

New Marlborough 5 Village News

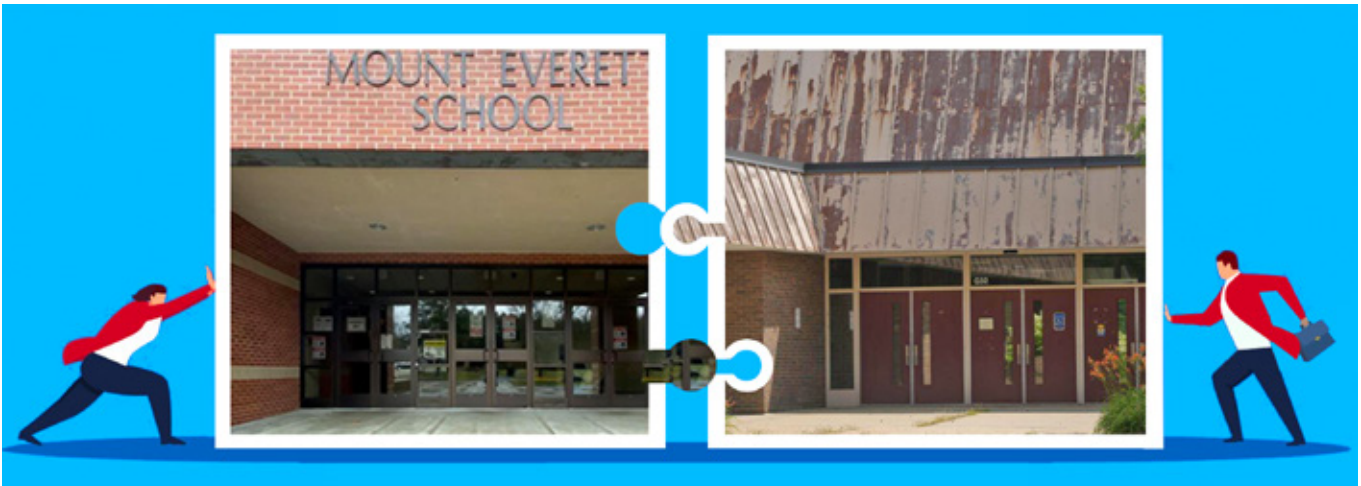
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Clayton ♦ Hartsville ♦ Mill River ♦ New Marlborough ♦ Southfield

DECISION TIME

An October 23 Vote on the Proposed School Merger



A three-and-a-half year deliberation by the 8 Town Regional School District Planning Board is nearing the finish line. A final draft of its proposed regional agreement to combine the Southern Berkshire and Berkshire Hill Regional School Districts into a single district has been vetted by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The forty-four page draft is expected to become available by the beginning of October, and will be available for viewing on the opening page of the Board’s website, 8towns.org. As this issue of the NM5VN is going to press, the Board is expected to send its recommendation to the select boards of the eight towns, requesting the scheduling of an up or down vote on Monday, October 23. In New Marlborough, the Special Town Meeting will be held at the firehouse in Southfield, starting at 6:00 p.m., and the vote will be recorded by paper ballot.

INSIDE:	
Select Board	4
View from the Board.....	7
Planning Board	8
A Clayton Treasure Trove	10
Neighbors	12
Wildlife Neighbors	16
Meeting House Presents.....	18
Mailbox	19
New Marlborough Central School	20
The Log	22
Recipe of the Month.....	24
Land Trust.....	25
Library News.....	26
Upcoming Events	28

The warrant article is expected to ask voters to approve the formation of the new consolidated district as proposed in the 8 Town Regional School District’s regional agreement. The warrant will also include two crucial stipulations that must be fulfilled in order for the merger to be completed: 1) to approve (at a later date) the debt required to construct a new high school on the current Great Barrington campus; and 2) to be approved via enactment of special legislation at the state level a) to permit the transfer of the buildings and assets of SBRSD and BHRSD to the new district, and b) to dissolve the two former districts.

Consolidation will require approval of a simple majority of the voters in each town, with approval of all eight towns required for the project to move forward. According to District Planning Board Chair Lucy Prashker, a new district theoretically could be formed with less than an eight-town membership, but that would not be decided by the Board, as, with its funds exhausted, it intends to disband no matter what the outcome of the vote.

The Board proposes a single district, to be known as the Southern Berkshire Hills Regional School District, that would, according to Ms. Prashker, “maintain

continued

all existing elementary and middle schools as they are but create a single high school in a new state-of-the-art facility to be built on the Great Barrington campus.” Ultimately, the new district would be governed by an eleven-member District School Committee, comprised of one member each from Alford, Egremont, Monterey, New Marlborough, Stockbridge, and West Stockbridge, two members from Sheffield, and three from Great Barrington, to be elected on the biennial state elections, the next being in November of 2026. Until that date, there would be a transition committee, with members appointed by the Select Boards of the eight towns. The transition committee would have the power to elect a superintendent for the new district.

While the 8 Town Regional School District Planning Board firmly remains pro-consolidation, opposition to consolidation persists.

Arguments in favor of combining the two into one include:

- A decline in student population in the eight towns — from 2,684 in 2000 to 1,680 in 2023, with a projected decline of another 400 students by 2030;
- Expanded vocational education facilities and offerings;
- Increased extracurricular opportunities in music, drama, and arts, and more robust athletic teams;
- A more diverse student body with greater access to English language learning, special education, and social-emotional education health;
- An economy of scale that would result in estimated operating cost savings of \$1.5 million a year.

Arguments in favor of maintaining separate districts, coming largely from residents of the five Southern Berkshire District towns, include:

- A reluctance to lose a unique climate of educational innovation at Southern Berkshire Regional;
- A desire to maintain the individual attention paid to students in small classes and a connection to the local community;
- A fear that existing elementary and middle schools currently preserved in the consolidation agreement would be vulnerable to closure at a future date;
- A suspicion that Berkshire Hills Regional School District is pushing through a consolidation plan to facilitate the construction of a new high school (Monument Mountain’s High School building has been deemed beyond repair);
- A belief that the claims of large savings in operational expenses are unfounded;
- An understanding that the partnership with Bard College at Simon’s Rock to provide college-level course at Mount Everett High would not be transferrable to a combined high school;
- A suggestion that increasing collaborative programs between the two districts might achieve some of the advantages of consolidation without its downsides, and might become the foundation for a universally accepted merger.

As the date for a vote on merger approaches, some residents of the member towns, while remaining open to consolidation, find fault with elements of the agreement. One concern is the amount of power given to the transitional committee, a group of eleven members appointed by the select boards. Other criticisms of the agreement relate to its lack of specificity on class size and the operational costs of a combined district. They fault the agreement for turning over land and buildings to the merged district for which it would have no apparent use. Those decisions are critical of its failure to enumerate such liabilities as the retirement benefits that would be brought to a new district, and to make clear that responsibility for those financial burdens would be proportionate to the number of students migrating to a new district from each of the former districts.

In response, Ms. Prashker says the agreement defines how a governing body will be created and how member towns will be assessed to meet the financial obligations of a consolidated district. It also spells out the processes by which budgets will be formed, debt incurred, schools closed, members added, the agreement amended, and other such management protocols. In other words, the agreement dictates “the process for making decisions,” says Ms. Prashker, “not the decisions themselves. Those decision are, and must be, left to future school committees, district leadership, and state law and other mandates, all of which obviously change over time.”

Since the agreement defines process rather than prescribing outcomes, it does not, says Ms. Prashker, deal with matters of class size, teacher and staff compensation, and transportation times. These matters will be within the purview of the school committee and school leadership and will be “informed by educational best practices,

financial resources and other things that necessarily change over time.” Regarding assets currently controlled and owned by the SBRSD, Ms. Prashker says that some of the infrastructure on the Sheffield campus will continue to be used by the new district and that the proceeds from any sale of land or buildings would be returned, pro rata, to Southern Berkshire’s five towns. Retirement and other post-employment benefits, she adds, would be shared by the eight member towns, based on the percentage of students they send to the new district.

