



New Marlborough 5 Village News

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GETTING WIRED

Charting a Road to Fiber Optic

By Joe Poindexter



“This has to get done!”

So said State Representative Smitty Pignatelli at an October 29 meeting of Southern Berkshire selectmen and finance committee members about the need for fiber-optic cable, and New Marlborough may be a prime example of why. Its river power has been overtaken by coal and oil; its rocky soil has been abandoned for more fertile farmland to the west. What is left is human talent, with a need to be connected to the rest of the world. This is where fiber-optic comes in.

With it, the town would have a robust pipeline of information and interconnectivity that proponents say would vault this little corner of Berkshire County into the twenty-first century. Without it, the town remains technologically stuck in the mid-twentieth century. But wiring New Marlborough with fiber-optic cable, sleek and efficient as it is, is a complex job, the expense of which is directly related to the sparseness of our population. Call it the New Marlborough paradox: the town’s thinly populated hills and valleys, which have provided a treasured rural environment for generations of residents, now stand in the way of its continued vitality.

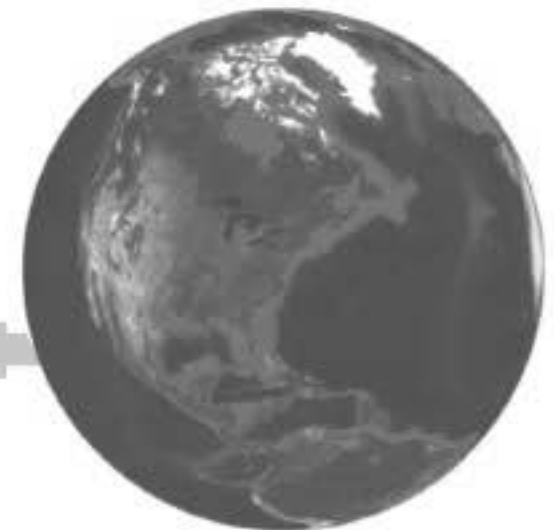
Enter WiredWest. This consortium of forty-four western Massachusetts towns, of which New Marlborough is a member, has a plan for financing a so-called last-mile fiber-optic system, one that brings super-fast connectivity to every home and business in the consortium. It estimates the cost to be around \$100 million for all forty-four towns. The state, through the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), has earmarked \$40 million for western Massachusetts towns under- or unserved by broadband connectivity. That leaves a \$60 million gap. MBI and WiredWest are proposing that it be filled by a bond underwritten by the member towns.

The two groups envision a five-year journey to robust connectivity — with a sequence of events that begins this month:

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1. By year’s end, MBI wants the board of selectmen from each WiredWest member town to pass a resolution supporting, first, an initiative to construct and operate a last-mile broadband network and, second, the approval of a bond to pay for it. MBI estimates that New Marlborough’s portion would range from \$1.7 to \$2.5 million.
2. By January 15, each town that chooses to participate must have signed up at least 40 percent of all potential customers — homeowners and businesses — to a pre-subscription contract. The contract would require a deposit, which would be returned if the network is not built. Without this level of initial participation, the project will not proceed.
3. MBI says it intends to complete a design of the fiber-optic system by spring 2015.
4. In May and June 2015, an article on whether to



continued on page 2

Illustration: Diane Barth

Getting Wired, continued

borrow the allocated amount of the \$60 million would be placed on the warrant of the town meeting in each participant town. Passage of this article would require a two-thirds vote.

5. Make-ready, the process of repairing, replacing, and adding telephone poles, where necessary, and repositioning telephone wires and power lines, would take place between next spring and the fall of 2017.
6. Completion of the project for all member towns would stretch into 2019.

As readers of the *5 Village News* know, thanks to an earlier state initiative, New Marlborough already has fiber optic — to Town Hall, the library, New Marlborough Central School, and the firehouse — so why would it cost so much money to complete the network? Answer: ninety-one miles of roads. To reach every residence in town — and that's the goal — cable has to be strung all ninety-one miles. WiredWest is conducting an inventory of telephone poles, road miles, and individual "drops," i.e. all houses and businesses, to establish an allocation for each member town. By this formula, New Marlborough's portion of the financing is estimated to be about 30

percent higher than the average of the forty-four members of the consortium.

If the bond issue is on the warrant at the Annual Town Meeting, voters will want to know what is at risk. According to WiredWest projections, if half of each town's homeowners and businesses subscribe to a so-called triple play — internet, telephone, and television — revenues would meet operating costs and debt service in the fifth year. (Subscription fees are projected to be about equal to what New Marlborough residents are now paying, with internet speed, of course, vastly superior.) Above that level, WiredWest foresees positive cash flow, which could be used to pay down the debt or be returned to the towns. The consortium, unlike Verizon, for instance, which has shown no interest in fiber optic for Western Massachusetts, is not organized to return a profit. The dividend it hopes to pay is the renewed vitality of the towns it serves. There is, of course, the downside risk that revenues fail to cover debt service, which would then be each town's responsibility.

In the long run, the risk of doing nothing may the greatest risk of all. □



photos by John Schreiber

Wind Power-outage: John Schreiber took these photos during the five-hour power outage on November 2. When asked how he happened to do this, he explained that he and Ben Harms routinely check the power lines on Hillingdon and Branch Roads in New Marlborough when the power goes out. This time, Ben called to tell him there was a lot of action on Route 57 in New Marlborough village, including a fire, so John came down to look.

