



New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield

A BLUEPRINT FOR GROWTH *The Planning Board's Bylaw Revision Comes to a Vote*

By Joe Poindexter



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Two eye-in-the-sky depictions of New Marlborough tell a dramatic story. A 1987 schematic shows a scattering of structures along the town's ninety miles of roads and byways. In a 1999 map, the roads are lined with rows of connected beads, each representing a new structure. The difference is like shifting a telescope from an unstarry sector of the nighttime sky into the heart of the Milky Way. Parcel by parcel, the town's rural acreage was being colonized by houses.

Some years ago, the New Marlborough Planning Board confronted this dynamic and determined that the Town's zoning regulations, essentially unchanged since they were written in 1966, were no longer adequately guiding its growth. With the help of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, it developed a strategy aimed at retaining the rural character of New Marlborough while encouraging vibrancy in the Town's five villages. Now the town gets its say. At a Special Town Meeting on November 18 (Town Hall, 7:00 p.m.), residents will vote on whether to adopt revised Protective Bylaws intended to help realize these objectives.

continued on page 2

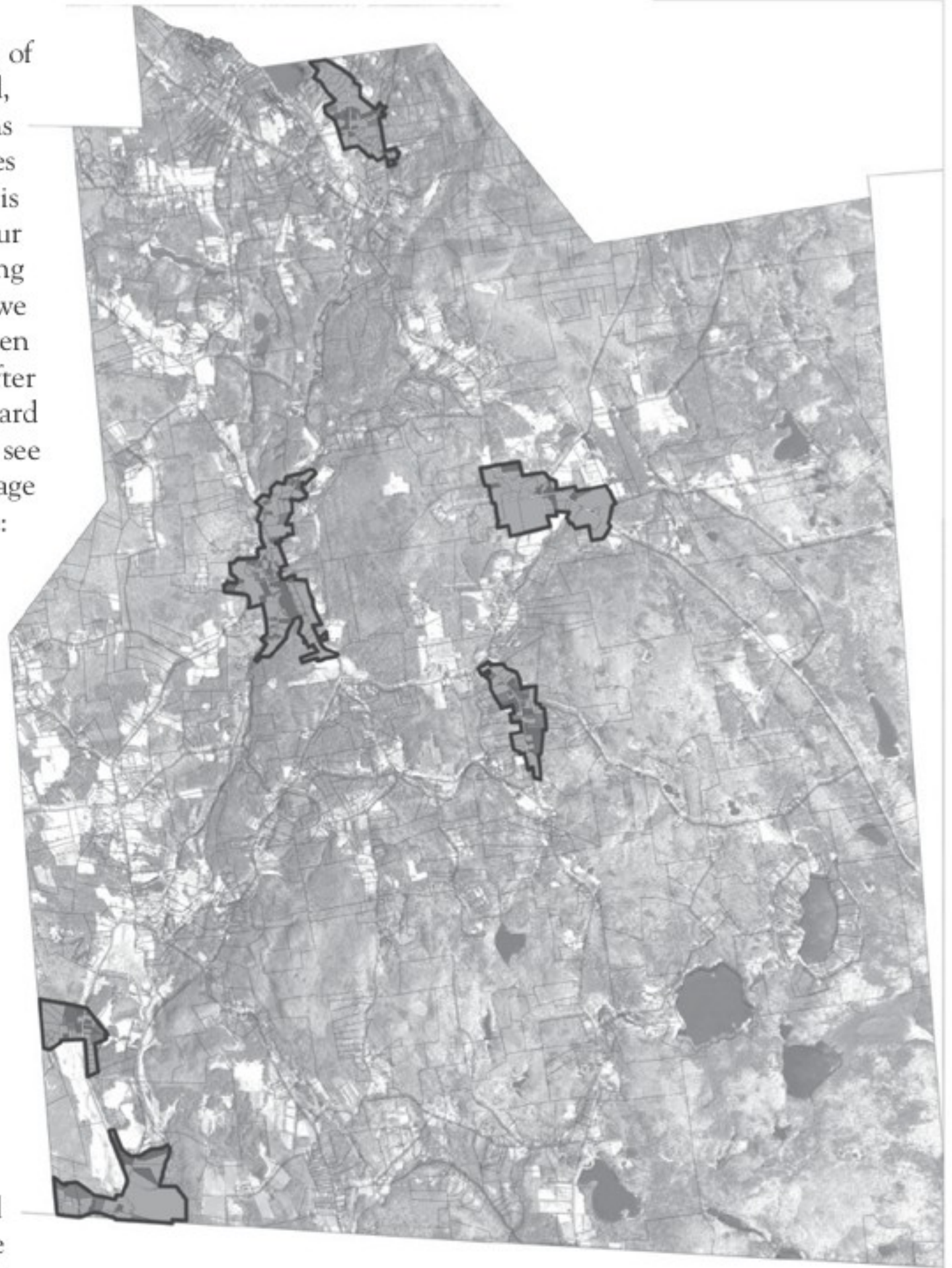
Blueprint for Growth, continued from page 1

Most residents have a general sense of where the five villages begin and end, but as far as present zoning regulations are concerned, there are no villages – every acre of New Marlborough is identical to every other acre. “To put our land-use house in order,” says Planning Board Chairman Jamie Mullen, “we have to recognize a distinction between the villages and the countryside.” After months of careful deliberation, the Board established village boundaries. (To see precisely where they fall, see village center maps at the Town’s website: www.newmarlboroughma.gov; click on Planning Board under the Boards and Committees heading; then on “Boundaries Village Center Districts Proposal Maps” under Additional Links.)

The next step was to distinguish between the nature of development in the villages versus that in the rural area. As a guiding principle, the proposed revision seeks to allow for increased population intensity and business activity in the villages, when and if they occur, with an aim toward reducing those pressures in the countryside. The revision maintains one-acre zoning throughout the town but reduces the requirement of 150 feet of road frontage to 75 feet in the village districts. Additional dwelling units on village lots could be built on as little as half an acre. Under the proposed revision, three- to six-unit dwellings are prohibited in rural areas, while they continue to be allowed by special permit (that is, approval by the Board of Selectmen) in the villages.