For South County residents still puzzling over the wisdom of school district consolidation, there will be a public forum at the Mahaiwe Theater in Great Barrington (October 4, 7:00 p.m.; pre-registration with the Mahaiwe is required), as well as informational meetings at Mount Everett High School (October 11) and Monument Mountain High School (October 18). □

Joe Poindexter



**New Marlborough Library's
Halloween Spook-tacular**
October 28th at 5:00pm at the Goodnow Preserve

Please join us for hayrides, face painting, cupcakes,
as you listen to our storyteller John Porcino by the bonfire
and enjoy Worthy-Que Smoke N'BBQ Food Truck as well as Big Elm Brewery
and, if you dare, join us for a spooky trail hike

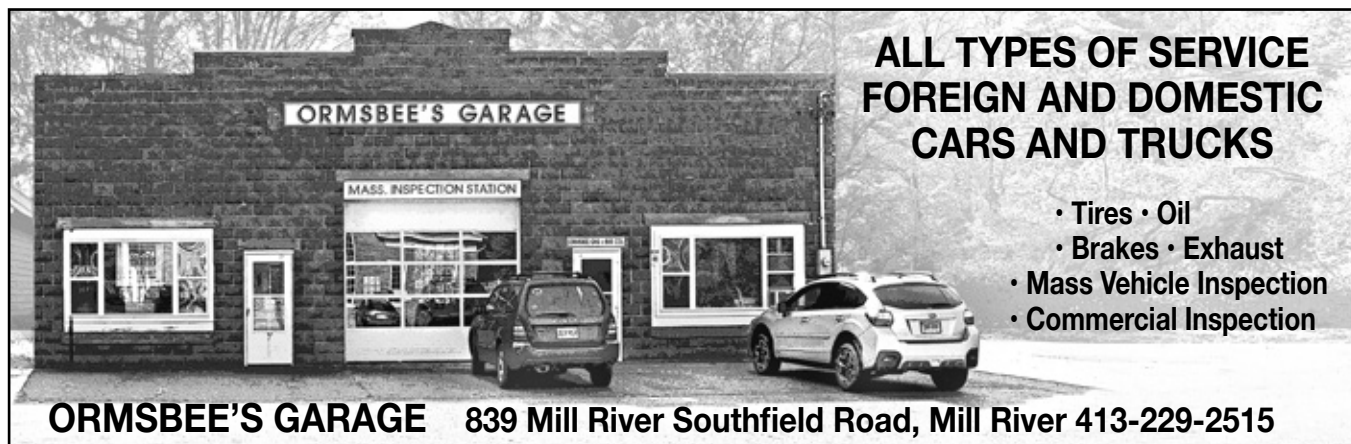
Directions to the Preserve: 442 Mill River Southfield Road
Starting at the front of the New Marlborough Library on Mill River Great Barrington Road,
take a left at the stop sign and follow Mill River Southfield Road for 1 mile.
Destination will be on the right.

This program is sponsored by:
The Friends of the New Marlborough Library

With special Thanks to:
The New Marlborough Land Trust
& The New Marlborough Fire Department

In case of rain,
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the Meeting House in New Marlborough Center

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Town Business Is Your Business

SELECT BOARD

August 21: With all three selectmen present, the Board heard a request from Kathy Palmer, president of Friends of the New Marlborough Public Library, that the library be allowed to close a small section of Mill River Southfield Road along the south-facing side of the building to accommodate an outdoor book sale on the afternoon of September 30. Books will be available on a dozen or more tables, and a hayride and face-painting will be offered as an incentive for younger readers. Assured that traffic could circumvent the closure via Mill River Great Barrington and Hayes Hill Roads, the Board gave the closure its blessing.

Chairman Tara White then welcomed American Legion Post 350 Commander Ann Riou and Legion member David Hastings. Ms. Riou explained that the Post wished to recognize the service of New Marlborough veterans who thus far have gone unacknowledged. The space in front of the Library can accommodate no additional memorials, they said. **While at work on the Revolutionary War memorial, the latest to be placed at the entrance to the Library, the Post realized that there were five other wars between the Revolutionary War and World War I that seemed to have been forgotten.** “We are now looking for a small piece of land that can serve as a collective site for honoring these veterans, perhaps to include the Revolutionary War monument,” said Ms. Riou. The Board agreed to assist in the search for a memorial site.

The meeting moved on to renovation of the old fire house, which has both short- and long-term needs. An immediate priority, said Fire Chief Chuck Loring, who was present, is the shoring up of the back of the building. Longer term, there are leaks to be repaired, the foundation needs work, the bathroom updated, and



the interior painted. Noting that the Fire Department has offered the upstairs of the old fire house as a space for a Police Department office, Selectman Tara White said that an accessibility ramp would have to be added to the outside of the building. Police Chief Graham Frank, also present, said that a move would also incur costs for new desks, a computer, security and safety apparatuses, and an open space for meeting with members of the public.

Mr. Loring estimated that the costs of a renovation and conversion could amount to a half million dollars and if that expense was beyond consideration, the project would have to be rethought. Town Administrator Mari Enoch reminded the Board that since the old fire house is not a Town property — it belongs to the Fire Department — the Town is not allowed to finance its renovation. She asked if private donations could be sought. To Selectman Beth Dean’s suggestion that Police Department space be included in a new town hall, Chief Frank noted the desirability of having all emergency services under one roof. With general agreement that the old fire house would be a good location for the Police Department, the Board requested more specifics on the costs of conversion.

Moving on, Chief Frank asked for and received approval of a \$50,000 grant request that would enable the purchase of two two-way radios and a search-and-rescue drone. The grant, he said, does not require matching funds.

Next, the Board heard from Daphne Moore, general counsel of CVE North America, the company that has established a solar power field off of Knight Road. With the completion of the installation in December 2020, CVE put \$98,050 into escrow to assure proper restoration of the site if and when the company decides to



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abandon it. Since then, the company has reached an agreement with an insurance company to cover restoration and asked that the escrow be replaced by a surety bond. Arguing that cash escrows were not standard industry practice and that the company had need of liquidity, Ms. Moore said she “would really appreciate the Town granting the request.”

Selectman Bill West responded that the Board had conferred with Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard, who advised against altering the agreement. “We already have the money,” said Mr. West. “A promise to pay is not the same.” The Board then voted unanimously to reject the transfer but granted Ms. Moore’s request to be put in touch with Mr. Pollard.

Moving through the agenda, the Board approved one-day alcohol licenses for the service of wine and beer to Big Elm Brewing for two occasions: Harvest Festival at The Farm New Marlborough on October 14 and a Library-sponsored Halloween Day celebration at Goodnow Preserve on October 28. In response to bids issued by the Highway Department, the Board approved Century Aggregates as the supplier of processed gravel and Segalla Sand and Gravel for winter sand. The Board then agreed that the 1.3 acres being ceded by Erik Mandel and Shawna Burke to allow for erosion protection along the Konkapot River in Hartsville be transferred as a quitclaim deed, not an easement.

Addressing the need for repair of the Town Hall roof, Ms. White reported that David Allard had agreed to draw up specifications for the job for \$700 and that the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, a regional service organization, would oversee the bidding for \$1,200. The Board ratified a name change from the Cable Advisory Committee to the Cable Advisory and Broadband Committee and

appointed Deb O’Brien as a new member. It then appointed Marc Trachtenberg to membership on the Transfer Station Working Group. Both memberships expire June 30, 2024.

September 11: Following a Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence, which included Board member Bill West’s reminder of the 2001 9/11 attack on New York City World Trade Center, the Board received an update from Town Hall Planning Committee Chair Barbara Marchione. **The Committee, said Ms. Marchione, was fine-tuning a second Request For Proposals (RFP) and hoped to publish it in mid-October.** Ms. Marchione voiced her concern that a town hall, whether renovated or new, will constitute a major investment and would need to be considered in the context of other potential expenses, including

school district consolidation, a new fire truck, and a new ambulance.

The ensuing discussion raised various questions: Would the response to the RFP require a vote at a town meeting? Yes, but a meeting early in the new year seemed inadvisable, given holidays, uncertain weather, and potentially poor turnout. **The timing of a town meeting came up because of the fear that the winner of an RFP would not wait forever to have the bid accepted by voters.** An alternative, described by both Ms. White and Ms. Enoch, would be for the Town to make a payment, the amount unspecified, to the winning proposer, to hold the proposal in place for an agreed-upon period of time. It is a strategy for bridging the possible time lag between a Select Board decision on a new town hall — whether it was for building anew on vacant land, Robin Hall, or some other presently unused structure — and the necessary vote of town residents to proceed with the project.

Should the RFP include the current Town Hall? No,

With general agreement that the old fire house would be a good location for the Police Department, the Board requested more specifics on the costs of conversion.



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the Town already owns the property. Should other Town boards and committees be consulted? Yes, the Board agreed with Ms. Marchione, who urged that the Finance and Capital Planning Committees, and the Select Board itself, participate in drawing up the final RFP and the selection process. "We all need to be on the same page," said Ms. Marchione.

The meeting then returned to the request from American Legion Post 350 that the Town secure land for war veteran memorials, with the space in front of the library unable to absorb the additional memorials the post anticipates erecting. Selectman Beth Dean read a letter she proposed the Board send to the New Marlborough Land Trust asking if it would turn over a small piece of its holding on the southwest corner of the intersection of New Marlborough Southfield and Hartsville New Marlborough Roads, catty-corner to the New Marlborough Village Green, to accommodate the memorials. Post Commander Ann Riou, present at the meeting, confirmed that the Land Trust had already rejected this plan, but Ms. Dean pointed out that the Land Trust had since changed leadership and that the letter formalized what had heretofore been a verbal request. The Board voted its approval of the letter.