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NEW MARLBOROUGH CENTRAL AND MONTEREY SCHOOLS HOST ANNUAL HOLIDAY FAIR

By Elizabeth Keen

It is the time of year to celebrate the changing of the seasons, with our children, our teachers, and our local public schools. This year marks the eighty-second year of the New Marlborough Central School (NMC), and to celebrate this, the students, teachers, and parents will be holding the annual Holiday Fair on December 6 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at NMC in Mill River. This holiday event, sponsored by the New Marlborough and Monterey Parent Teacher Association (PTA), is the culmination of much creativity and hard work and has been generously supported by many local businesses and community members. Funds raised go directly toward enrichment programs for the children.

The Holiday Fair is a family event with activities going on throughout the day. There will be live music between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. with such local groups as the Mount Everett Madrigals, Rob Sanzone and the Berkshire Ukulele Band, and Easy Riding Papas; Carolyn Sanzone will be doing a sing-along. Children can try their hands at putting together and painting wooden models in the Make and Take Room. They can also enter the Children's Only Room, where they can purchase gifts for their loved ones. For adults and children alike, the organizers are excited to bring Sean Stanton from North Plain Farm to the school with his horses to have winter carriage rides! In addition, community members can pick out their own local Christmas tree and browse the bazaar for handmade crafts, ornaments, and useful and edible gifts made by children and adults. These items have been created over the last several months during after-school hours.

New this year will be the first-ever Cake Stall. What a display of cakes will be for sale there! Come and be tantalized by the cake extravaganza.



Photo by Kristin Sanzone

Ruby Citrin examines sale items

Lunch will be offered, featuring Farm Country Soup's butternut squash soup, The Marketplace Café chili, Indian Line Farm salad, and Berkshire Mountain Bakery bread. Outside, hot off the grill, you can purchase hot dogs from Fox Hill Farm. In addition, there will be an assortment of other lunch items.

And last but certainly not least, the PTA has put together an amazing selection of silent auction items: dinners at many local restaurants; such local services as yoga classes, oil changes, septic tank pumping, pedicures, fitness classes, spa days, gymnastic classes, and a beautiful selection of pieces from local potters and artists.

All funds raised on this day go to the support the children of the school. Last year the PTA was able to fund many after-school enrichment programs including ukulele classes, field walks with naturalists, yoga and garden clubs, and science and art programs. The funds also made many field trips possible. We look forward to seeing you on Saturday, December 6! □



The Annual Holiday Sing

(Christmas - Chanukah - Kwanza)

Visit from Santa at the Meeting House on the Village Green

(New Marlborough Village, Route 57)

Saturday, December 20 at 5:30 p.m.

Reading of *The Night Before Christmas*, with
Original Illustrations by Local Children

Children: Private consultations with Santa
Refreshments

New Marlborough Village Association
New Marlborough Fire and Rescue



Photos by Larry Burke

Town Business Is Your Business



BOARD OF SELECTMEN

October 20: With all three selectmen present, the first order of business was an hour-long presentation by WiredWest officials who were there to update the Board and interested visitors on their latest plans for financing and building the network that would bring high-speed internet to the western part of the state. According to Executive Chair Monica Webb, the number of towns joining the consortium has now reached forty-four, while the estimated cost of the fiber optic network is still around \$100 million, with \$40 million of that coming from the state. That leaves roughly \$60 million to be financed by the member towns, probably through the issuing of a general-obligation bond in what would be a twenty-year financing. The average cost to each town would be upwards of \$1.4 million, although the apportionment of how the debt would be spread is still being worked out. In response to a question from Selectman Yohalem, Ms. Webb said the basic service would cost between \$45 and \$49 a month, with a \$100 hookup charge, "about the same range as you're paying

now, but for far superior service." She said that in addition to internet access, WiredWest would be offering television and phone, "just like Verizon."

Next up was Finance Chair Jim Drawe to explain how the financing and debt-repayment would work. He said the plan is for the towns to make interest-only payments on their debt for the first three or so years, after which the network is expected to be cash-flow positive and be able to make the interest and principal payments on each town's bond obligations starting in year four or five. "So you're only looking at paying the interest for three or four years, and after that the intent is for WiredWest to generate enough revenue to make those payments for you." Asked about the possibility of WiredWest going bankrupt and leaving the towns with a huge debt-repayment burden, Ms. Webb said "the financial models have been very carefully vetted and don't show anything close to that." She said there have been a few systems that have encountered financial problems in the past, but they've been in urban areas where there's a lot of competition. Added Mr. Drawe, "If we get a 40 percent 'take rate' on the service, we shouldn't have a problem." (For a more detailed look at how all this would work, see "Getting Wired" on page 1.)

Next, Patricia Hardyman and Charlie Parton from the Planning Board asked the selectmen for feedback on two proposed changes to the Town's Protective Bylaws. The first would clarify the definition of the maximum allowable square footage in an accessory dwelling, such as a garage apartment or an in-law suite. The current wording defines it as the "net living floor area," which, as Ms. Hardyman pointed out, doesn't really make clear what's included in the square footage calculation, "whether, for example, you would include closet space." Under the new definition the allowable square footage would be defined as "the maximum gross floor area."

