9:46 a.m. Mutual Aid to North Canaan Structure Fire
- Aug. 5 5:30 p.m. East Hill Road Fire Alarm
- Aug. 6 7:26 p.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road Fire Alarm
- Aug. 6 10:00 p.m. Canaan Southfield Road Wires Down/Fire
- Aug. 8 11:24 p.m. East Hill Road Medical Call
- Aug. 9 5:07 p.m. Norfolk Road Medical Call
- Aug. 10 5:41 a.m. Canaan Southfield Road CO Alarm
- Aug. 10 4:02 p.m. Cross Road to Canaan Valley Road Fire Alarm
- Aug. 12 5:00 p.m. Hartsville New Marlborough Road Fire Alarm
- Aug. 13 8:25 a.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road Possible Electrical Fire
- Aug. 13 11:20 a.m. Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call
- Aug. 13 4:39 p.m. Mutual Aid to Sandisfield Medical Call

- Aug. 14 5:23 p.m. Mutual Aid to Monterey Water Rescue/Search
- Aug. 15 9:41 p.m. Shunpike Road Outside Burn
- Aug. 16 4:02 p.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call
- Aug. 17 9:35 p.m. Canaan Southfield Road CO Alarm
- Aug. 18 9:02 a.m. Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call
- Aug. 19 5:48 p.m. Brewer Branch Road Medical Call
- Aug. 22 11:48 a.m. Hayes Hill Road Medical Call
- Aug. 23 8:53 a.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call
- Aug. 26 11:05 p.m. Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call
- Aug. 28 10:25 p.m. Hartsville New Marlborough Road Fire Alarm

Fire Company President David Smith



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RECIPE OF THE MONTH

For the gardeners out there who had more luck with their cabbages than I did this year (a fence is only an effective measure against sheep when people remember to close the gate), Mark Phillips is here to help you out. We are lucky to have Mark and Sandrine Harris as our neighbors, and have been enjoying Mark's wonderful fermented produce during the summer, but we'll have to visit the New Marlborough Farmers Market for a cabbage or two to try this for ourselves.

Fiona Kerr

Mark Phillips' Fermented Cabbage

Vegetable fermentation is a timeless, safe, and effective strategy for preserving and enhancing the flavor of garden produce. Lactic-acid fermentation (or "lacto-fermentation," as it is sometimes called) occurs naturally when vegetables are submerged in salt-brine: lactobacillus bacteria live on all vegetables and convert sugars to lactic-acid, thereby ensuring food safety through acidity while producing the sour tang commonly associated with sauerkraut, kimchi, and dill pickles. Unlike vinegar based pickles which rely on vinegar to provide the acidity for pickling, the magic of lactic-acid fermentation is that flavor and preservation occur naturally through the fermentation process itself. When making sauerkraut, kimchi, dilly beans, ginger carrots, or any other form of fermented veggie, *our only job is to submerge vegetables under salt brine*. The bacteria, in turn, will do the rest of the work. The recipe below can be used to ferment any vegetable: try carrots, radishes, celeriac, onions, garlic, or all types of peppers for a fermented hot sauce.

Ingredients:

1 to 2 heads cabbage

Sea salt to taste - non-iodized sea salt or kosher with zero additives for best results

(If you have a scale, measure salt at 2 percent the total weight of vegetables.

If not, start with about 1 tablespoon of salt per head of cabbage and go from there.)

Additional vegetables and/or spices to taste (carrot, onion, garlic, caraway seed, dill, etc.)

Mason jar, crock, or other vessel for fermenting

- **Slice cabbage in half and remove the core, then slice cabbage finely with a knife, mandoline, or food processor.**
- **In a mixing bowl, add salt to the sliced cabbage (along with additional vegetables/spices), starting with 1 tablespoon per head of cabbage. If you have a scale, measure 2 percent salt by total weight of vegetables. Otherwise, use your tastebuds to add the amount of salt that works for you. Salt is essential for vegetable fermentation, so don't skip this step!**
- **Massage the salt into the cabbage for 5-10 minutes to wilt the vegetables and release water; this liquid combines with your salt to become the brine used for fermentation.**
- **After your cabbage has thoroughly wilted, pack it tightly into your cleaned vessel along with brine. There will be enough brine if more than one jar is used.**
- **Use the cabbage core, a plastic-bag filled with water, or any other item to weight down your vegetables to keep them submerged in the brine. The vessel can be covered but should not be sealed tight as fermentation will produce CO2.**