Next, the Board revisited elderly transportation. As noted at its August 7 meeting, two of the vehicles made available for the town's elderly are provided by the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA). A requirement that the Town be a member of BRTA — the Town is not — is now in force. While the Board works to secure BRTA membership, transportation has been provided by vans that were not owned by BRTA. However, the van that could accommodate wheelchairs recently went out of service. Because the program is partially funded by the federal government, it is a requirement that accessible transportation is available, and until such time as it is, New Marlborough residents cannot take part in the transportation service.

The Board moved on to accept a PILOT agreement with Construct, Inc., the owner of Cassilis Farm. The agreement calls for the payment of \$2,991 in year one and \$2,422 in years two and three (following the expected sale of a parcel of land on the property), all payments deferred to mid-2026 when conversion of the property to affordable housing is expected to be completed.

Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring asked for and received permission to sell a ten-year-old tractor and a second tractor used for parts that the Depart-

ment no longer needs. A gantry crane that the Department has used just once will also be sold. Mr. Loring reported that he is applying for a grant to purchase speed feed-back signs — those electronic speed readers that scold "Too Fast" as drivers race past them — to help reduce speeding on town roads. He said that the effort to acquire pedestrian crossing signs has been impeded by the requirement that such crossings terminate on sidewalks. New Marlborough doesn't have them. The Board then rescinded its acceptance of a bid for fill from Century Aggregates because of an ambiguity as to whether the bid was for yardage or tonnage. And it turned out that the Highway Department does not need the material.

In her town administrator update, Mari Enoch reported that the Town's pension obligations are close to being fully funded and will be able to absorb the recent cost-of-living adjustment. She went on to note her appreciation of the work of Michelle Castellano, who retired as administrative assistant on September 7 to take a position with the Southern Berkshire Regional School District. "She will be sorely missed," said Ms. Enoch. After voting to allow Police Chief Graham Frank to carry over forty hours of unused vacation time to June 30, 2024, the Board took up past meeting minutes and then adjourned.

September 18: With all three selectmen present at an 11:30 a.m. meeting, the Board briefly discussed the need to join the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority (BRTA) so as to allow New Marlborough residents to use the BRTA vehicles that are a part of the fleet providing elderly transportation to South County towns. A unanimous vote to join followed.

There being no other items on the agenda, the meeting was adjourned soon thereafter. □

Joe Poindexter

A requirement that the Town be a member of BRTA — the Town is not — is now in force.



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VIEW FROM THE BOARD

It seems hard to believe that summer is over. The Select Board reduced its meeting schedule to every other week during the summer, but that did not diminish the amount of work that continued to happen within the Town.

The PILOT program with Construct for the Cassilis Farm property has been negotiated and signed. The grant for the police cruiser, which was voted upon at the May Annual Town Meeting, has been received. The Hartsville erosion project has been secured and work on the riverbank will begin as soon as possible. The CVE solar project pilot program is in the process of being negotiated. Grant opportunities have come before the Board for roadwork, additional speed signs, police department equipment, and funding for maximizing the fiber connectivity to homes. Preparation of these grants are time-consuming and we thank everyone who is working on them for their dedication to helping the Town receive funding for these and other projects.

The regionalization of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District and the Berkshire Hills Regional School District has been in the news as the time comes closer for the eight towns to vote on whether it is better to combine the two high schools or remain independent of each other. This has been a three-year project by a team of twenty-four dedicated members of the eight towns that comprise the two districts. Information on all of the research, including the educational quality findings, programming, student enrollment figures, financial impacts on each town, towns' vocational tuition costs, operating and transportation costs, and much more can be found on the 8towns.org website. If you have questions that are unanswered or you need more information, there are several community forums coming up that you can attend for the answers or ask your questions on-line at the 8towns.org website.

The Town Hall Planning Committee has been actively working on how to move forward with either repairs to the existing Town Hall, purchasing property

and building a new Town Hall, purchasing an existing building and renovating it, or receiving a building that has been repurposed. The requirement for this process is dictated by the state through a Request For Proposal process, applications to which are submitted to the Committee for review and evaluation.

As we approach the fall and winter months, the work on preparing a budget for the May 2024 Annual Town Meeting will be worked on. The Highway Planning Committee will make recommendations on road repairs, the Capital Planning Committee will be looking at long range planning for the next five to ten years on paying for requested capital expenditures, and the Finance Committee will be coming together to begin the process of reviewing budgets for the Town departments. This could be a challenging year for our town, with the rising costs that all of us are experiencing in our daily life. All of these meetings are posted on our website newmarlboroughma.gov and we would appreciate your input.

Finally, Michelle, our Administrative Secretary, has left us for another job opportunity. We thank her for her time here and are currently interviewing for a new person. □

Tara White, Chair, Select Board

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THE PLANNING BOARD

September 13: With all five members in attendance, the Planning Board began the evening by discussing an upcoming Special Permit hearing on an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) at 92 County Road. While ADUs in existing buildings are allowed by right, this project involves new construction, and is therefore subject to the special permitting process. The Board unanimously agreed that, with the acreage and setbacks proposed, there were no concerns, and Chair Bob Hartt said he would forward the Board's opinion to the Special Permit Granting Authority, a.k.a. the Select Board.

Following up on an earlier question on another recently built large home on Lake Buel, at 114 Downs Road, Mr. Hartt reported to the Board that the residence, which far exceeds the size of the footprint of the previous building that had been demolished, should have been subject to the special permit process. "It was a goof," said Mr. Hartt, and added that Building Inspector Matt Kolmer is making changes in the application procedures, so another oversight like this does not occur down the road.

The primary agenda item for this meeting was to continue deliberations on the drafting of a bylaw on Short Term Rentals (STRs), to be presented at the Annual Town Meeting in May of next year. Parameters that are of interest include limitations on the number of properties one owner may rent, as well as how many days per year; required inspections by certain town

boards and the fire department; septic system size; and a "three strike rule" for noise and other violations. Several members had been tasked with researching what neighboring towns have come up with, or are working on now. Christian Stovall reported that he could find very little being done in Sheffield, but he found that Sandisfield, according to an article in *The Berkshire Eagle*, had passed regulations back in May that included required registration by would-be short term renters, inspections by fire and health officials, limitation of one rental property (unless the owner lives on site, in which case two rentals are possible), and the town receives a 6 percent occupancy tax on each rental.

Jordan Archey found many of the same requirements in Stockbridge, where an estimated 100 out of 650 residential buildings are available for rental through Airbnb or VRBO. She did note that Stockbridge requires a local manager, and disallows corporate ownership of rental properties or short-term rental of designated affordable housing. The Stockbridge bylaw does not apply to hotels, inns, or B&B's, which is also true of Great Barrington, as Becky Wilkinson found in her research.

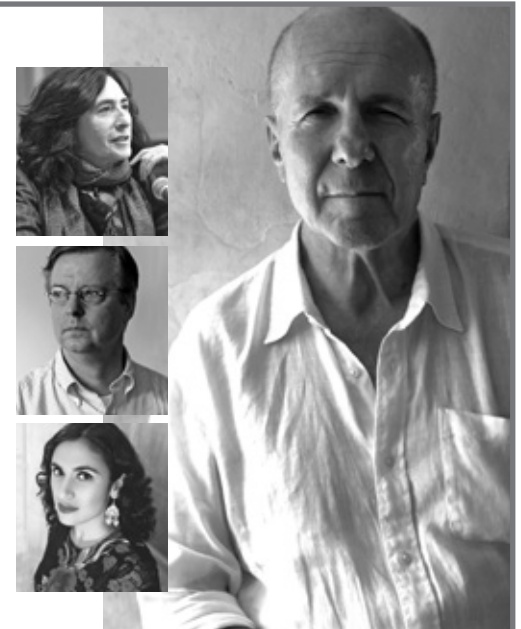
Ms. Archey returned the focus of the discussion to the issues surrounding STRs in New Marlborough. She presented the Board with a study she had undertaken, which she entitled "What is the problem we are solving for?" She identified the main concerns

A WRITER AND A ROBOT WALK INTO A BAR: Writing in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

SIMON WINCHESTER

October 7 4:30 p.m.

Simon Winchester returns to The Meeting House to lead a discussion on the future of writing in the age of AI with three distinguished figures in the world of letters: Francine Prose, writer of fiction and nonfiction and critic, is the author of twenty-one novels, including *Blue Angel*, which was a finalist for the National Book Award; Timothy Bent, Executive Editor of Trade Books for Oxford University Press; and author Chandra Prasad, whose forthcoming novel focuses on the intersection between artificial intelligence, identity and environmental ethics.



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that have surfaced so far: Nuisance to neighbors and community; overuse of town services; unregulated, potentially unsafe rental spaces; missed opportunity for income to the Town; and, underlying, a lack of affordable, median priced housing. In her research, she worked out that there are 1,033 domiciles in New Marlborough, forty-four of which are available as Airbnbs. Thirty-two of those are occupied either by the owner or a community member, or are rented out by second home owners. The remaining twelve are under some type of commercial management.