The revision allows for traditional village-based commerce. While the current bylaws are mostly silent on what businesses may be established in the town, the revision names thirty-three. Antique shops, galleries, banks, B&B’s, professional offices, retail spaces of 2,000 square feet or less, farmers’ markets, and farm-stands are all permitted by right in the villages. Some fourteen others are eligible for special permitting. (All current businesses are grandfathered under the revised bylaw.)

Other commercial growth has limits, however. Fast-food restaurants and drive-throughs are nixed in



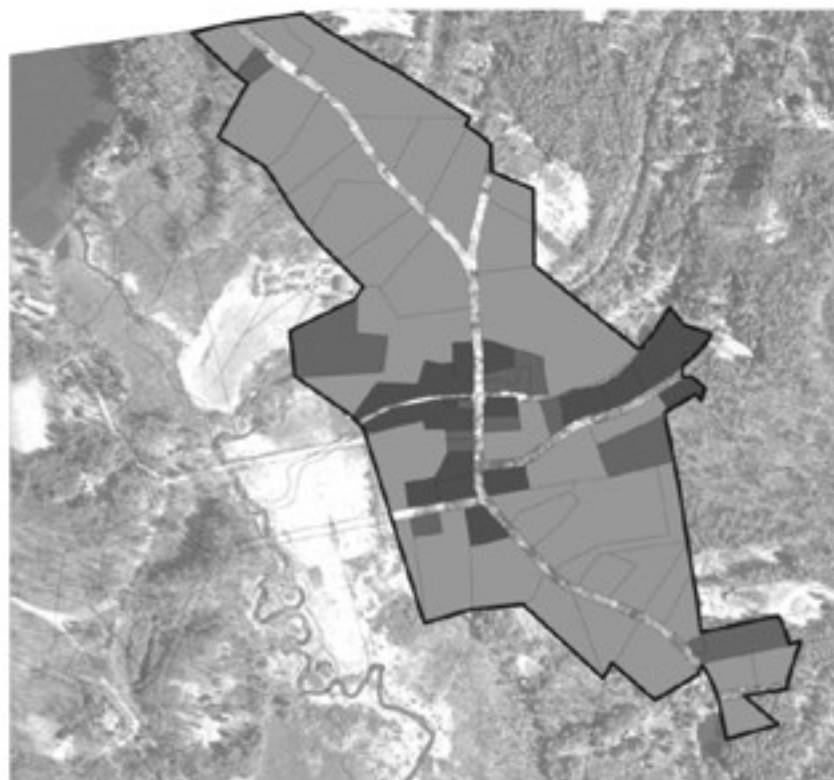
The five villages are outlined in an aerial view of New Marlborough.

the bylaw revision – as are drive-through banks. The revision would allow commercial kennels, sawmills, campgrounds, and meat-processors – by special permit – in the town’s rural areas but not in the villages.

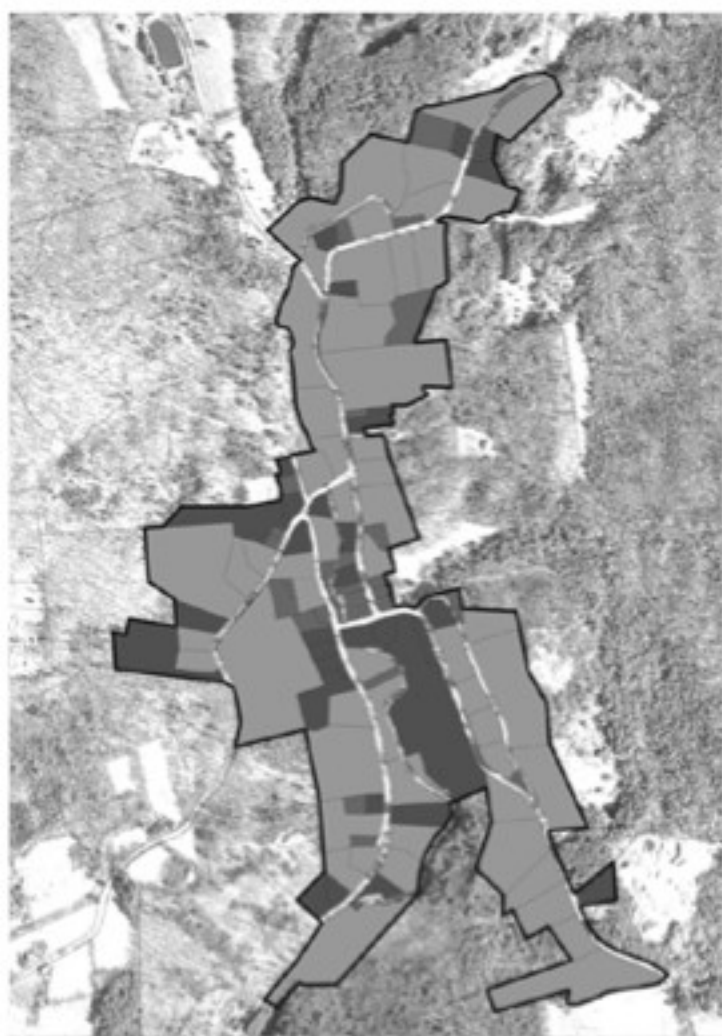
“Change is occurring whether we like it or not,” says Mr. Mullen. “The question is, do we want a strategy to guide it? Planning is rarely about today or tomorrow but more significantly thirty to fifty years from now,” he adds. “The effects of what we do today will be experienced by generations yet unborn. They will either thank us for our efforts or curse us for doing nothing.”