The second change would grant the right of property owners to create an accessory apartment as part of a single-family residence without first having to obtain a special permit, as is the case today. As Ms. Hardyman explained, this would promote the "creation of special rental units, which would add to the town's housing stock." She said drafts of both changes have already been submitted to town counsel for review and comment, after which they will be presented to town residents at a public hearing and then voted on at a town meeting to be scheduled at a later date. The selectmen indicated they're on board with the proposed changes and asked when the Planning Board would like to bring them before the town for a

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vote. "We're not in a rush," Ms. Hardyman said. "We may decide to wait until the annual town meeting in May."

The Board approved a \$12,000 proposal from Stantec Consulting that would cover engineering fees related to the filing of paperwork for additional permitting requirements for the Clayton Mill River Road bridge. As reported earlier, the state imposed the new requirements because of environmental concerns stemming from the amount of work involved in repairing the bridge. (See the Board of Selectmen report in the November issue of the NM5VN.)

Board Secretary Sharon Fleck said Mark Cappadona from Colonial Power Group has offered to attend a selectmen's meeting to answer resident's questions about the Community Choice Power Supply Program. As previously reported, Colonial Power has secured a reduced electrical rate for town residents through a bulk-purchase agreement with Hampshire Power. (See Board of Selectmen report in the October issue of the NM5VN.) That session has been set for the November 10 selectmen's meeting.

The Board voted to appoint Acting Police Chief Graham Frank to the position of Assistant Constable so he can post the warrant for the upcoming general election on November 4.

Selectman Yohalem reported that the Town had received a Department of Environmental Protection recycling grant for up to \$7,500 which the Board agreed would be applied to the recent purchase of a single-stream recycling compactor installed at the transfer station earlier this month. The award also included two lesser grants totalling \$1,000 for marketing and explanatory materials on what can and cannot be recycled.

On the recommendation of Cultural Council Chair Michelle Shalaby, the Board appointed Susan Cane and Kathy Potoski to three-year terms on the Council. The appointments are effective immediately and run through June 2017.

Selectman Yohalem said the Board had received a letter from School Superintendent David Hastings asking

whether the Town would like to withdraw its request of the School Committee to close the outlying schools in Monterey and Egremont, but the Board declined to do so. Instead, in a written reply the Selectmen again asked the School Committee to take a formal vote on its proposal, adding that "As the Board of Selectmen, it is our primary duty to raise questions and concerns about budget items that appear to be inefficient, extraordinary, or inappropriate. The combination of budget dollars and low number of students calls into question the efficiency of education funds being spent on these programs."

Selectman Yohalem also reported that the Finance Committee of the School Committee will be seeking approval from the five towns that make up the district for financing to cover the cost of replacing the roof and the boilers on the main Sheffield campus. He said the original cost of the project was estimated to be around \$3 million, of which the state was expected to pick up half, but after discussions with the state and some architectural reviews, the cost has ballooned to around \$6 million, with the state agreeing to pick up less than 40 percent. He said the increase in large part reflects the need to comply with state requirements for energy efficient insulation for the new roof and the installation of two biomass (i.e. pellet) boilers instead of conventional oil-fired furnaces. According to Mr. Yohalem, the Finance Committee is now looking at a roughly \$3.7 million bond issue payable over ten years, which he said could add as much as \$80,000 a year to New Marlborough's budget.

October 27: The sole agenda for this meeting was a discussion of the proposed use of Tasers by New Marlborough policemen. That report appears on page 8.

November 3: With all three selectmen present, the Board met with Police Chief Graham Frank to iron out the remaining details of his contract. In the discussion that followed, the Board confirmed his salary at \$55,000 a year, said he would have three weeks paid vacation, fifteen days paid sick leave with a doctor's note, and that he would receive a still-to-be-determined salary increase

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when he earns his associate's degree, expected in the spring. The final item under discussion was the Chief's request that his contract not include a termination without cause clause, but the Board demurred and decided instead the contract would specify that he could be terminated as chief without cause upon forty-five days' notice, but that he would remain on the force as a full-time officer, subject to town's personnel policies, with a reduction in salary to \$48,000 from \$55,000.

Separately, Chief Frank asked for the Board's **permission to hire another part-time officer** to round out the coverage provided by his existing roster of four part-timers. This the Board agreed to let him do, as long as he stayed within budget. And finally, following up on an earlier discussion, Chief Frank indicated **Sheffield has a five-year-old, fully equipped cruiser with 180,000 miles** on that the town would be willing to sell to New Marlborough for \$1,000. He said that although the vehicle needs about \$800 in power steering repairs and possibly some brake work, **it could serve as a backup cruiser** and thus prolong the life of the existing cruiser, which currently has 67,000 miles on it. But Mr. Yohalem said he would prefer to see the Town buy a new cruiser a year earlier than planned and use the existing one as the backup. He said he's concerned that a five-year-old vehicle with that much mileage on it could turn into a "bottomless pit" requiring one repair after another. "So let's wait another year and a half, and then put a new cruiser on the warrant for May 2016."

The Board asked Animal Inspector Prudence Spaulding to report on her recent meeting with Tom Brazie about the need to keep his farm animals off the public roads. She said she and Animal Control Officer John Springstube visited the Brazie farm on Route 183, checked all the fences and discussed with him "the necessity of keeping his animals confined." But she said Mr. Brazie continued to maintain that it's the speeders on Route 183 that are the real hazard. (See Board of Selectmen report in the November issue of the NM5VN.) She asked the Board if it had ever sent the letter she requested to the Board of

Health asking it to issue a notice of "abatement of nuisance" to Mr. Brazie. This would make him liable for fining the next time his animals get out, which Mrs. Spaulding thought it would be useful to have on file. The Board said it would have to look into it and get back to her.