Ms. Archey urged the Board to consider jointly the issues of the burgeoning short-term rental market and the scarcity of low or medium priced homes/long term rentals. She argued that, with the very strong market for second homes, which tend to be used as STRs (a study by the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce states that one-third of New Marlborough homes are second homes), the remaining few affordable houses are then in jeopardy of being bought up by contractors, to be renovated and sold as high-end second homes. Ms. Archey concluded by writing, "My recommendation is that the town government find a way to work with organizations that create low- and medium-price housing stock." She cited the work of Construct, Inc. both here in New Marlborough at Cassilis Farm

and in Great Barrington, as well as that of the Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity. And, returning to the STR issue, she recommended: a) a registration process like a business license, requiring proof of insurance; b) a 1.2 percent local occupancy tax to be paid by the renter; c) the establishment of a grievance and appeal process; and d) a limit of two STRs for local residents and one for non-residents.

Discussion then turned to the question of occupancy tax – how much, who pays, whether inns and B&B's would be exempt. The maximum local tax allowed by the state is 6 percent, an amount that is tacked on to the bill, not levied on the renter. Mr. Hartt wondered if the Planning Board might craft a bylaw that skirted the issue of taxation, send it to the Select Board, and let that Board decide whether to add it in.

As the meeting was winding up, Chairman Hartt laid out the tasks facing the Planning Board between now and May – drafting the STR bylaw, finalizing work on the protective bylaw language clarifications, renewing the Open Space Plan, and, to Jordan Archey's point, focusing on the issues surrounding housing affordability in New Marlborough. □

Larry Burke



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A CLAYTON TREASURE TROVE, BROUGHT TO LIGHT

A Look Inside the Clayton General Store

Entering the ground floor of 2383 Canaan Southfield Road for the first time, one experiences a startled pause, and perhaps an audible gasp, as the vision of a 19th century general store comes into focus. Floor to ceiling shelves line the walls, filled with original ephemera collected and arranged piece by piece: spools of thread, bolts of cloth, wooden crates filled with bars of soap, children's shoes, a tiny finch cage with a miniature porcelain water bowl, boxes of men's and women's collars, tobacco tins, washboards, and

pill boxes. There are painted signs, handwritten grocery lists tacked to the walls, an octagonal haberdashery, wire mobiles made to dispense string, tapered candles, and baskets of hand-painted facsimiles of fruits and vegetables. The creator of this elaborate time capsule is Sue Connell, who worked on her creation for over thirty years. According to Sue's



The Clayton General Store back in the days of the Model-T

friend Martha Bryan, she loved to come downstairs into the store during thunderstorms, sitting in the dark with her cats winding around her feet and her creation illuminated by the flashes of lightning.

For most of us, the experience of driving by the Clayton Store is to pass a mustard-colored structure



Sue Connell's assemblage of merchandise from a past era has been a captivating, museum-like experience for the lucky visitor. Photos by Joe Poindexter

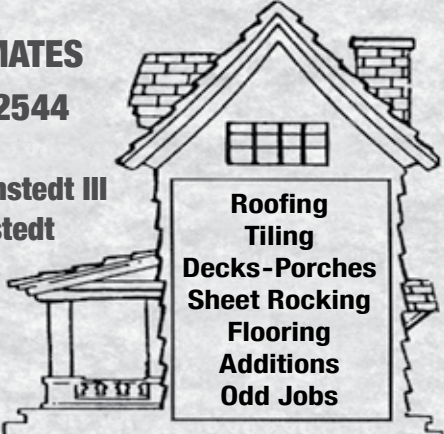
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that is both so close to the road and so shrouded by trees that it's hard to make out much detail. If you went slowly enough, though, you could make out the silhouettes of large plants, monopolizing the sunlight in the windows. Now, for the first time in half a century, change is afoot. The Clayton Store, first a tavern in 1810, a general store until 1977, and now a private residence, is for sale, as Ms. Connell has chosen to move on from her life-sized art project. In preparation for the sale, trees have been trimmed back, light gently let in, spaces freshened, and objects sifted through to make room for a new chapter in the venerable building's story.

With an online auction and on-site estate sale this month, there is the rare chance to see the store with its original counters intact and some of the extensive collection it housed. Curious folks can check the online auction, beginning October 6, at caringtransitions.com, or come to the estate sale in person on October 21 and 22. □

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NEIGHBORS



David Herrick, a central figure in the life of Mill River for many years, passed away on August 27 at the age of 84. He grew up in Great Barrington and Lenox, graduating from the Cranwell Preparatory School in 1957. He attended Boston University, and served in the United States Air Force. He went on to become national sales manager for Tuck Tape and its successors, traveling throughout the United States.

Dave returned home in 1993, and in 1998 purchased the Mill River General Store. Under his ownership, the store quickly became the hub of the village, providing a welcoming atmosphere and even personalized coffee mugs. Dave was an active participant in civic life of New Marlborough, where he served on the Conservation Commission, the Finance Committee, as constable, and as the 911 sign coordinator. For twenty-five years, Dave played an important role as an officer in the New Marlborough Fire Department, serving also as a member and president of the Fire Company's Board of Directors, and as an EMT with the New Marlborough First Responders and the Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad. He actively encouraged young firefighters, and was proud of their participation. The many facets of Dave's contributions to the community, along with his faithful Siberian husky, Crow, are remembered here by many of his New Marlborough friends.



Photo by Larry Burke

Dave Herrick, always ready and willing



Photo by Larry Burke

Dave Herrick and Brian Dillon salute the flag at the 2012 Memorial Day ceremony

Firefighter **Brian Dillon** had a special relationship with Dave after Brian's father passed away: Traveling to Boston recently to see the Red Sox play the Dodgers, I thought about how many Red Sox games I had been to. I pointed out to my family the spot where Dave and I waited for our tickets at the will-call window when he took me to my first-ever Red Sox game versus the Yankees in September of 2016. I found peace in spending the last day before his passing in one of his favorite places on earth, Fenway Park, watching our favorite team, the Red Sox.

When my parents moved to New Marlborough in 1997, Dave went out of his way to make them welcome and asked my dad to join the fire department in town. After my dad passed away, Dave would always go out of his way to say hello and show me the fire station. He allowed me to ride with him every Memorial Day to raise the flag at the ceremony, a tradition that I only took over by myself this past year without him beside me. I truly don't know what my life would look like without him right now, as I would never have been exposed to the fire service.

Dave drove all over Berkshire County to watch me play soccer in middle school and offered me my first job, working for him when I was thirteen at the Mill River General Store. Dave always attended important life events for my sister and me, like our graduations. This past May, even when not feeling well, he left his rehab facility to be with me at my college graduation party. These past few months, I had gone to visit him at his house and I will miss the conversations we had, the last one being on his birthday earlier in August.

Dave, thank you for everything you have done for me and my family. I wish I could tell you in person how thankful I am right now. I'll be sure to have an extra pair of socks in my gear this winter. You were a great man. RIP.

Doug Newman and his family, of Hartsville, relate this story of Dave's effectiveness as a recruiter: It was our first year here in New Marlborough; our daughter Sara was nine, and our son Harrison was four. One of our favorite things to do during the summer was to pick up sandwiches and drinks at the Mill River Store, head down to Umpachene Falls for a picnic and a swim, and then head back to the store for some soft serve

ice cream. Harrison noticed Dave's class A uniform hat and asked was he a fireman? Dave said he was, and was a lieutenant in the New Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department. Dave and Harrison had a bit of a conversation, and the next thing I knew, we were following Dave to the firehouse.

He opened the garage door, strapped Harrison in the front seat, with Sara and me packed into the back seat, and Dave took us for a ride around the town. Harrison was just in heaven, with a memory imprint that would guide his life forever.

When Harrison turned fourteen, he joined the Monterey Fire Department, only because New Marlborough wasn't taking junior firefighters until age sixteen. Harrison did interact with our New Marlborough department in his later teen years, and when he was home during his college years.

Today, Harrison is a paramedic firefighter at a department not far from his alma mater, the University of New Haven Fire Science. It was Dave Herrick who influenced Harrison to pursue his calling.

Thank you, Dave, for all your kindnesses to our family throughout the twenty-four years we have lived in New Marlborough, and for the many lives you have touched.

Barbara Marchione knew Dave from the store, the Fire Department and First Responders, and in Town government: Dave Herrick breathed new life into the Mill River General Store and our community when he bought the store in 1998. It quickly became a gathering place for locals with the infamous coffee club. On occasion, second home owners were allowed to join the ranks. Daily newspapers, doughnuts, the post office and a cup of coffee kept it a busy place.

The store saw local contractors during lunchtime, and if someone needed a builder or advice on plumbing or electrical issues, the Mill River Store was the place to go. It became an informational venue for passers-by, and a weigh station for hunters in the fall and winter. Locals would often stand on their soapboxes and fight for their causes. Guns and ammo were still sold through the store, along with licenses for hunting and fishing. And he also sold lottery tickets, beer, and wine. Dave was in his element at the store, and as his sister Mary Jo said at his service, it was his favorite place to be.