The Planning Board’s proposed revision asks whether we want a town with well-defined villages or one in which town and country are allowed to blend without distinction. On November 18, New Marlborough residents will render a verdict. □

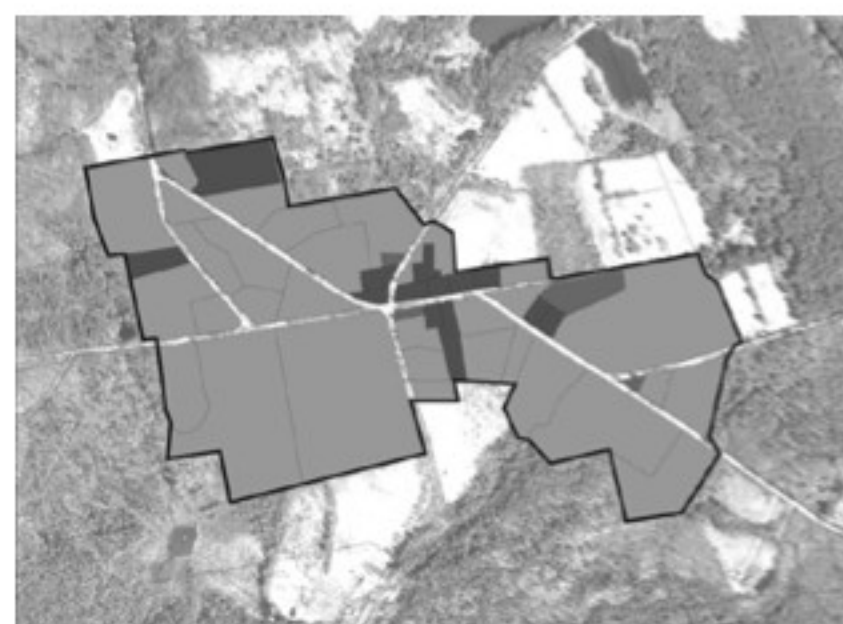
NEW MARLBOROUGH VILLAGES DEFINED



HARTSVILLE
from the Monterey town line to a quarter mile south of the village center.



MILL RIVER
runs from above New Marlborough Central School on Hartsville Mill River Road to about a half mile below the village center on both the Clayton and the Southfield Mill River Roads.



NEW MARLBOROUGH VILLAGE
runs along Route 57 from Branch Road to just beyond the fork of 57 and Route 183.

CLAYTON
has three sections: One contains the lots bordering the Connecticut state line along Clayton Road and proceeds north beyond the fork of Canaan Southfield Road and Clayton Mill River Road; the other two pick up farther north on Clayton Mill River Road and contain lots on Alum Hill Road to where it enters Sheffield.



SOUTHFIELD
starts at the head of Norfolk Road and proceeds to just beyond the turn onto Canaan Southfield Road.

Town Business Is Your Business

BOARD OF SELECTMEN



August 26: All three selectmen were present for a discussion with Tim Newman, chairman of the Town's technology committee, of the imminent completion of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute's (MBI) Middle Mile Network to the Town Hall, the library, and the fire station. That means the Board will soon need to decide what kind of Internet services it wants to take from the network. There will be two basic offerings, Mr. Newman explained: high speed Internet access and Internet-based phone service. The town currently uses Verizon DSL for its Internet access, which according to Mr. Newman, seems to work well enough, but as he noted, new applications are coming along all the time that the town might want to take advantage of that will require more bandwidth than DSL can provide. Similarly, the phone offering would provide many more features and flexibility than the town's current phone system but would require a capital investment of about \$5,000 in new equipment and wiring. So at Mr. Newman's urging, the Board agreed to meet with Crocker Communications, one of the service providers on the network, to discuss various options and price points.

The Board awarded the contract for the Canaan Southfield Road bridge to J.H. Maxymillian of Pittsfield, the lowest of four bidders for the job at \$346,611. (The others were New England Infrastructure at \$421,405, Tully Construction Corp. at \$425,696, and Northern Construction Service at \$437,850.) The next step will be for Maxymillian and BSC Group, the Town's engineering consultant on the project, which analyzed the bids, to put together a work schedule for the project.

Chairman Nat Yohalem reported there was a break-in at the Highway Department garage the previous Thursday. The thieves were caught on the building's security cameras and arrested the next day in Falls Village by Connecticut State Police. Most of the stolen items were recovered, but as a consequence of the break-in the Board has begun to rethink its original plans for securing the Town Hall. It is now considering installing security cameras.

Following up on the recent Town Hall-style meeting with School Superintendent David Hastings and Mount Everett Principal Glenn Devoti, Mr. Yohalem said the Board is looking to compile a list of resident experts in the town who would be willing to share their time and expertise with students in the high school. Mr. Hastings, as he noted at the time, is an enthusiastic proponent of bringing talents from the community into the educational process (See "Facing the parents – and the Taxpayers" in the October issue of the NM5VN).

Mr. Yohalem reported that Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, citing a busy work schedule, has declined the Town's invitation to attend a Board of Selectmen meeting. Instead, the Board will extend an invitation to Senator Elizabeth Warren.

In other actions, the Board appointed Administrative Secretary Jessica Bosworth to the part-time position of assistant treasurer to replace Jennifer Goewey, who is unable to serve because of health reasons, Mr. Yohalem said. It also awarded a contract to Ormsbee Gas Company of New Marlborough to supply propane to the Highway Department. The only other bidder, Ostermann Propane, quoted a higher price.

Finally, the Board turned down a request from Northwest Connecticut YMCA to post three permanent road signs directing visitors to YMCA Camp Wa Wa Segowea on Foley Hill Road. The Board felt it would set a bad precedent with other organizations in town.

September 30: All three selectmen were present as Chairman Yohalem announced the Board had hired Bill Ruane of Southfield to fill a Highway Department vacancy at a salary of \$17.50 an hour. Mr. Ruane previously worked for DeVries Building Supply in Sheffield. Mr. Yohalem also noted that Police Chief Scott Farrell and Fire Company President David Smith have apparently reopened discussions on garaging the police cruiser at the fire station. The cruiser is currently housed in the Highway Department garage, but Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring has asked that it be moved prior to the start of the winter plowing season.