Selectman Yohalem reported that the **Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee took a formal vote at its October 30 meeting not to close the Monterey and Egremont schools.** He said in both cases the vote was 8 to 0, with one member absent. The vote was taken in response to letters sent last spring by the towns of New Marlborough, Sheffield, and Alford. He said the committee in his view did not follow proper procedure in taking such a vote, but that to make an issue of it at this point "would foment all kinds of bad feeling and accomplish nothing." Instead, he suggested getting together for "a dialog" with Alford and Sheffield town officials to discuss what alternatives, if any, are available to the towns, or "whether we should just drop it."

Noting that the school district bond issue vote is coming up very soon and that the cost of the project has virtually doubled as a result of a review by the state's School Building Authority (SBA), Chairman White said the **Board is considering sending a letter to the School Committee asking what it would cost to go back to the original proposal for replacing the roof and the boilers and to forego any state funding.**

November 10: Called to order at 6:00 p.m., most of the meeting was devoted to a presentation by **Mark Cappadona, of Colonial Power Group, who was there to answer residents' questions about the Town's new energy supply program.** All three selectmen were present.

As previously reported, New Marlborough, along with nine other Berkshire County towns, has enrolled its citizens in a new program that brings community-leverage, or aggregation, to the negotiation of electric power rates. The consortium hired Colonial Power as its energy broker and Colonial then negotiated a bulk purchase electricity rate with Hampshire Power that's nearly 25 percent below



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what National Grid is charging this winter. (See Watt's What in the November issue of the NM5VN.)

As Mr. Cappadona explained, it's an opt-out program that residents can join or leave at any time, and there are no fees or penalties for doing so. "You're automatically enrolled, unless you opt out by sending in a card, calling us, or notifying us via the internet." He said the ten towns comprising the consortium represent 13,000 electrical meters, "which gives it good leverage" in negotiating supply prices with both conventional utilities as well as with providers of green power. "So for the first time, the power is in your hands. You get to decide what your energy is going to be and for how long. And that's really what aggregation is about — choice."

He also talked about the possibility of adding green power, that is, electricity generated from renewable sources such as solar, hydro, or wind, to the mix next year. He said that he's been asked by town managers in the consortium to go back in the spring and "do green for the contract that begins next November."

He explained how the distribution of green power works. "When a customer signs up for green power, it doesn't mean the electrons from, say, a solar farm somehow find their way to the customer's home. Rather, they go onto the grid, and it shows up as a credit on the customer's bill. So it's really a financial transaction, and the customer is getting credit for it, but what we're really doing is funding the [solar] project, which makes us all feel good."

He concluded by noting that to date there have only been seventeen aggregation deals in the state, "and you're one of them. You guys are literally on the frontier. But that's changing fast," he said. "I actually see the scale tipping, with everyone wanting to make the decision you

guys were fortunate enough to make this winter."

In the only other business of the night, Chairman White reported that **three people have volunteered to work with the Board on revising the Town's personnel policies.** They are Owen Hoberman, who worked on the last revision three years ago, Board Secretary Sharon Fleck, who, in Ms. White's words, "can represent the point of view of the Town's employees," and John Pshenishny from the Finance Committee, who has a background in personnel policy issues, Selectman Shalaby said. The newly formed committee is being asked to report back to the Board with recommendations the first week in January.

November 17: With all three Selectmen present, the first order of business was the awarding of **contracts for winter road materials, including sand and gravel. But the Board rejected all four bids** because of uncertainty about the quality of the sand, and instead will ask the suppliers, Joe Wilkinson, Century Aggregates, J. Donovan & Sons, and Segalla Sand and Gravel to rebid. The Board also delayed awarding a heavy equipment rental contract, pending a recommendation from Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring.

In the spirit of the upcoming holidays, the Board voted to close Town Hall on the day after Christmas, which is a Friday, giving Town employees not only an extra day off but also an extra long weekend.

Chairman White reported that the town had \$396,965 in free cash at the end of the 2014 fiscal year, as certified by the Department of Revenue. This compares with the previous year's figure of \$650,000. Free cash is the money left over at the end of the budget year from unspent appropriations or higher-than-expected revenues. □

Peter Schuyten

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS!

Leslie Armstrong; Rev. Joseph Bishop; Linda Buxbaum & John Graben; Sue & Arnie Cohen; Elizabeth Colhoun; Robert DeStefano; Ellen Dripps; Egon & Joan Fromm; Aviva Gorden; Edith Grosheim; Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Halpin; Marsha Harvey; Neil Brander & Christine Hobbie; Maureen & David Hosford; Joan & Dick Hulett; Virginia Joffe; Thomas & Linda King; Cindi Labshere; Lisa Maloney; Gayle & Chuck Mazursky; Hildreth McCarthy; Mike & Janett Miller; Scottie Mills; Robert F. Ovitt; Ronald & Jean Paro; Angelene Pell; Patrick & Jean Pollock; L. Ronald Schneider; Virginia & Howard Sheldon; Walter Simons; Eugene & Sally Stamper; Peter & Abbe Steinglass; A. Glenn & Phyllis Tozko; David VanDeusen; Gil Eisner & Kate Wenner; Anonymous; Joby Baker; Jerome Berko; Nancy Bonvillain; Donaldson Brown & Michael Kokiko; Don & Roberta Ferris; Pam Gillette; Peter & Barbara Goodman; Shubha Hoveland; Julian & Judith Jadow; Celia June; Martin & Janet Kaplan; Ronald & Ida Leonard; Steve Marshall; Virginia Palfini; Mary Ann & Bruno Quinson; Gladys B. Reil; Michael Skrak; Mary Richie Smith; Sally & Eugene Stamper; Lori & Jeff Stockwell; Tara White; Aline Bove; Anne Broggi; Jane B. Carpenter; Natalie Garnell; Christopher House; Steve & Jeri Johnson; Nancy Kalodner; Maureen & Joe Krejci; Carol Majkowski; Christopher & Priscilla Morrissey; Art & Elna Rodda; Pat & Ken Rudolph; and Edward & Claire Stiepleman