Dave also jumped in and did an enormous amount of Town committee business. He served on the Finance Committee, the Conservation Commission, and was the town constable and 911 coordinator.

Thank you, Dave, for your service to our little town. I know you are in good hands now, reunited with many old friends who have gone before you. Rest well, Dave.

Bob Dvorchik, of Mill River, recalls a favorite ritual in the store: Dave loved to laugh, especially when the joke was on him. Whenever small children would come in the Mill River Store, he would make that ridiculously fake deer head mounted on the wall "talk" to them by speaking into a microphone he hid behind the checkout counter. He was never aware that as soon as the kids walked out onto the store's porch, they would agree never to tell Dave that they knew it was him.

From Fire Company President David Smith: New Marlborough lost a true champion with Dave's passing. Things are just not the same without him. We know what Dave meant to the community by resuscitating the Mill River General Store and his service on many boards and committees, but it is the unheralded things he did that mean just as much, if not more.

Dave spent hours, many hours, showing the ropes to new firefighters — myself included — teaching us to operate the firetrucks, which, of course, happened after he badgered us to join the Department. Some patrons were lucky to escape the store by buying a few raffle tickets or Spring Dance tickets; others of us ended up signing on for chimney fires, 2:00 a.m. alarm calls, car crashes, and everything else in between — and New Marlborough benefitted immensely from Dave's evangelism. Early Sunday mornings in the dead of winter, picking up the papers and cup of coffee while chatting with Dave before the week unraveled were more than just habit, they were religion in its own form.

It took some digging, but down in the basement, I found a *Berkshire Record* article written when Dave bought the store. Those three decades came and went pretty quickly, but not without a ton of laughs and memories, a couple hundred coffees, and an uncountable number of hours any time of day or night with a true friend. We are all far better off for those three decades.



Photo by Brian Dillon

Dave at his post in the Mill River Store

John Kemp was a neighbor of Dave and his dog, Crow: I can't say I knew Dave very well, but we were neighbors up on Brewer Hill Road, perhaps a quarter mile apart. I would chat with him occasionally as he passed me in his truck on his way down to the diner in Canaan. I'd see him at Town Hall, when I went to vote, and we'd chat there too. But I didn't really go in the general store too much, as my life was often elsewhere.

But Crow came down to see me quite often in the past couple of years as Dave got older and spent more time just at home. I think Crow would slip his leash because he knew that Dave wanted a chat, and I guess Crow trusted me well enough to come get me.

Crow couldn't hide his wild spirit or cleverness. You could see it in his eyes. He would lead me up the road and over the top of the hill to the other side. We'd play in the road a little bit. Once we turned into Dave's driveway, he would let me take his collar or lead him back into the house, and I would spend some time chatting with Dave on his doorstep.

The last time Crow came to get me, a few weeks ago, Dave wasn't at his house any more. His brother told me that Dave had been taken to hospital, and was very sick. When a dog like Crow, a dog with that cleverness and intelligence, would go and find his owner a person to talk with, and lead that person back to his owner's house, you know his owner is a very good man.

Holly Morse, of Mill River, describes the role of Dave in the eyes of her sons: We arrived in Mill River at the end of 1999. I had no idea Dave had purchased the store just the year before. He was already such a fixture, a linchpin for the town, keeping the wheel son. When the kids went down the hill for candy, or soft serve in summer, they interfaced with Dave. At first, I think, they were a little afraid of him. They were small. Dave was tall. He had a look that let you know he would not tolerate monkey business, even if you weren't planning any. But eventually, he became for them the essence of what it means to live in a small town, an adult you know you can count on to be there with his opinions, solid as a rock, reliable, a steady and watchful presence while you grow up. In this, he gave a lot to my boys. He certainly gave a great deal to this community. He will be missed.

Barbara Bean, of New Marlborough village, relates this example of Dave's compassion: Sunday mornings were always busy at the Mill River Store. Whenever longtime New Marlborough resident Louise Devine arrived, Dave made sure to find a stool for her to perch on. From there, she could linger, watching the commotion and greeting people who came for the Sunday paper, a mug of coffee, or to pick up last-minute groceries.

One night, the First Responders were called to Louise's home, to take her to the hospital for the final time. As they strapped her on to the gurney for her last journey, Dave leaned over and said, "Hello Louise, your friends are all here."

What a comfort that must have been. Dave embodied the goodness of this community. □

Compiled by Barbara Lowman: deeuell@yahoo.com

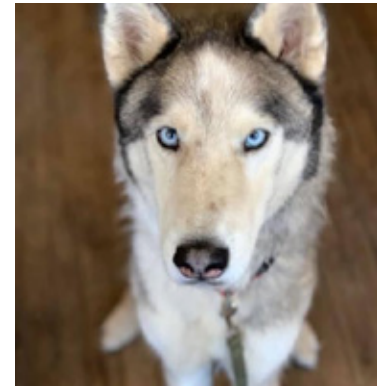


Photo by Laura Endacott

Crow, Dave's loyal companion



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Shawn Fields

When you are spending a few hours as a gallery sitter on a rainy day, the paintings in the room can begin to speak to you in unexpected ways....



photos by John Schreiber

Headstone Restoration: Under the tutelage of New Marlborough Historical Society President John Schreiber, volunteers (Matt Vita on the left, and Deanna Mummert with Robin Tost on the right) gathered on September 23 to remove decades of moss, lichen, mold, and grime from headstones in the Old Mill River Cemetery.

OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

This month we are featuring several flora and fauna that might be deemed less-than-desirable next door neighbors.

First up is the **Amyntas worm**, native to Japan and Korea, a relatively new arrival to the Northeast that goes by a number of common names – the Asian jumping worm, the snake worm, the crazy worm, and probably a few other names we can't mention here. The worm is distinguished by its jumbo size, by a whitish band about one-third along its body from its head, and by the crazy way it wriggles when handled. According to a publication by the USDA Forest Service, Amyntas is a serious threat to forests and agricultural land wherever it appears – and that includes New Marlborough.



photo by Larry Burke

A sizeable Asian jumping worm

The creature devours mulch and leaf litter, leaving a trail of castings resembling coffee grounds, which strip nutrients from the top layer of soil, making it difficult for new plants to take root. According to **Mac Callahan**, a soil specialist with the Forest Service, "They're voracious. Soil is the foundation of life, and Asian jumping worms change it. In fact, these earthworms can have such huge impacts that they're able to actually reengineer the ecosystems around them."

While clearing out a raised bed measuring six by three feet recently, one New Marlborough gardener extracted thirty or more of these over-sized, hyper-wriggly invaders.

The Asian jumping worms die in the fall, but leave behind many eggs, or cocoons, to hatch in the spring. One solution to this infestation, limited as it is, is to dig through the top six inches or so of your garden and pull the crazy worms out by hand, and then dispose of them as you see fit. There is also some evidence that treatment of the soil with **tea seed meal**, an organic fertilizer that contains the natural compound saponin, which is toxic to worms, will do the trick. The drawback to this measure is that tea seed meal is toxic to all worms, not just Amyntas. Perhaps a good preventative for gardeners would be to avoid using leaf mulch.

If you want to test your soil for the presence of the Amyntas worm, here is a method from Steve Featherstone, a nature journalist for Syracuse.com: *Check for jumping worms by mixing a solution of 1/3 cup ground yellow mustard and one gallon of water; pour the solution slowly over soil (it won't hurt plants). Irritated worms will come to the surface where you can identify and remove them.*

The next unwelcome – if spectacular looking – resident is the fungus *Climacodon septentrionalis*, commonly called **northern tooth**. A striking specimen has revealed itself on the north-facing side of the sole remaining ancient maple tree just on the other side of Route 57 from the New Marlborough Village Green. Northern tooth finds its home primarily in maple trees, especially sugar maples, and beech trees to



photo by Larry Burke

A northern tooth fungus fruiting body



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a lesser degree. The fungus takes root in wounds that the tree may suffer, such as broken limbs, and eventually penetrates to the core of the trunk, where it turns the wood to a soft, white pulp. The evidence of the fungus's existence becomes known at this time of year when it produces the fruiting body, which forms on the exterior trunk. According to the UMass Extension Service, "These mushrooms consist of many, shelf-like layers that are cream-colored to pale yellow when fresh, becoming discolored (greenish-brown to black) with age. They can persist on trees for many weeks in late summer and early autumn but do not survive into the following year. The underside consists of small spines or teeth, which bear the fungal spores, hence the common name northern tooth fungus. When fruiting bodies are visible, a significant decay column will have developed above and below. Spores are dispersed on local air currents to infect nearby trees." The fungus cannot be eradicated. The formation we see on the trunk of this venerable maple is a clear signal that the tree is nearing the end of its life.