Administrative Secretary Jessica Bosworth said that three town residents so far have responded to the Board's request for "experts" willing to mentor students in the high school.

Chairman Yohalem reported on the third of three meetings so far between the Building, Grounds, and Technology subcommittee of the Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee and the selectmen from the five towns in the district on the district's capital needs. As reported earlier, the first two meetings focused on operating costs of the district's four schools and enrollment trends in the district. The third meeting, held September 26, featured a presentation by Monterey on its plans for replacing its existing school building, considered to be beyond repair, with a new building at an estimated cost \$1 million. As Mr. Yohalem noted, that's a sizeable increase over the \$300,000 to \$400,000 Monterey

originally forecast for building a new structure. In addition to pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students, the new school would be expanded to include first graders, with the goal of enrolling six students in each grade. There are currently eight town students attending the existing school (For further details see "Repairing Our Schools" on page 16.)

Then it was Egremont's turn, and according to Mr. Yohalem, the town's representatives "told us what they've been telling us for a year now," which is that the town spent \$12,500 on a pre-engineering report on its school building, "but they have absolutely no idea what it would cost to renovate the building or where the money would come from. It was a complete waste of time," he said. The next meeting, according to Mr. Yohalem, will be held in about five weeks and will focus mainly on the capital needs of the main campus in Sheffield and provide updated capital costs for the New Marlborough School.

The Board convened a special permit hearing to consider a change-in-use request from builder Michael White for the former American Legion Hall. Mr. White recently purchased the building for use as an office for his contracting business. After hearing there were no objections from any of the abutters or from the Planning Board or building inspector, the Board in a roll call unanimously approved his request.

The Board appointed John Lander of Pittsfield to the position of Clerk of the Works for the Canaan Southfield Road bridge project. He'll be paid \$35 an hour and act as the Town's eyes and ears on the project. Mr. Lander has previously served in a similar capacity for the Town of Hinsdale and has also worked as a civil engineer for District One of the Massachusetts Highway Department.

October 7: All three selectmen were present for a wide-ranging discussion on the upcoming repairs and improvements slated for the transfer station. These include the purchase of a second compactor for single-stream recycling. Present for the discussion were Highway Superintendent Loring, Wilkinson Excavating's Joe

Wilkinson, Transfer Station Superintendent Alvin Stalker, and Roger Levine, the Town's Solid Waste Coordinator, who attended by phone. The repairs will focus mainly on rebuilding the concrete block and cement walls surrounding the existing compactor, which have been deteriorating for some time. Mr. Wilkinson, whose company will do most of the work, said he will provide a cost estimate by the end of the October.

He will also be pouring a concrete slab for the new compactor, at a cost of about \$3,500 in anticipation of the installation of the new compactor next spring. Its estimated cost is about \$40,000. But as Mr. Levine noted, the switch to single stream recycling, in which all recyclables – paper, glass, plastic and cans – are comingled and compacted together, will save the Town approximately \$10,000 a year in hauling costs, meaning the compactor will essentially pay for itself in about four years. He said the Town has already received bids from two vendors for the unit, and he also suggested approaching the Town's current waste hauler Eco Waste Systems of Albany, which furnished the existing compactor, to see if it is interested in bidding on the compactor.

In other action, the Board designated October 31 from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. as the Town's official Halloween trick or treat. The Board also accepted the resignation of Peter Marks from the Conservation Commission and will send him a letter of thanks for his five years of service. It then appointed Freddy Friedman, who is also a member of the Board of Assessors, to serve out his term.

Selectman Michele Shalaby reported on the previous week's meeting with Crocker Communications on the new high-speed fiber-optic network that will soon be available to the Town. Crocker discussed the cost savings of having the Town Hall, the library, and the fire house share a single 10MB feed versus the risk of overburdening the system. It also explained the features and flexibility of an internet telephone service compared to the system currently being offered by Verizon. □

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION

September 28: Co-Chairmen Ned Wilson and John Weinstein, were present to address the month's agenda.

Joe Wilkinson of Joe Wilkinson Excavating started the meeting by asking the Commission to review a pending project for M. Ismail Khan on Cagney Hill Road. Mr. Wilkinson explained that a new catch basin is necessary to divert water away from the house to an area in an adjacent field. Mr. Wilkinson had already conferred with the Highway Department and the abutters to the property. The Commission thanked Mr. Wilkinson for keeping it informed but noted that technically, the Commission has no jurisdiction in the proposed work area.

Next the Commission addressed Keith Salzmann of Route 57 in Hartsville. The applicant explained that he had e-filed a permit for a Notice of Intent (NOI) with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) but that the DEP had not received the submission. Because a file number had not been issued by the DEP, the Commission could not rule on the project. The Commission briefly

noted that the application covered the construction of a garage in a forested area within 200 feet of Hatchery Brook. The Commission agreed to wait for comments from the DEP before discussing the matter further. The hearing was continued until the next meeting.

With no further business the mail was reviewed. A forest cutting plan for Prudence Spaulding of Sisson Hill Road was received. Notice was also received that a Certificate of Compliance for Ralph Kuhn on Hadsell Street had been recorded. The Commission was notified of the Public Hearing for work at the former American Legion hall on New Marlborough Southfield Road. A letter from the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife noted that the NOI for the Lake Buel Preservation District was subject to review under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act.

Finally the last two months' minutes were read and approved. The meeting adjourned at 11 a.m. □

Martha Bryan

Snowbird Alert!