TASER DISCUSSION

Historical note: The Taser was invented by a NASA scientist named Jack Cover, Jr., who worked on the Apollo moon landing project. He gave his invention the acronym TSEER after one of his favorite science fiction stories, calling it "Tom Swift's Electric Rifle;" the A was added later to make it easier to pronounce.

With a relatively large turnout – for a selectmen's meeting – of fifteen to twenty townspeople, the only item on the October 27 agenda was a discussion of Tasers, and the Board's decision to approve their use by the Police Department. Interest in the meeting had been high, with more than fifty posts on Maggie's List, many of which were highly critical of the Board's decision. But for all the heightened emotion, the discussion itself turned out to be measured and even civil. All three selectmen were present, as was Sheffield Police Chief Eric Munson, New Marlborough Acting Chief Graham Frank, and Joyce Hackett, who made the original request to put Tasers on the agenda.

The stage was set by Selectman Shalaby who read a statement on behalf of the Board saying the original proposal for the Tasers came from former Chief Scott Farrell to give the Town's police officers another option for subduing "violent or resistant persons before going to a firearm." She said the Board supported the proposal, while also recognizing that with Tasers there's a risk of injury, abuse, and liability to the Town. Still, when weighed against the welfare of the officers, EMTs, and bystanders, the Board felt the benefits clearly outweighed the risks, especially since the Town's officers frequently find themselves out on calls alone in difficult situations. "We want to give them the support they ask for and see no reason not to," she concluded.

Next up was Joyce Hackett, who started the Taser discussion on Maggie's List with an October 9 posting, saying she was disturbed the selectmen approved the use of Tasers without any public discussion beforehand. She pointed out that "Tasers don't just stun, they can also kill people, and they've killed 700 people in this country." She also noted Tasers have been designated as an instrument of torture by the United Nations, and that Amnesty International cites several studies showing that where they've been adopted they tend to be overused. "I'm not de facto against Tasers," she said, "but I am concerned that our town is going to arm up without a really clear policy. Her second concern, she said, is the potential impact on the Town's insurance, and that if a mistake is made with a Taser and the Town gets sued, "what happens then?" And finally, she said she's concerned about a policy that doesn't specifically stipulate that Tasers are to be used on people who are threats, and not on people who are uncooperative. "I

don't want to be tased for disagreeing with a cop in a situation where I'm not compliant with something I don't think is legal. That's really what it's about."

She was followed by Chief Munson of the Sheffield Police, who responded to her comments by describing how closely the state regulates and monitors the use of Tasers by local departments. For example, he said it took Sheffield two years to get its Taser program approved, and that the department's Taser policy, which Chief Munson wrote, went through a seven-month review process. He said the state "takes this much more seriously than do some southern states or states out west where I think you probably see a greater use of these things for what I think are unjustified reasons." He went on to explain how local police departments are required to submit monthly reports detailing every activation and use of a Taser to the state's Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS). "EOPSS gets a report every time a Taser is discharged, for whatever reason, in training, actual use on the job, or an accidental discharge." And an officer who tases someone has to do a full and complete report, and "if there are holes in it, believe me, the attorneys at EOPSS will find them and be coming out to investigate. And if they feel it's being misused they can pull the plug on you just like that."

He said there are restrictions on who can and cannot be tased: no one under seventeen, for example, and no one over seventy. In addition, "You can't tase someone in the face or the groin. And Tasers must be carried on the opposite side of the body from where a firearm is carried, and they are made in a bright yellow color so there's no confusing them with a gun." He said everyone in the Sheffield department had to undergo sixteen hours of intensive training, including, if they were willing, being tased, which he elected to do. "I wanted to feel what it was like to have it done to me," he explained, "and I'll tell you right now it's not something I would ever want to have happen again." In answer to a question from Selectman Yohalem, he said the range of a Taser is fifteen to thirty-five feet, depending on the cartridge that's used, and that Sheffield uses a fifteen-foot cartridge. He concluded by saying, "The feeling in most police departments is that Tasers are a better option than using the baton, pepper spray, or a gun. They generally cause less damage, some bumps and bruises when the person being tased falls to the ground, but it's better than broken bones, stitches, or a fatal shooting in the case of a gun."

Next, Chairman White opened the floor to comments from the audience, and almost without exception the comments were supportive of the Board's position. Said former selectman Dan Litchfield, "We're blessed here in New Marlborough where we don't have a lot of crime, but

continued on page 9

PLANNING BOARD UPDATE

The Planning Board continues to meet on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month. The Board is under the able leadership of Patricia Hardyman. Other members of the Board are Judy Hattendorf, Holly Morse, Jamie Mullen, and Charlie Parton.