Store your vessel in a place you can see, checking on it every few days. Brine will release over a 24-hour period, so place the vessel on a plate to catch overflow. If the brine level drops below the surface, add a bit more water. Taste it after one week, keep fermenting for as long as you like, and store in the fridge indefinitely when the kraut has fermented to the point of your desire.

If surface scum develops in the course of the fermentation, simply remove it with clean hands or utensils and keep fermenting. Remember the primary maxim of vegetable fermentation: Submerge in brine and you'll be fine! Lactic-acid fermentation is extremely safe and there has never been a reported case of food-borne illness from this process.

Note: If making kraut in the winter, spring, or early summer with stored cabbages, occasionally water may need to be added to produce a sufficient brine for fermentation. This is because cabbages and other vegetables will dry out during their storage.

Questions, comments, or requests for more comprehensive instructions can be emailed to Mark Phillips at earthculturesnortheast@gmail.com, or you can follow Mark on instagram at @EarthCultures.

BROADBAND UPDATE

Since the announcement was made that Charter/Spectrum will be installing high-speed internet as well as cable TV programming and telephone service, there has been optimism and some skepticism that the people of New Marlborough will finally be provided with these three services.

The Cable Advisory Board, in conjunction with Charter, has been monitoring Charter's progress, and can report that they are installing fiber cable on poles – the equipment needed for a start of service sometime in the spring of 2021, weather permitting. Charter reports that they are on or ahead of schedule and remain confident they will meet their obligations on time.

It should be remembered that of the 100 or so miles of roads in our town, about 75 miles will have aerial and/or underground installations of fiber optic cable. At this time about 2 to 3 percent of these roads have had cable installed. The status of work is made available every week, and current work is described in a



Photo by Michael Shocket

Fiber optic cable being installed on South Sandisfield Road on September 16

weekly "street sheet" posted on the Board's webpage (www.newmarlboroughma.gov/cable-advisory-committee).

We expect to be able to order Charter service in the early part of 2021, after the final testing has taken place around New Marlborough. The encouraging news is we are on track, Charter is making progress. □

Michael Shocket, member, Cable Advisory Committee

MAILBOX



To the Editors,

I won't be hooking up to Charter Communications high-speed internet connection due to the inordinate cost. While 96 percent of New Marlborough houses will be charged \$50 to hook up, I was advised that, due to my location, my cost would be \$5,800. That is not a misprint - five thousand eight hundred dollars.

Mr. Steve Klein, Chair of the Cable Advisory Committee, Town of New Marlborough, was the point person who contacted me to inform me of this situation. He said that the cost quoted to me was in line with those for the other 4 percent. He put me in touch with Mr. John P. Decker, construction coordinator for Charter, to whom I have spoken to no avail. Mr. Klein said that he understood my disappointment with this situation. I replied that I was outraged rather than just disappointed.

I have written to the top executives of Charter, Thomas M. Rutledge, chairman and CEO, and John Buckham, President and COO. To date I have not received a reply.

My house is in a dead zone for cell service, so I rely on land line. I have addressed this situation with the telephone company and have gotten no reply. We had to pay for the poles to be installed when my family first got electricity and a phone line many years ago when Route 183 was a gravel/oil road. That cost seemed reasonable then.

In this day and age, high-speed internet service is as vital as a telephone was back then. It should not cost \$5,800. to hook up.

Thomas M. Callahan
New Marlborough

THE SCHOOL REPORT

After months of Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) School Committee Zoom meetings packed with issues associated with education during the pandemic, it was a breath of fresh air to find a new item on the agenda for the September 10 meeting: "Approval of an Activities Account for the Diversity Book Project." Mount Everett Librarian Michelle Raszl explained that a student had come forward with the idea of adding books on diversity to the elementary school libraries, and the student hoped to raise money to supplement the District's library budget. The committee enthusiastically approved the request. As it turns out, the student is Mount Everett High School senior Cecelia Caldwell, who lives in Southfield and who was willing to be interviewed about the project.