It's that time of year again: the time when some of our regular readers and supporters head for warmer climes to escape the rigors of a New England winter. If you are a snowbird and want to continue to read the NM5VN throughout the winter, please let us know your temporary address so the 5VN can follow you. If you don't let us know, two things happen, and neither of them is good. First, because it's classified by the U.S. Postal Service as third-class mail, the 5VN is not forwardable and the post office will simply discard it. Second, the post office will notify us that you are "temporarily away" with no further information, and will charge us a fee to boot. At that point, we have

two alternatives, and, as above, neither of them is good. First, we can continue to be dunned by the post office for each issue of the 5VN they will not deliver or, second, to avoid paying the post office fee we can simply remove your name from our mailing list.

We've begun a list of several of our regular snowbirds: folks who usually go away and return at somewhat predictable times and of their regular winter addresses. But for all others, we have no way of keeping in touch. So, to repeat, please let us know when you're leaving, when you expect to return in the spring, and your winter mailing address. We can be reached at 5villagenews@gmail.com or at 413-229-2369. □



A REQUEST FROM THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring asks that homeowners, landscapers, and snowplow workers refrain from blowing leaves or plowing snow into public roadways. Leaves cause drainage blockages and snow pushed onto roads can create hazardous driving conditions. The Highway Department and your fellow drivers thank you.



Photo by Larry Burke

Award-winning authors, left to right, Robert K. Massie, Elizabeth Graver, and Katherine Hall Page, along with co-presenters Gloria Levitas and Mike Levitas (at the podium) gathered at the Meeting House October 5 for the season's final Music and More program.

THE MAPLE PROJECT Photographs by Ed Harvey

This is a very simple project involving a lone maple tree alongside Norfolk Road just north of the Connecticut line. Anytime the mood struck over the past six odd years and I happened by the spot, I would take a few frames with the hope that someday the photos could be put together to show the tree in each season. □



Spring



Late Summer



Early Fall



October

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Say Hello to Reverse 911

By David Lowman

On Monday, September 30, 926 identical telephone calls were made to all New Marlborough residents. In addition, 100 emails and 70 text messages containing the same information as the telephone calls were made. The messages were identical: Tuesday, October 1, the Clayton Mill River Road would be closed to all through traffic for the entire day.

Imagine! A timely and important message delivered almost simultaneously to the entire town.

Welcome to the first use in New Marlborough of the Reverse 911 warning system. The system is computer-based, and the specific program New Marlborough uses is called Blackboard Connect; it costs the Town about \$100 per month. Director of Emergency Management, Ed Harvey explained the process he followed for the road closing. He was first approached by Selectman Michele Shalaby, the Board of Selectmen's point person for emergency management, who asked if the warning could be executed. He recorded a brief message from a script he had written, sent the message to a remote 800 number, pressed a few computer keys, and the telephone calls began. In this instance, the entire town was alerted, but the system is so flexible that, in time, it will be customized for various purposes and audiences. For example, if heavy rain is predicted for one sector of the town, people in that sector could be warned. If the Fire or Police Departments had particular reasons to alert people to potentially dangerous situations, the system, when fully programmed, could do that. A hazardous material spill might necessitate people within a specific radius of the spill to be temporarily evacuated, and the system will be able to handle that, as well.

Mr. Harvey is the assistant director of security at Bard College at Simon's Rock in Great Barrington, and he was appointed to the position of director of emergency management by the Board of Selectmen in June of this year. He succeeds Barbara Marchione who resigned in

April. His work station is in the radio room of the new firehouse. In assuming his duties, Mr. Harvey was helped greatly by Will Brinker of Egremont who is deputy director for emergency management in several South County towns.

The Reverse 911 system is a valuable asset to the town. Its ability to define and separate locations and populations within New Marlborough is a major step in the effort by Town officials to quickly communicate with residents and businesses in potentially dangerous situations. □

Hunting Season Dates

Pheasant, Quail,	
Ruffed Grouse	October 19 – November 31
Black Bear	November 4 – 23
Bobcat	December 20 – March 8
Coyote	January 1 – February 28
Fox	January 1 – February 28
Deer	
Archery	October 21 – November 30
Shotgun	December 2 – 14
Primitive firearms	December 16 – 31

No Hunting Sundays

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Attention New Marlborough Residents: Experts Needed to Mentor Students

Our schools are reaching out to the community of New Marlborough with an opportunity to share knowledge and to help educate students of any and all ages. A recent example of this goal: two high school students wanted to learn German, and the school was not able to fund the request for such a small class. So School Superintendent David Hastings committed to meet with them once a week over lunch to teach

them. If you are a horticulturist or an agriculturist; a carpenter, mason or mechanic; a painter, dancer, writer or musician; a municipal, state or government employee, or have experience in any other areas and wish to volunteer your time, please call Jessica Bosworth at the Town Hall at 413-229-8116 or email at jbosworth@newmarlboroughma.gov. She will gladly forward your name and information to the school's principal. □

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THE LOG: FIRE AND RESCUE

Sept. 1	12:53 a.m.	Mutual Aid to Sandisfield Structure Fire	Sept. 12	4:01 a.m.	Downs Road Fire Alarm
Sept. 3	7:08 a.m.	Lake Road Power Line Down	Sept. 14	2:15 a.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call
Sept. 5	3:30 p.m.	Route 57 Motorcycle Crash	Sept. 17		Hillingdon Road Fire Alarm
Sept. 6	9:56 a.m.	Stone Manor Drive Fire Alarm	Sept. 20	7:00 a.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call
Sept. 6	5:08 p.m.	Adsit Crosby Road Medical Call	Sept. 22	10:36 p.m.	Hartsville N.M. Road Fire Alarm
Sept. 9	9:34 p.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call	Sept. 26	6:50 a.m.	Downs Road Fire Alarm
Sept. 11	1:40 p.m.	Red Fox Drive Fire Alarm	Sept. 26	6:56 p.m.	Clayton Mill River Road Medical Call
Sept. 11	1:55 p.m.	New Marlborough Southfield Rd. Fire Alarm	Sept. 29	5:40 p.m.	Downs Road Fire Alarm

photo by Winnie Veretto



The Annual NMHS reunion was held on September 21 at Bogies Restaurant in Great Barrington. Thirty-two people attended, fourteen of them graduates of New Marlborough High School, classes of 1951 through 1955. Seven others were graduates of Mount Everett Regional High School (Class of 1958). In the photo, facing the camera are, left to right, Sandra McDarby Preston, Londa Bianchi Bourguard, and Leon Bourguard. The photo is by event organizer, Winnie Veretto (Class of 1955), who wishes to remind all who attended NMHS that this is an annual event; she can be contacted at 528-1556.