One denizen of these parts, and one that is the bane of our canine population's existence, is the **porcupine**. **John Schreiber** of New Marlborough Village, sent along a photo of a small porcupine that he came upon in his orchard. John wrote, "Porcupines love apples! This guy knows we don't have a dog anymore and allowed me to get close for a photo." Other than the quill aspect, they are pretty darned cute!

And finally, while we make an effort to confine our offerings in this column to New Marlborough-based critters, once in a while there's a sighting in a neighboring town that deserves our attention. The accompanying photo of a **timber rattlesnake** was taken in Egremont, but the critically endangered species is known to be present in parts of New Marlborough, Dry Hill in Hartsville being one. This impressive snake was encountered on September 14, by **Kate Feuer Burke**, who was taking her dog Maple for a hike on the loop trail of the Jug End State Reservation & Wildlife Management Area.

Kate said that Maple approached the snake but was warned off, both by her command and by the serpent's rattling sound. It is thought by herpetologists that rattlers add a new rattle every two years or so, which would indicate that this individual is at least four years old. Timber rattlers are shy by nature and will not attack a person unless unduly provoked...or stepped on by accident... and they will warn us of their presence with that rattle. After being nearly eradicated in Massachusetts in the eighteenth century, they are now to be found – and protected – in only three areas in the state – the Blue Hills south of Boston, parts of the Connecticut River Valley, and here in the Berkshire Hills. □

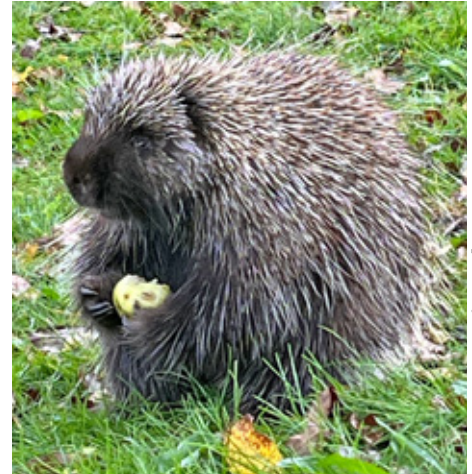


photo by John Schreiber


A porcupine, mid-snack



photo by Kate Burke

A sunbathing timber rattlesnake

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


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A Writer and a Robot Walk into a Bar:

ON WRITING IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

By Barry R. Shapiro

“This is starting to get scary,” says Simon Winchester about the stunningly rapid growth of artificial intelligence and its ability to turn out not only works of non-fiction but empathic works of fiction as well. “Back in the winter, when AI first came to many people’s attention,” says Mr. Winchester, “it seemed new, shiny, and interesting. It is much less so now.”



Simon Winchester
Francie Prose,
Timothy Bent, and
Chandra Prasad

Mr. Winchester, acclaimed author of over thirty books, most recently *Knowing What We Know*, will lead a panel discussion on the impact of AI, not only on writers but on the world at large, at the New Marlborough Meeting House on October 7, at 4:30 p.m.



Joining Mr. Winchester will be Francine Prose, critic and writer of fiction and non-fiction, including *Blue Angel*, which was a finalist for the National Book Award, Timothy Bent, executive editor of trade books for Oxford University Press, and Chandra



Prasad, author of adult and young adult fiction, whose forthcoming novel focuses on the intersection between AI, identity, and environmental ethics.

Central to the panel’s discussion is the question of what our world will look like as artificial intelligence becomes more and more powerful and becomes, among other things, able to produce books and art equal to, or even superior to, that of humans with unenhanced intelligence.

“AI keeps learning at a remarkably rapid pace,” adds Winchester. “Right now, I think we’re still better but that may well change. Many of us are wringing our hands with concern about the future. I do hope that young people are aware of this and will join us in October. It is their future that is now on the line, because AI can do it all.”

Tickets are available at www.nmmeetinghouse.org. □



Thank You to Our Contributors:

Raymond Levin & Eileen Shapiro; Arlyn & Owen Hoberman; Joan Elder & Lee Backer; Leonard & Hannah Golub; Joe & Darlene Wilkinson; Fern Khan ; and Eugene & Elizabeth Rosenberg



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MAILBOX



To the Editor,

We are writing to express our collective concerns regarding the proposed merger of the Southern Berkshire and Berkshire Hills Regional School Districts. As lifelong residents of the town of New Marlborough, we have had the unique pleasure of attending New Marlborough Central School and Mount Everett Regional High School, as have our children, and now grandchildren. We appreciate the value of quality education, particularly education that takes place in a small school setting. We believe that bigger is not better.

We received a high-quality education in our district's schools, and we feel that the breadth of extracurricular activities and innovative programs and opportunities now available to our school children is exceptional. This is evidenced by the early college program now taking place between Mount Everett and Simon's Rock, where our high school students can earn college credits; the multitude of extracurricular clubs and sports that are available to our students; the robotics program that has gained wide recognition; and our participation in the prestigious Transcend Rural Schools Design 2.0 Cohort. We appreciate our district's investment in rural community-based schools and feel honored to be one of the ten schools chosen to participate in this unique project with Transcend.

We recognize that a lot of work has been done to study the prospect of combining our two districts. Our experience in the busing industry has shown us the unique challenges of transporting students in our rural area. We are familiar with the proposed transportation changes and with the flaws of computer-generated bus routes and are concerned that they may not take into account the unique challenges of our area, such as roads that are simply not passible in the winter or accessible by large buses, amongst other factors.

Our district has worked diligently to maintain its buildings, as evidenced by the new HVAC system being installed in the Sheffield campus, as well as solar panels being added to the roof. The commitment to maintaining the infrastructure in our district is apparent.

As our father, former selectman in New Marlborough for thirty-four years said in 1996, "We have the best little school in the district right over here in New Marlborough."

We are in support of our small schools and look forward to sending future generations to SBRSD to experience quality community-based education. We do not believe that a merger would benefit our district financially; nor would it support the social and emotional development of our students or provide them with the one-on-one attention and value that is only available in a small school setting. Please join us in preserving the small schools that are part of the fabric of our communities and investing in the educational experience that our small schools currently provide by voting against the proposed school merger.

Respectfully,
Robert K. Miller
Anita E. Ormsbee Cook
John E. Ormsbee

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NEW MARLBOROUGH CENTRAL SCHOOL

Past, Present, and Looking to the Future

A thumbnail sketch, first off, on the history of New Marlborough schools: Hard as it is to imagine with our present day population, but in the mid-nineteenth century there were a dozen one-room schoolhouses spread out throughout the five villages. According to a 1975 report by Barbara Rhodes for the New Marlborough Historical Society, in 1876 these twelve schools supplied elementary and secondary education for 522 children. Over time, as the mills closed and the population declined, the number of schools dwindled. By 1926 there were just five schools remaining, one in each village. Further consolidation occurred over the next several years, with the younger children going to either Southfield or New Marlborough Village, and grades seven through twelve attending a larger school in Mill River. The present building was built in 1932 on the site of the old one, which had been deemed a fire hazard, and by 1943, the Mill River school was the sole school for all New Marlborough students. Ten years later, in 1953, New Marlborough joined with Alford, Egremont, Monterey, and Sheffield to form the first regional school district in Massachusetts – Southern Berkshire Regional (SBRSD). For the next nearly seven decades, New Marlborough Central has been a much-loved kindergarten through fourth grade school, primarily serving children from New Marlborough and Monterey.

Fast forward to today, New Marlborough Central School is now thriving as an early childhood center for prekindergarten through third grade. At the invitation of SBRSD Elementary Schools Principal Charles Mill-



Top, a 1903 class photo of Mill River Grammar School, and a 120 years later, some of our current teachers and staff - Principal Charles Miller, Sue Krom, Markey Blackwell, and Belinda Twing

er, this reporter went in mid-September to visit classrooms and to speak with staff about how the school is progressing in its fourth year as an early childhood center. Rather than being buzzed in through the locked door, Administrative Assistant Shannon Ruane came to open it with a welcoming smile.

Despite its age, the building, affectionately called our “little red brick schoolhouse,” has bright and inviting classrooms. First stop was the Pre-kindergarten program, occupying two classrooms, where enthusiastic children ages three through five were in the midst of choosing an activity of interest. The team of teachers — Carrere Tirrell and Sue Krom, along with Educational Support Personnel Belinda Twing and Jessica Eichstedt — are using a rich curriculum developed by the Boston Public Schools. The children are currently learning about themselves by making self-portraits and getting some math concepts by measuring their feet.

Next, in the kindergarten room, Elizabeth O'Donnell led a morning meeting, which is an important element in all the classrooms. She patiently listened to each child as they digested the plan for the day.

In the first grade, the lesson was about how to be a good friend, which is part of the social-emotional learning that has become so important in making up for the isolation the children experienced during the pandemic. Teacher Jaime-Lyn Schieb was helping them think through how they feel about helping others.

In the second grade classroom, veteran teacher Anne Dunne showed that, although in her first year at NMC, she had already made a great connection with her students. They were eagerly listening to the story she was reading and answering her questions about the motivations of the characters. They were also

learning how to listen to each other's opinions.