The Board is currently focused on developing a strategy to involve community leaders and residents in formulating a plan for decision-making regarding the long-term physical development of the Town. □

CAPITAL PLANNING COMMITTEE: THE PICTURE ISN'T PRETTY

The Capital Planning Committee (CPC) presented its findings to the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee on November 3. Michele Shalaby, who is the Board of Selectmen's representative on the CPC, began the report by reviewing the Town history of total revenue, taxes, spending, and debt from 1987 to the present. While revenue has increased 92 percent during that time, spending increased nearly 143 percent. New Marlborough is currently at the tipping point where spending is going to exceed revenue. Projecting forward over the next twenty years, the gap only widens; if revenue is projected at a restricted rate (i.e. Proposition 2½), the Town would have a \$10.4 million shortfall by 2035. These projections paint a stark picture of the necessity of making some difficult decisions now, before the discrepancy is out of control.

Clearly our tax rate and spending levels are not sustainable, the report goes on to note. If spending continues at the same pace, taxes will have to increase at an accelerated rate; if tax growth is to be restricted, then spending will have to decrease. These are difficult choices to be made by the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee, and ultimately, the voters. The CPC recommended that a financial "State of the Town" be presented to citizens at a meeting prior to the Annual Town Meeting. This would provide current information that the Finance Committee and the voters can use in making decisions on expenditures.

Further, the CPC recommended no capital purchases in FY16, as a way of holding the line while the financial

picture becomes clearer. As budgets are developed, operating efficiency needs to be analyzed to identify possible areas of saving. Selectman Nat Yohalem noted that talks are under way with three other towns about sharing some capital expenses for equipment, and possibly sharing the salary of a highway clerk to expedite the necessary paperwork in all four towns.

The selectmen and members of the CPC noted that the recent reports from the town auditor and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue offer a starting point for improving the Town's financial reporting. At the moment, that reporting does not alert officials to problem areas in a timely fashion. Mr. Yohalem suggested that a committee representing of the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee, the CPC, and the Board's Administrative Assistant be formed to develop a corrective action plan to address the shortcomings. It was also noted that they will need to find a way to present the financial situation so that the voters understand the urgency of the situation and the financial choices that must be made.

At the close of the presentation, the Board and the Finance Committee thanked the CPC, in particular Ms. Shalaby, for the thoroughness of the report and the clarity with which the critical issues were highlighted. The picture is not a pretty one, but the CPC has built a solid base from which to improve financial reporting and decision-making. The report is available on the town's website, www.newmarlboroughma.gov/. Go to the Capital Planning Committee page and click on the link to the report. □

Barbara Lowman

Taser Discussion, continued

I'll tell you one thing, there's no way in the world I'd want to be out on Route 57 pulling cars over in the middle of the night, which we all know is a corridor used by drug traffickers. So to deprive our officers of the tools necessary to do the job safely would be a bad thing. I think you've made a good decision." Added John Wrinkle, a former Connecticut state trooper with eighteen years of patrol experience, "I'm way in favor of Tasers; there were times when I wished I'd had one."

Bringing the meeting to a close, Selectman Yohalem stated that the ultimate responsibility for the decision rests with the Board of Selectman and in making sure it hires responsible officers. "I believe our chief of police is a responsible officer. But if we get a complaint from someone who was tased and feels it was unjustified, we're going to have a hearing, and if it's found that it was used improperly, our chief of police is no longer going to be our chief of police, no matter who it is."

Peter Schuyten

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

October 25: The meeting was called to order by Commission members Ned Wilson and Freddie Friedman.

First on the agenda was a Request For Determination (RDA) presented by Chris Tryon of Berkshire Geo-Technologies for residents Robert and Laura Friedman on Konkapot Road. Mr. Tryon explained that the house had been sold and failed a Title 5 inspection, requiring the installation of a new septic system. He explained his considerations in siting the new system due to the proximity of the Konkapot River. The commission confirmed his siting of the system in the best possible location and outside the 100' inner riparian zone to the river. The RDA was approved stating that, although the work was in the buffer zone, it would not alter the wetland resource and would not require a Notice of Intent.

Next was an RDA submitted for Michael and Meta Levi of 170 Adsit Crosby Road. The owners explained that a damaged tree was threatening their pool house and that they would like to remove the tree. The Commission

noted that the tree was in the buffer zone to the wetland but that removal would not alter the resource. The permit was given a negative determination meaning that the work was not subject to the Wetlands Protection Act.

After all scheduled business was addressed the Commission reviewed the mail. The Commission received a request from Attorney Elizabeth Goodman on behalf of Marc Gourevitch and Sabrina Cherry of 98 Lumbert Cross Road. The request was for an amendment to the scheduled compliance date of the enforcement order, extending the deadline from October 20 to November 29. The Commission asked for some details on the progress in addressing the overflow of silted water running continually from outside the casing of the newly drilled well into the adjacent wetlands and eventually into the river. The Commission agreed to the extension and reiterated that they want to be sure the owners take the time needed to find the best solution to the problem.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m. □

Martha Bryan

COUNCIL ON AGING NEWS

A fall comfort food luncheon was held on Friday, October 24, at the Southfield Church Hall. Seniors were invited to come and listen to Therese Lefebvre from the Berkshire Community Action Corporation describe the Fuel Assistance Program, a federal program designed to help families pay the cost of their fuel during the winter months. She also talked about the energy audit available through the same program.