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Neighbors



The Kerr family – **Broc and Fiona**, and their children, **Angus**, 11, **Evie**, 9, and **Digby**, 6 – have recently moved to New Marlborough from Brisbane, Australia, by way of Chicago. After eighteen months in Chicago, where Broc was working as an IT consultant, they decided that they were tired of city living. Moreover, they were disappointed in the snow situation; since there wasn't snow at their home in Australia, their dream was to experience deep, gleaming white snow. This didn't happen in Chicago, so they began investigating New England. They had read about Great Barrington, and with considerable help from Google, they explored the surrounding area and decided to take the plunge.



Angus, Digby, and Evie Kerr

Broc still works in Chicago four days a week, but spends the rest of his time here; the family takes every opportunity to explore New England. The plan is to return to Australia by the end of 2014. In the meantime, let's hope that this winter will live up to their expectation of copious amounts of snow.

Evie Kerr writes: I moved here in July and I love it. I can't wait until winter so I can go skiing in my backyard, practically, instead of driving to another state. There is also a sledding hill in our backyard. I can't wait.

Angus Kerr writes: Living here in the country is largely different from living in the city: the coyotes howling and barking in the cold night air, the forests covering the landscape, dotted with meadows. The town markets and the little shops are excellent, and you have almost everything you need in the local towns. For bike riding it is brilliant, and the autumn is spectacular. In Australia, we never had any trees turn so red and orange, and hills never turned into such mixes of colours.

Moving here after living in Chicago almost feels like a vacation – the friendliness of the local people, the beauty of the landscape, and the general relaxed feeling, and it's so nice to know that you don't have to drive for four hours to get to the nearest hill. I like the fact that this area is so rich in folk history, and has so many famous writers and artists, like Norman Rockwell and Nathaniel Hawthorne who once lived in the area. The experience of living here is like no other experience in the world, and that's probably because there isn't anywhere like it in the rest of the world — the Berkshires is one of a kind.



Debbie Wright, of Sisson Hill Road, has been selected as Kiwanian of the Year by the Sheffield Kiwanis Club, which serves all of southern Berkshire County. She was presented with this award at their installation dinner on October 5. For three years she has chaired the food trailer project, which has filled many of her evenings and weekends. This trailer is taken to a wide variety of community events, and hot dogs and hamburgers are sold to raise money for Kiwanis projects. Those activities include food pantries, scholarships, and children's clothing. □

compiled by Barbara Lowman: deeuell@yahoo.com

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OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

photo by Don Beauchamp



On September 25, **Don Beauchamp**, of Clayton, writes: Had two different **hummingbirds** at the feeder this afternoon. The first one showed up at around 4:30; then a bigger one came by several times until about 6:00. The last of the season? On September 28, Don adds: I was just biking around the Colonel Ashley House, photographing some spider webs, when a flock of young **cedar waxwings** landed in a tree right in front of me and proceeded to strip the little berries off of it.



photo by Don Beauchamp

On October 4, **Leslie Wheeler**, of Southfield writes: A big highlight of last weekend was the sighting of a cow **moose** on my property on Cagney Hill Road. First saw her in the back field Saturday morning [September 28]. Coincidentally, I had spotted a moose in another location – behind the guardrail separating the Mass Pike from the woods beyond – as I was driving to the Berkshires on Friday afternoon. This is the first time I've seen moose in Massachusetts; previously, have seen them a number of times in Montana. The second sighting on my property occurred Sunday evening when I went to get some herbs from the garden. I looked up and there was the moose about fifteen to twenty feet behind me! She stared at me and I stared back. Then she made her way into the back field and disappeared into the woods. Kicked myself that I didn't have a camera handy. Fortunately, I saw her again on Monday morning and then a second time around noon. She came out of the woods, walked by the pond, and down the driveway a bit before disappearing into the woods. The final time she did this, I had my camera ready and got a picture of her in front of the house. What a gift this was!



photo by Leslie Wheeler

On October 6, **Thomas Callahan**, who lives on Route 183, writes: While at York Lake last weekend [September 29], my son, Greg, spotted a **snake** in the reeds to the right of the swimming area. My grandson, Aiden, and I tried to get a picture of it. Alas, our efforts were in vain as the snake was under water and very well concealed. It had a very thin tail and a pattern on its back that looked like an argyle. Its head was rounded. We guessed that it was approximately two or three feet long. After doing research on line, I concluded that it was a **northern water snake**. Maybe one of your readers can confirm my conclusion.

On October 14, **Larry Burke**, who lives on Route 183, writes: We have **coyotes** serenading us on a nightly basis, and I saw a large, tawny member of the pack at sunrise this morning, loping through the field north of the house. They are loving the dropped apples and pears from our trees. Saturday, four **sandhill cranes** flew over, headed in the direction of York Lake. At first glance I thought how unusual to see four blue herons flying together, but then I heard their clacky calls.



photo by Ed Harvey

On October 17, **Ed Harvey**, of Mill River, writes: I took an hour or so to rattle off some shots on the camera I had rented to photograph an upcoming wedding. I picked the Palmer Graveyard and had pretty good results, but a few things weren't working as planned, so I was about to sit down on the grass to figure things out. I looked before sitting and was glad I did as this small **garter snake** quickly became the liveliest subject around.