While the third graders with Tom Masters were solving math questions independently on their computers, he was moving around the room, giving each student individual attention. It was interesting to see that he was able to tailor the online math curriculum so all students could learn at their individual levels.

Monday, library day, was obviously a favorite with the students who were gathered in the lavender painted school library, with all eyes focused on librarian Markey Blackwell. As in all of the classes observed, it was clear that teachers and staff have a common goal in building community by establishing rules and routines that foster a positive social and emotional learning environment for the students.

During lunch time, several of the teachers and staff had a chance to talk about their experiences at New Marlborough Central. In her second year with the District, Ms. Tirrell expressed her enthusiasm for the special aspects of the small school, saying, "It is unique as a PreK teacher to be involved with teachers from all grades and have the families so involved." When asked to comment on the school, Ms. Dunn said, "The one word that comes to mind is 'community.' With one teacher at each grade level we work together. The teachers, students, parents, and community members are all invested in the children." Laurie Briggs, the support person in second grade, has been part of the school for a long time. She said, "This place is like a second home. Over the years, it has maintained a caring community atmosphere that makes the school special." The librarian Markey Blackwell and Nurse Lisa St. Pierre also commented, "We are all there for each other." Currently the bonds are especially strong, as

From the top, a kindergartner learning to measure, Jaime-Lyn Schieb, Tom Masters, Elizabeth O'Donnell, and Anne Dunne



eight of the eleven staff members live in the District and have children who had attended or are currently students in District schools. Their commitment goes very deep. They are pleased to be back to a more normal, post-covid time, in which they can resume school projects involving multi-grade level groupings investigating a common theme.

To understand the parents' connection with the school, this reporter attended the September meeting of the New Marlborough Monterey Parent Teacher Association. The discussion was focused on the fall activities that bring parents to the school, and plans for raising funds to support school activities this year. Speaking for the NMMPTA, Kevin Fish, with three children attending the school, said, "The blend of experience and fresh energy of our incredibly talented team of educators and staff gives students a learning experience that is unparalleled. The small size of the school provides for a great amount of individual attention and flexibility. The Holiday Fair is our opportunity to help support hands-on learning and enhance experiential opportunities like field trips and visiting artists. This year, the fair will be held on December 2. One of the highlights of the Holiday Fair is our online auction that raised over \$10,000 last year. We have hopes to exceed that this year."

The potential merger of SBRSD with the Berkshire Hills Regional School District was on the minds of both staff and parents, all wondering what a consolidation might mean for New Marlborough

Central in the future. For the time being, everyone associated with the school is fully devoted to making it a place where all children can learn and thrive. □

Jane Burke

photos by Jane Burke

THE LOG

Police Department (selected entries)

- Aug. 1 11:32 a.m. The Department alerts the tree warden to a damaged tree that appears ready to fall onto Canaan Southfield Road in Clayton.
- 11:52 a.m. Following a report of an injured deer with broken hind legs on Mill River Great Barrington Road in Mill River Village, the animal control officer dispatches the deer.
- Aug. 4 7:18 p.m. An officer assists a Hartsville resident to re-enter his home after the door code had been changed.
- 10:23 p.m. A caller alerts the animal control officer to a cow loose on South Sandisfield Road.
- Aug. 5 1:37 p.m. A Lake Buel area resident complains of an open fire in the front yard of a neighboring property.
- 9:25 p.m. A caller complains of fireworks in the area of his Lake Buel residence.
- Aug. 7 9:23 p.m. A person emerging from the woods near Campbell Falls is advised to restrict his visits to daytime and told to move on.
- Aug., 13 1:43 p.m. The highway superintendent is contacted after a resident reports a tree down blocking both lanes of Hayes Hill Road.
- Aug. 17 2:09 p.m. A caller reports an injured fawn, with its mother nearby, on the side of Hartsville New Marlborough Road in New Marlborough village.
- Aug. 21 10:03 a.m. The Highway Department is notified of a large sink hole, apparently created by a failed beaver dam, on Campbell Falls Road.
- Aug. 22 8:15 a.m. The Highway Department is notified of a dead fawn on Canaan Southfield Road.
- Aug. 23 10:23 a.m. A Southfield resident reports that the owner of a dog that had jumped at her car as she passed, damaging the side of the vehicle, had refused to take responsibility and instead had made a threatening statement to her.
- Aug. 25 4:02 p.m. A resident of eastern Massachusetts inquires as to the location of the vehicle she was driving, which was towed following a traffic stop last March.
- 7:46 p.m. An officer accompanies a mother to assure the peaceful transference of her daughter from the Hartsville residence of her father.
- Aug. 26 8:26 p.m. A Clayton resident complains of fireworks being set off in the village's one-mile cornfield.
- Aug. 28 5:32 p.m. A caller reports the loss of a dog-trainer collar in Goodnow Preserve.
- 9:23 p.m. An automated crash alert to 911 from an iPhone resulted, it was revealed on callback from its being dropped from a motorcycle.
- Aug. 31 1:37 a.m. Following a report from a New Marlborough village resident that a Labrador retriever had wandered onto his porch, an officer assists in re-uniting the dog with its owner in Mill River village.

Graham Frank, Chief of Police



THE WHIP SHOP



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High Speed Fiber Optic Internet

- In Southfield Village Center
- Cell Phone Service
- On site US Post Office
- Steps from the Southfield Store

FOR AVAILABILITY, CONTACT:

413-229-3576

FIRE AND RESCUE

Aug. 1	12:24 p.m.	Aberdeen Lane Fire Alarm	Aug. 14	3:52 p.m.	York Lake Road Medical Call
Aug. 1	6:33 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call	Aug. 14	8:29 p.m.	East Hill Road Fire Alarm
Aug. 1	7:49 p.m.	Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call	Aug. 15	3:39 a.m.	Canaan Southfield Road Fire Alarm
Aug. 2	9:55 a.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call	Aug. 18	6:23 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Sandisfield Medical Call
Aug. 2	12:55 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call	Aug. 20	11:38 a.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call
Aug. 3	1:58 p.m.	Mill River Great Barrington Road Fire Alarm	Aug. 22	10:49 a.m.	Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call
Aug. 4	12:15 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Sheffield Medical Call	Aug. 23	11:58 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Odor of Propane
Aug. 4	7:30 p.m.	Underwood Road Service Call	Aug. 24	8:15 p.m.	Hartsville New Marlborough Road Grill Fire
Aug. 5	10:03 a.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call	Aug. 25	3:43 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call
Aug. 5	7:48 p.m.	Hartsville Mill River Road Medical Call	Aug. 25	8:54 p.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call
Aug. 6	12:01 p.m.	Canaan Southfield Road MVA	Aug. 26	5:12 a.m.	Canaan Valley Road Medical Call
Aug. 6	11:49 p.m.	Clayton Mill River Road CO Alarm	Aug. 28	9:36 p.m.	Southfield Branch Road Medical Call
Aug. 11	8:37 a.m.	Mutual Aid to Great Barrington Medical Call			
Aug. 11	9:48 a.m.	Mutual Aid to Sheffield Medical Call			

Fire Company President David Smith

New Marlborough Fire & Rescue honors the memory of retired **Captain David Herrick** for his extensive role in our emergency services. He served as an EMT and Fire Department Training Officer, was a former president of the New Marlborough Fire Company, a member of the Company’s Board of Directors, and served on the New Marlborough Emergency Services Fund Board of Directors.

Dave took a leading role for years in heading the Fire Company’s annual Pig Roast and Raffle, and made sure few folks escaped his Mill River Store without buying a raffle ticket or two — or more. A great teacher, Dave trained several firefighters to drive and operate the engines, and he took more than one firefighter under his wing during nearly three decades of service to the town of New Marlborough. His larger-than-life personality, all-around reliability, and good humor are already greatly missed.

Godspeed, Captain Herrick. The weather’s getting colder — pack an extra pair of socks with your gear. □

Fire Company President David Smith



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RECIPE OF THE MONTH

AI— It's a hot topic! It's the theme of this month's program at the Meeting House, and it's a major sticking point in the Hollywood actors' and writers' strike. As I write this, there appears now to be an end in sight for that strike, but there is nevertheless no debate that artificial intelligence is a threat to those who work in the arts, but what about the culinary arts?

To test out where we stand with artificial intelligence vis à vis cooking and baking, I decided to ask Chat GPT for something seasonal – a “unique” pumpkin chocolate chip recipe. It took about two seconds for Chat GPT to spit out a recipe. Was it perfect? NO!!! The recipe included a disappointing pumpkin cream filling which I am not including here. Also, the moist cookie batter needed several more minutes in the oven than the AI recipe called for. I wasn't expecting to need to make adjustments or disregard half the recipe.

But most importantly, how did the cookies taste? My husband's Tuesday night poker game happened to be at our house the next evening and all six men enjoyed the cookies and gave them a thumbs up.