She explained that, over the last four years, she had observed the state of the world, especially in these last few months, and, as someone too young to vote, felt powerless. With plenty of time to read during the period of no in-person schooling, she realized how powerful books can be in opening people's minds. She thought books might be especially important to young minds in our rural community because there is exposure to only a limited view of the world. She got the idea that she herself might have the power to make change by increasing children's world view through access to a more diverse spectrum of books. She emailed Charles Miller, the elementary principal, in mid-August, saying that she would like to start this initiative, and he immediately endorsed her idea. She said, "He instantly reached out to both Mount Everett's and Undermountain's librarians. Both were incredibly excited and have been working with me and supporting me throughout this process."

Given the green light, she has been using various online sources to research the most highly rated books and forwarding her recommendations to the librarians. Some of the titles include *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña, *Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History* by Vashti Harrison, *Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag* by Rob Sanders, *This Book is Anti-Racist* by Tiffany Jewell, and the *Once Upon a World Series*, which retells classic fairy tales through a multicultural lens. The librarians have been ordering the books, using the library budget and \$1,000 that Cecilia has raised on her own.

One month into the project, she explained that, as it has evolved, new aspects have surfaced. She said, "While I'm still working on finding children's books, I'm also



Mount Everett senior and Southfield resident Cece Caldwell

photo by Gail Caldwell

working on exploring high school-level authors and books to read. Working with Ms. Raszl, I want to reach middle and high school students as well. We're going to start a social justice oriented book club." In addition, she also would like to coordinate live virtual readings over Zoom where older kids will get a chance to read to younger kids. She also has started a social justice league, which will start with a Free Library box where people can exchange books. She has written a grant request to the Youth Operational Board at Railroad Street Youth Project to buy the box.

She mentioned, "I've been trying to read as many books on diversity as I can in my free time for my own personal growth. I just finished *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi and *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. My goal is to bring about as much change as I possibly can during my last year of high school. I also hope the change I make will last once I've graduated, and that more students and community members will want to keep the project going."

Ms. Raszl said how heartening it has been for her to return to her work with students, in part as a result of Cecilia's project. The School Committee seemed equally happy to see that, even with the limitations of schooling during the pandemic, this kind of student initiated work is encouraged.

The next item on the agenda, "Approval of the Fall Athletics Program," reflected the piecemeal fashion in which the Education Commissioner and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education have created challenges to planning for fall reopening. One of the last directives having to do with athletics programs came in early September: no contact sports. The coaches from SBRSD were on hand to explain the plan. Districts in the Berkshires have agreed upon a very limited schedule for two sports, golf and cross country. Busing will not be provided, so parents have to transport their children, but they cannot stay to observe the competitions. Students can play soccer through the Youth Soccer travel teams that are separate from the public schools. All athletics require the same social distancing and mask wearing required by the District, which means changes to the usual rules of play. There was a good deal of discussion to reassure Committee members that all participating districts would be using the same safety protocols before a vote to approve was passed.

Another item was the three-page Covid-19 contract

which each family must sign in order for children to attend school in person. Zoom and socially-distanced outdoor meetings were held where each family met with a staff member to go over the details of the contract to ensure that everyone knows that masks are required of all students, health checks are required before leaving for school, and hand washing and social distancing are mandatory in the building. It also includes a code of conduct to protect the privacy of families while remote learning is in progress.

A report from Director of Curriculum and Professional Development Amy Lyn included a review of the training teachers had been receiving in how to design remote learning effectively with the inclusion of social/emotional learning. She shared her survey of the faculty responses to this professional development, which was very positive. Of special note was the excellent leadership shown by several teachers who have expertise in on-line learning. They will continue to support other teachers after school opens especially on Wednesdays, where ninety minutes of time is reserved for teachers to work together.