Compiled by Jon Swan, joncswan@gmail.com

Santa Shops Southfield!

Give your Santa a head start at the Second Annual Holiday Market hosted by the Southfield Church. On Saturday, November 30, local artisans, crafters, booksellers, and gift makers will be assembled in the

Southfield Church Hall with an awesome array of holiday gift-giving possibilities. Shop local and show your loved ones who's their Santa! The market will be open from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. □

Robert Olsen

UPCOMING: *Event Calendar for November and December*

November 8: Hip Hop at the Mahaiwe, with students from Mount Everett, Monument Valley, and Lee performing with the professional dancers of Open Thought Productions; 7:00 p.m., tickets are \$5.

November 15-16: *Macbeth*, The darkest of Shakespeare tragedies, with five students from New Marlborough in the cast, comes to Mount Everett High School; 7:00 p.m. both nights with a Saturday matinee at 2:00 p.m. There will be an additional performance at the Tina Packer Playhouse in Lenox on November 23 at 1:30 p.m.

November 18: Special Town Meeting, Town Hall, 7:00 p.m. The main item: a Planning Board proposal to update the Town's zoning regulations.

November 30: Second Annual Holiday Market, Southfield Church, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with unique gift ideas from local artisans, crafters, and booksellers.

December 7: New Marlborough/Monterey Holiday Fair, New Marlborough Central School, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

'FAIR IS FOUL, AND FOUL IS FAIR' *Macbeth Comes To Mount Everett*

By Jane Burke

The play has been the thing since mid-September for over thirty students at Mount Everett, who are participating in the 25th Fall Festival of Shakespeare. Tenth-grader Samantha Twing of Hartsville, in her fourth year of participation, describes the experience of working under the Shakespeare & Company directors as "something you would never want to stop doing. Preparing for the performance of Shakespeare," she says, "requires more dedication than other plays because the language is so different. First we have to spend hours on 'book work' to fully understand the language and meaning of the play. Each of us has to look up every word we do not understand and choose the dictionary definition that makes the line make sense."

She remains full of enthusiasm about rehearsing for *Macbeth* because she is learning new things. "This year I am one of the witches and I am being asked to include a lot of movement in my performance." Although the schedule is demanding, the directors customize the times for rehearsal to meet the needs of each actor so that the larger parts go to those who do not have a lot of other commitments after school. In addition to the regular sessions after school, there are extra classes. All of the students from participating schools come together for common classes in how to do fight scenes and dance.

There are three other cast members from Hartsville. Senior Kyle Carson is playing Macbeth. He is passionate about the program and saddened that this performance will be his last. At a recent rehearsal he was deep in book



photo by Jane Burke

Hartsville's Kyle Carson studies his lines for the title role in *Macbeth*.

work trying to understand the nature of the social order in which *Macbeth* lived. Tenth grader Jake Christinat and Samantha LaCosse-Andrews are also cast in the play, as is Olivia Marchione of Mill River.

The play will be performed at Mount Everett on November 15 and 16 at 7:00 p.m., with a 2:00 p.m. matinee on the 16th. There will be an additional performance at the Tina Packer Playhouse in Lenox on November 23 at 1:30 p.m. Samantha said "It motivates us more when we have an audience to show the skills we have learned." She hopes that the community will come out to support their efforts. □

QUILTS THAT DAZZLE

Robin Tost Converts Abandoned Cars into Art

By Jodi Rothe

photo by Holly McNeely



Robin Tost at Art 101

New Marlborough residents know the work of Robin Tost mostly by the often whimsical sculpture she has shown at the Meeting House Gallery and other venues in South County. But there is another dimension – or, strictly speaking, one less dimension – to her work, the sculptural hangings Robin calls Industrial Quilts. Seven of these brilliantly colored and intricately designed constructions of metal and wire – plus six smaller metal works she calls “pillows” – are now on exhibit in Robin’s first solo show. “Industrial Quilts” opened October 11 at Art 101, a gallery in Brooklyn’s trendy Williamsburg district. It will run through November 17.

Robin, who moved to her 1745 farmhouse on Clayton Mill River Road in 1985, creates “quilts” that are both traditional and radical. Constructed in the barn she uses as a studio, from cast off metal parts rather than clothing, her material comes mostly from junked cars. Her thread is wire. About the designs, Robin says, “Some of the metal quilts are based on designs from the past, but I have created new designs, too.”

Her inspiration, she says, came while traveling around Massachusetts and Vermont in 2008: “I noticed all the closed factories; the enormous loss of jobs and income. At the same time, there were ‘Quilts for Sale’ signs in yards – a different source of income. The dichotomy sparked the idea of combining the ‘masculine’ industrial waste material with the ‘feminine’ art of quilting.”

Creating these works is labor-intensive – and a far cry from the traditional quilting bee. “Sometimes I work four or five hours [at a time] in the barn,” she says. Her largest work, a very detailed six-by-six-foot square, took about a year to complete. The smaller ones can take several months. “They represent my intensity as an artist,” she says, “my thoughts about the union of the masculine and the feminine that needs to be brought forth in our time – but not as a statement, just as a work that I’ve probably spent more time on while cutting metal



Crazy Quilt, mixed metal and wire

than it might have taken for women to cut cloth.”

Her materials are readily, sometimes too readily, available: “People are always giving me stuff – I’ve even been offered carburetors and transmissions which I have no use for.” But she also goes on scavenger hunts. Robin is well known at the New Marlborough town transfer station, where she can be found dumpster diving for metal. She has visited salvage yards and climbed mountains of smashed vehicles. (She wishes car manufacturers would be more creative with their paint choices and bring out some vibrant colors!) She uses tin shears to cut the metal into pieces, “which gives some idea,” she says sardonically, “of the quality of automobile parts these days.”



“Mrs. Wharton Takes a Walk” at The Mount

In order to do this kind of physical work, Robin has to stay in shape – and take precautions. “My life,” she says, “is about tennis and tetanus shots.”