So, from my limited experiment, I conclude that AI is not presently a culinary threat. I'm sticking with reliable sources like Melissa Clark and Madhur Jaffrey. There will always be some things that AI just can't compete with!

Enjoy!!!

Marjorie Shapiro



photo by Barry Shapiro

Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ingredients

1 cup canned pumpkin puree	1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened	1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup granulated sugar	1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 cup brown sugar, packed	1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 large egg	1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
2 cups all-purpose flour	1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
1 teaspoon baking powder	

Directions

- Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C) and line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
- In a medium-sized bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, ground cinnamon, ground nutmeg, ground cloves, and ground ginger. Set this dry mixture aside.
- In a large mixing bowl, cream together the softened butter, granulated sugar, and brown sugar until it's light and fluffy.
- Add the egg and vanilla extract to the butter and sugar mixture and mix until well combined.
- Gradually add the canned pumpkin puree to the wet mixture, mixing until fully incorporated.
- Slowly add the dry mixture to the wet mixture, mixing until just combined.
- Fold in the semi-sweet chocolate chips until they are evenly distributed throughout the dough.
- Drop rounded tablespoons of cookie dough onto the prepared baking sheets, spacing them about 2 inches apart.
- Bake in the preheated oven for 15-18 minutes, or until the edges are golden brown and the cookies are set.
- Allow the cookies to cool on the baking sheets for a few minutes before transferring them to a wire rack to cool completely.



NEW MARLBOROUGH LAND TRUST

Get outside and enjoy the crisp weather and splendid colors of fall. This is a time of year when our efforts in trail and land management shine through for everyone's enjoyment. Take time to notice the world around you. It won't be long before it will all be covered in a blanket of white.



cap

Please support the New Marlborough Land Trust! Your support means we can preserve valuable natural treasures for future generations.

<https://www.nmlandtrust.org/support-our-mission>

UPCOMING EVENT:

READING THE LAND, Saturday, October, 2, 11:00 a.m.

Join Tes Reed, passionate naturalist, wilderness educator, guide, and NMLT Board member on Saturday, October 21, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. for a guided hike on the Goodnow Preserve. Together we will read the landscape to reveal its story. We will identify the flora, investigate the succession of a forest, look for animal signs and interpret bird language as we wander the fields and forests. Ages 15+. Space is limited. Contact nmlandtrust@gmail.com to reserve your spot. To learn more about Tes Reed, go to www.tesreed.com. □

Silvia Eggenberger, Executive Director

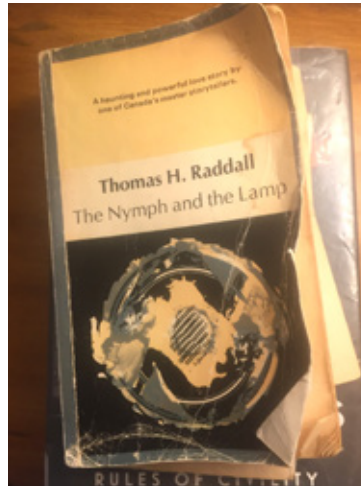
WHAT ARE YOU READING?

This column is inspired by NM5VN co-founder Jon Swan, who started every long distance phone conversation to family members with the above question.... In his honor, here is this month's choice of a book by one of our townspeople.

Sam Halley, 43, Hartsville Mill River Road

The Nymph and the Lamp, by Thomas Raddall

Sam's description: "A beautiful, surprising love story set in the 1920's, in the world of marine wireless operators stationed on a remote island off the coast of Nova Scotia. I love every bit of it – its stark 'Nova Scotia-ness,' the portrayal of the lives, art, and community of



the 'brasspounders' (which Raddall himself lived and knew); the glimpses into the ways in which the world was quickly changing after WWI, even on remote islands; and, of course, the rich love story throughout. This is one of those books that stays with me as I go about my day." □

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NEW AQUISITIONS

Adult Fiction

Leonard and Hungry Paul, by Ronan Hession

The Rabbit Hutch, by Tess Gunty

Normal Rules Don't Apply, by Kate Atkinson

The River We Remember, by William Krueger

Whalefall, by Daniel Kraus

The Armor of Light, by Ken Follett

The Raging Storm, by Ann Cleeves

Adult Nonfiction

Walking with Sam: A Father, a Son, and 500 Miles Across Spain, by Andrew McCarthy

The Grace-Filled Homestead Cookbook, by Lana Stenner

Wandering Through Life, by Donna Leon

Children's Fiction

Once, a Bird, by Rina Singh

Slowly Slowly, by Toni Yuly

Rory Branagan: Detective, by Andrew Clover

Too Much: an Overwhelming Day, by Jolene Gutierrez

The Dreamatics, by Michelle Cuevas

Children's Nonfiction

From Roots to Blooms: Plants Have a Purpose, by Margaret Williamson

Goose Migration, by Marla Tomlinson

LIBRARY HOURS

Mon. Wed. Sat.

10:00 am – 5:30 pm

Tues. / Fri. 1:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Thurs. 1:30 pm – 5:30 pm

229-6668

Have a Scary
Halloween



ROBERT FORTE OPENING RECEPTION

New Marlborough Library's Art Exhibit

Please join us for an opening reception

October 1st from 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm.

Come browse and chat with the artist as you enjoy light refreshments.

After leaving the practice of law, I turned to my lifelong passion for art. Painting and drawing have always been there for me. My paintings are done primarily in oils. This show focuses on landscape and floral subjects, but figurative subjects are important to me as well. Regardless of what I paint, all my work explores color and color relationships, as well as the simplification of form over detail. Painting for me is a unique, personal and passionate experience. I hope this is evident in the work I chose for the show. — Robert Forte

For more information contact Caryn King at caryn@carynking.com

A portion of all sales will be donated to the New Marlborough Friends of the Library

Sunflowers
Oil on canvas
32"x40



Rocky Inlet
Oil on canvas
24'x30

Please fill in the form and send with your contribution to:
 New Marlborough 5 Village News
 P.O. Box 243, Southfield, MA 01259

YES, I WANT THE *New Marlborough 5 Village News* TO CONTINUE!
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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:** May - August, 2nd Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.
September - April, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays
- Board of Health:** First Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.
- Conservation Commission:** Third Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m. or Zoom
- Board of Assessors:** Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- Fire Department training:** Every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. at the fire station
- Building Inspector:** By appointment only; call 413-229-0277
- First Responders:** Meeting/training: First and third Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. at the fire station
- Cultural Council:** Second Thursday at 4:15 p.m at the library
- Post Office: Mill River** (413) 229-8582
Window hours: Monday - Friday 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Saturday 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.
- 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 and Tuesday, 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- Tax Collector:** Monday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Tues. and Thurs. 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
- Selectmen's Administrative Secretary:** Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- Animal Control Officer:** Graham Frank, (413) 229-8161
- Town Clerk:** 229-8278; 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. weekdays; Saturday by appointment
- Town Hall:** 229-8116
- Police:** Business office: 229-8161

Transfer Station Hours:

Wednesday: 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.
 Saturday: 9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
 Sunday: 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

PERMITS ARE DUE JULY 1

and can be purchased for \$225 by mail or online at www.newmarlborough.gov. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. No admittance without a permit after August 15

Emergency calls:

Police, Fire, Medical
911

New Marlborough Highway Department

Located on Mill River-Southfield Rd.
 Hours:
 Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
 PO Box 99, Mill River, MA 01244
 (413) 229-8165

We welcome advertisements from businesses owned by New Marlborough residents. Call Barbara Lowman: 229-2369

NM5VN Editorial Team

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 Shawn Fields, Robbi Hartt, Ruben Kier, Zoë Kogan,
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New Marlborough 5 Village News

appears monthly,
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www.nm5vn.org

The next issue will be dated November 2023.
 All copy must be submitted no later than October 17.
 For advertising, contact Barbara Lowman,
 tel: 229-2369 PO Box 243, Southfield, MA 01259
5villagenews@gmail.com

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Upcoming: *Events Calendar for October and November*

October 6: Fluxus at Cassilis, a Historical Society program on a brief flurry of artistic innovation in the late 1970s based at Cassilis Farm; 7:00 p.m. in the Meeting House Gallery

October 7: Writing in the Age of Artificial Intelligence, a discussion, led by Simon Winchester, with novelists Chandra Prasad and Francine Prose and Timothy Bent, executive editor of trade books for Oxford University Press; 4:30 p.m. at the Meeting House

Through October 8: 25th Annual New Marlborough Artists Show, at the Meeting House Gallery

October 23: Town Meeting, to vote on the proposed regional school agreement, at the firehouse in Southfield, 6:00 p.m.



October 28: Halloween Spook-tacular at the Goodnow Preserve, starting at 5:00 p.m. In case of rain, the event will be at New Marlborough Meeting House

November 11: First Responders Wine Tasting, offering a sampling of locally produced wines, beers, and spirits, plus food pairings from local chefs, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Fire House in Southfield Village