The hall was decorated for Halloween, and everyone enjoyed vegetable and meat lasagna, garlic bread, salad, and cupcakes provided by the Southern Berkshire Regional School District. This was the last luncheon for 2014, but plans are to resume in the spring. □

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NEWS FROM THE LAND TRUST



- Thanks to 40 + volunteers at the Fall Road Cleanup 50 + bags of trash were gleaned from our town roads and hauled to the transfer station. Blue Budweiser cans were the "catch of the day". The volunteers were rewarded with a delicious picnic lunch at The Old Inn on the Green. Our goal is to comb the streets and find no trash!!!
- We are making progress at the Joffe Sanctuary to blaze a new loop trail which will allow access to the incredible mountain laurel area upland to the wetland. Also New Marlborough Central students made their second visit to the Joffe Sanctuary to learn in the outdoors. 2nd/3rd grade and 3rd/4th grade classes visited the site on September 24th. Tom Masters class learned to identify the tree species growing at the site. More trips are planned.



Walk off Thanksgiving dinner. Join us and explore Jane and Larry Burke's property, Sunday, 11/30, 10 am, 731 Route 183, New Marlborough

A Spirited Fundraiser. The first, and probably not the last, Autumn Social wine tasting event was held at the firehouse on October 25. The purpose of the gathering was to raise funds for a scholarship fund that assists the children of our firefighters and EMTs in their pursuit of higher education. An estimated 125 people enjoyed the wines, beers, ciders, spirits, cheeses, and hors d'oeuvres supplied by Domaney's Liquors, Les Trois Emmes Winery, Berkshire Mountain Distillers, Windy Hill Farm, Hilltop Orchards, Big Elm Brewery, Gedney Farm, Aegean Breeze, and Mario's. Including proceeds from a silent auction, the event raised \$2,500 for the scholarship fund, and a great time was had by all. Add this to your calendar for next year!



photo by Larry Burke

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SENIOR WELLBEING RESOURCE CONFERENCE

By Merry Nan Abolafia, Marsha Harvey, and Jane Burke

Representatives from twenty different agencies from all over Berkshire County sat around the conference table at the New Marlborough Fire House on November 7 to share information about resources available to help seniors in town. Over soup and sandwiches, the attendees described available resources for seniors and discussed how they might enhance the services to those in need by cooperating with others around the table.

Town Clerk Kathy Chretien pointed out the importance of the meeting since so many of New Marlborough residents are elderly. Ed Harvey, director of the Office of Emergency Management, emphasized the need for the various agencies to know who might be in need of services. The wealth of information shared is of great value to all townspeople.

Community Health Programs representatives Kathleen Floyd, nurse practitioner, and Bill Wellspeak, mobile office driver, informed the group about the services offered including general medical, obstetrics and gynecology, WIC, dental care, and eye care. Their mobile medical office has visited Mill River regularly and will return if residents show interest. Fees are charged on a sliding scale and CHP accepts insurance. More information is available at 528-9311 ext. 1164. There is also a food bank on the first Tuesday of each month at their Great Barrington offices from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

"Services of the South Berkshire Elderly Transportation Corporation are available to residents fifty-five and older, and people with disabilities no matter what age," explained Dawn Valinaggi, executive director/treasurer of this organization. Their vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts. Their personnel assist with rides to medical appointments, grocery shopping, etc. For fees and schedules call (413) 528-4773.

Elder Services were outlined by Lynn Penna. She mentioned Meals on Wheels, well-being checks on individuals, personal care, money management, family caregiver support, and protection of the rights of the elderly. Contact this office at 528-0524.

Prudence Spaulding spoke about the Berkshire Community Action Council's fuel assistance program, guidelines to be met, federal funding, energy conservation and efficiency surveys that are available. She identified Stacy Cote, social worker, at 528-1947 as an important contact to get this assistance.

New Marlborough Assessor Marsha Pshenishny outlined the programs for tax savings. These included real property tax exemptions for those sixty-five and over (income guidelines apply), Senior Work-off Program

for those sixty and over, blind exemption for qualified individuals, and veterans' exemptions for those with a war-related injury. For more information call 229-8054.

Police Officer Graham Frank and New Marlborough Fire Chief/Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring both made clear their commitments to meeting the needs of the elderly through their work. Officer Frank offered well-being checks by calling 229-8393. For highway issues Mr. Loring can be reached at 229-8165.

Porchlight Visiting Nurse Association member Bonnie Wickham outlined the availability of home health aides and nurse practitioners available for home visits to provide nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, nutritional information, and social work to those on Medicare. They can be reached at (413) 243-1212 ext. 110.

Joan Hotaling spoke on the Sheffield Food Pantry, which is available on Mondays at Old Parish Church in Sheffield. To determine eligibility, call 229-2624.

Robert Olsen, represented the Southfield Church, said they provide fuel and other assistance at 229-5903. He also spoke about Volunteers in Medicine. He explained that free medical and dental services are available to individuals without insurance at VIM, 528-4014.

Prudence Spaulding talked about the SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and the Food Pantry of Western Massachusetts. Eligible individuals are issued EST cards that can be used at various retailers to purchase food. The coordinator, Carol Dupre, can be reached at (413) 247-9738 ext. 125. There is currently open enrollment.

SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) provides counseling about health insurance. Coordinator Candace Marks can be reached at 229-3038.

Jennie Sutherland, community outreach coordinator for Berkshire Healthcare, discussed the many services provided to seniors, including physical consultations and rehabilitation, pain and symptom management, physical, emotional, bereavement, and spiritual support, and personal care. Contact her at (413) 447-2703.