And art.

Note: In addition to the Meeting House Gallery shows, Robin Tost has for many years been a regular exhibitor at the outdoor shows of SculptureNow, which take place on the main streets of Stockbridge, Lenox, Lee, and Great Barrington and also at the Norman Rockwell Museum. Her eight-foot sculpture “Mrs. Wharton Takes a Walk” is currently on view at The Mount in Lenox as part of the sculpture show, “Confluence.”

Art 101 (www.art101brooklyn.com), located at 101 Grand Street between Berry and Wythe Streets in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, is open Friday through Sunday from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. □

REPAIRING OUR SCHOOLS

Overdue Renovation Could Cost Millions

By Barry R. Shapiro

The approval of future school budgets promises to attract even more attention than usual in New Marlborough and elsewhere in the Southern Berkshire Regional School District. While not yet firmed up, the cost of capital improvements in SBRSD's four schools seems likely to run into millions of dollars, an amount that in all likelihood would, if approved, need to be funded through a bond issue.

If history is any guide, getting voter approval for such a bond is not going to be easy. Although the school budget for fiscal year 2013 ultimately passed after being rejected twice, the bond proposed at that time to pay for capital needs and major technology updates was never approved. (It was voted down by two towns; a vote of four of the five towns comprising the District is required.)

In the past, the District has dealt with repairs and capital improvements as they arose. But early this year, SBRSD's Buildings, Grounds, and Technology Subcommittee began analyzing the long-term capital needs so as to better manage the large outlays that would be required, for example, for a new roof or an overhaul of a heating system. "There is a limited amount in the annual budget for capital needs, approximately \$400,000," said Vito Valentini, chairman of the subcommittee. "Much will go to Sheffield where the majority of the students are. The question is, where do we get the remaining money and how should it be spent? Not everyone," he added, "can get what they want."

The elephant in the room, the need for large-scale renovation or replacement of buildings in the neighborhood schools, was the focus of a September 26 meeting of the subcommittee, to which selectmen from the District's five towns were invited. A representative from Monterey said that its building would have to be completely rebuilt, at a cost of \$1 million – a figure that was more than double estimates of just a year ago. (See the Board of Selectmen report of the September 30 meeting on page 4.) He said that the District was liable for some of this cost because of its failure to adequately maintain the building. Under a District agreement, although the community school buildings are owned by the towns in which they reside, upkeep is the responsibility of the District. However, that same agreement was cited by Mr. Valentini in his opinion that the District could not provide funds for a new building.

Egremont, which had hired an engineer to analyze the costs of repairing its school building, provided no dollar figures.

The much-discussed benefit of investing in the

neighborhood schools, with their small classes, inevitably comes into play. Mr. Valentini stated that the subcommittee does not have a mandate to consider closing schools. It has, nevertheless, reviewed the enrollment of children from each town and the savings that would result if any school were closed. According to available statistics, New Marlborough Central last year had a total enrollment of approximately seventy-five children, fifty-six of whom live in town. Monterey and Egremont last year had, respectively, eight and six in-town children enrolled. The gross annual savings that would be realized if a particular school closed are estimated at \$238,000 for New Marlborough, \$110,000 for Monterey, and \$108,000 for Egremont. They would be reduced, of course, by payments the District would make for students choosing to attend public schools elsewhere.

The subcommittee plans to meet again in early November, at which time a report on the capital needs of New Marlborough Central prepared by EDM Engineering will be presented. □



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A NEW WAY TO TEACH SCIENCE

Makerspace Arrives on the Sheffield Campus of SBRSD

By Jane Burke

Thanks to the efforts of two community volunteers, children at the Southern Berkshire Regional School District will become part of the national Makers Movement. Over the past year Tim Newman, film producer, and a member of the WiredWest board, and Paul O'Brien, recently retired as a teacher and technology coordinator in the Southern Berkshire Regional Schools, have been working together to establish the first Makerspace in Berkshire County. On Thursday September 17, their request to establish this exciting project on Southern Berkshire Regional School District's Sheffield Campus was approved by the school committee.

Makerspaces have been popping up around the country since the middle of the last decade. They provide places for people with ideas to socialize, collaborate, share, and work on self-directed projects – informal, play-focused environments that cultivate interest in science, technology, engineering, math, and design. They are the shops of the 21st century and encourage “do-it-yourself” innovative activities. Most are located in urban areas, so this rural project is a bold move.

Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Newman settled on siting the project on the District's campus in Sheffield because of SBRSD's demonstrated commitment to engineering and student-centered learning. The duo introduced Superintendent David Hastings to the Makerspace idea and, after being encouraged to make a proposal, presented him in September with a fully fleshed-out plan for establishing the project. They accompanied Principal Glenn Devoti and four teachers on a District-sponsored trip to the New York Makers Faire on September 21. This event, which drew 70,000 people, clearly demonstrated

to the group how a Makerspace could inspire creativity in Southern Berkshire students.

Scheduled to begin in January, Makerspace will start small. It will be open Wednesdays through Fridays and will be geared to students in grades three and four. Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Newman will continue to volunteer their time and will recruit other volunteers. They will also be seeking donations of tools, machinery, and supplies to outfit the thirty-by-thirty foot space the District has offered, where the “shop” will be housed. Contributions to buy materials can be made to the Mt Everett Activities Fund. New Marlborough's Flying Cloud Institute has committed to supporting the project.

Community members with science and engineering skills and those interested in contributing to this innovative educational initiative should contact Tim Newman at tdnew555@gmail.com or Paul O'Brien at paulwob@gmail.com. □

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Make Your Own Scarecrows Family Fun Day



photos by Debbie O'Brien

Twenty-six children and their families attended the library's annual "Family Fun Day - Make Your Own Scarecrows." The children brought their own old clothes and the library supplied the hay, generously donated by Freddy Friedman. The event concluded with apple cider and donuts holes — a good time was had by all!

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