The committee went on to approve new policies related to Covid-19. The mask wearing is now codified. The immunization of students now includes the influenza vaccine, as required by the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The September 17 meeting of the School Committee was held in person, to be in solidarity with the upcoming hybrid school opening set for September 28. Six members were able to attend in person, socially distanced in the Mount Everett cafeteria, with two members using Zoom. With the help of microphones provided by technology director Chris Thompson, everyone could be heard. The report from Superintendent Regulbuto was that the remote opening of school went well, despite the fact that the laptops ordered months ago had not arrived. There is a chronic shortage of devices regionally but it is hoped they will arrive within the next week. Meanwhile school laptops for the most in need have been distributed to grades 3 through 12, while 75 percent of the

younger students have been given iPads. She went on to say that the District is sympathetic with families who are having difficulties with remote learning including lack of connectivity at home, children's resistance to parents as teachers, and the fact that parents need to do their own work. Those who have no options for connectivity may qualify to have their children come into school on remote days to do their work in a supervised space. Children of District teachers have the option of coming to school on remote days as well. Those children whose parents are facing economic stresses and are compelled to leave the home to work have been referred to CLuB, which is a community organized collaborative between Berkshire South, Flying Cloud Institute, Greenagers, and VIM, providing supervised locations to do remote learning and enrichment. At Parent Night, parents will learn how to better navigate the various learning platforms used by their children.

On September 28, the District transitioned from fully remote learning to the hybrid model. Parents have chosen one of four groupings, or "cohorts," for their children. Cohort A, which has sixty children, is in school four days a week to accommodate the need for extra in-person learning; cohorts B and C students (numbering 225) attend two days a week, Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday; and cohort D (forty) remains fully remote. At New Marlborough Central, there are currently ten students in A, sixty-one in B and C, and twenty-nine in D. Families can opt to change cohorts at any time.

After so much preparation to provide safe education, Ms. Regulbuto feels confident that our buildings are safe and all staff has been trained for success, but she reminded the Committee that there needs to be an understanding that we remain "flexible and fluid." She hopes all can work together when and if changes are required to deal with the unpredictable path of the pandemic, the struggles families face, and the challenges the educators face in meeting the needs of all student. □

Jane Burke

SBRSD School Committee Chair

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- One By One*, by Ruth Ware
- The Darkest Evening*, by Ann Cleeves
- The Book of Two Ways*, by Jodi Picoult

Adult Nonfiction

- Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man*, by Mary L. Trump
- Killing Crazy Horse: The Merciless Indian Wars in America*, by Bill O'Reilly

Children's Fiction

- The Magic Misfits: The Fourth Suit*, by Neil Patrick Harris
- The Vanderbeekers: Lost and Found*, by Karina Yon Glaser
- Wild Symphony*, by Dan Brown



Join Us For A Halloween Drive-by!

Saturday, October 31st, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. (And... it's a full moon that night!)

Decorated carved pumpkins by the children of New Marlborough

Check out our Spooky Library Yard - if you DARE!

Community Helpers in Costume - Please remain in your cars!!!



Calling All Pumpkin Carvers!

The New Marlborough Library is looking for children 14 years and younger to carve and decorate pumpkins at their homes and then drop them off at the Library on

Monday, October 26, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

All pumpkins will be starring in our Halloween Drive-by!

If you plan to participate please contact the library at 413-229-6668 or newmarlborough@gmail.com

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

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YES, I WANT THE *New Marlborough 5 Village News* TO CONTINUE!

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

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

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

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

Board of Assessors: Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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

Building Inspector: Monday 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.; or by appointment.

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

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

Post Office: Mill River (413) 229-8582 — if and when it re-opens:

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

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Southfield (413) 229-8476

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

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

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

Tax Collector: Monday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tues and Thurs 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

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

Dog and Animal Control Officer: Cassie Keeley, (413) 429-7603

Town Clerk: 229-8278; 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. weekdays; Saturday by appointment

Town Hall: 229-8116

Police: Business office: 229-8161

Library: 229-6668

Transfer Station Hours:

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

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and can be purchased for \$150

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www.newmarlborough.gov.

Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. No admittance without a permit after August 15

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We welcome advertisements from businesses owned by New Marlborough residents.

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

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New Marlborough 5 Village News

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

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