Ms. Sutherland also represented Hospice Care of the Berkshires, Inc. This organization provides hospice care throughout the county, has over eighty-five volunteers, and provides support to survivors as well as end-of-life care. (413) 443-2994.

The town is lucky to have dedicated volunteers like Prudence Spaulding and Ed Harvey, who organized the conference. And, of course, thanks to New Marlborough Council on Aging members Marsha Harvey and Joan Hotaling, who provided the lunch. □

HALLOWEEN

On Halloween night, the little people of our town were magically transformed into all sorts of scary, alien, and magnificent creatures. Over sixty people attended the party at the Southfield Church Hall organized by Missy Zdziarski, Jennie Percy, and Cassie Keeley. It was a true collaborative effort, with contributions from over a dozen others. Delicious sugary treats; charming, lovely decorations. The other judges having been eaten by goblins, two substitutes, Jodi Roth and Joyce Hackett, awarded prizes. Most gory went to a poor soul with his brains hanging out. Winners also included a cowgirl, a tiny nun, a pair of butterfly twins, a Pharaoh, and a Zorro. A dapper British explorer and a miniature geisha took top honors. □

Joyce Hackett



photos by Missy Zdziarski and Cassie Keeley

NEIGHBORS



Harold Lewin, a New Marlborough village resident for three decades and founder in 1991 of Music & More, died November 7 in New York City at age eighty-five of complications of muscular dystrophy. Born in Boston, he earned a PhD in theory and piano performance at Indiana University and went on to form the Arioso Trio, which debuted at Carnegie Hall in 1979. His performances as a pianist took him to Lincoln Center, The Library of Congress, and as far off as the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland. President of the (Jean) Sibelius Society for more than twenty-five years, he was decorated with the Lion of Finland Medal for his contributions to Finnish Music.



It is, however, for his unceasing efforts on behalf of music in New Marlborough that he will be best remembered here. More than his fine musicianship, his pursuit of excellence has been the catalyst that has put New Marlborough on the cultural map in Berkshire County. His wife, Susan, plans a memorial service in New Marlborough next spring or summer. Meanwhile, here are the recollections of a few of those who worked with and made music with our esteemed neighbor.

As both a gifted musician and an accomplished organizer, Harold enhanced the cultural life of our small township. As much as he loved the performing arts, he also loved our Meeting House – its stately exterior as well as its beautiful interior. Music & More, in fact, was begun as a fund-raiser for undertaking needed repairs to the building.

Since hearing of Harold's passing a few days ago, a variation of the phrase *ars longa vita brevis* (art is long, life, short) keeps occurring to me. The variation has to do with our building, which has been standing now for 175 years. Many have worked to ensure that this remarkable structure remains a part of our heritage, none harder than Harold Lewin, and we owe him our gratitude for his energy and vision.

— Ben Harms

Harold was an amazing person — full of creative energy and multiple interests — who never complained about his diminished physical capacity. While he was planning the season, there would be multiple calls and emails back and forth, daily. Sometimes, after finishing our “business” we would discuss music, dance, and food, and, of course, our grandchildren. We never quite established which one was the most exceptional! A few weeks before he died, in the final stages of planning for the 2015 season, Harold called to tell me that he had done something awful: he had invited enough musicians to play next summer to fill eight, rather than the usual six concert dates. He hated to disinvite any of these world-famous performers. What should he do?

Of course, there was only one thing to do: assure him that somehow we would raise the additional money. In the end, we knew the hard work would be worth it. Every concert Harold has produced — the exquisite performances in the beautiful surroundings of the Meeting House — has taken my breath away. Harold loved New Marlborough. It was his favorite place to be, and the gift he gave to the community of these soon-to-be twenty-four seasons of world class music is one of the things that makes the town so exceptional.

— Louise Yohalem

I was a friend of Harold and Susan's for many years. I am a professional clarinetist, and I performed with Harold a number of times in South Florida, as well as on his Music & More programs in New Marlborough. He was a wonderful musician and performer. He had a deep knowledge of classical music and a unique ability to communicate that knowledge to others. His performances were heartfelt and eloquent. When he could no longer perform, he created exciting and meaningful programs for Music & More, on which I was fortunate enough to perform several times. He was also a kind and caring person, who extended his generosity to me many times.

— Paul Green

I knew Harold only five years, but a cordial professional relationship had grown into a friendship I will miss greatly. He originally hired me and some colleagues to play a Bach concert on the Music & More series. When I met him to discuss details and programming, I sensed a kindred spirit – someone who loved bringing great music to life more than merely putting on flashy performances. Subsequently he hired me and the various ensembles with which I play twice a summer. His faith in me and my seriousness about communicating through innovative programming has been one of the warmest votes of confidence I have received in recent years. I've come to think of him as the supportive older brother I never had.

Our many phone calls and meetings at his New Marlborough home showed Harold to be a many-faceted musician

and intellectual. Furthermore, the way he has stoically dealt with his infirmities has been an authentic inspirational model. In my experience, he remained upbeat, planning ahead, thinking always of the wonderful audience he has built in the Berkshires.

— Dan Stepner

We first met Susan and Hal Lewin about ten years ago. What an amazing couple — Susan, with boundless energy and Hal, still playing the piano — and he was always working on the New Marlborough Music & More series. Even as the series was growing, Hal's own health was failing. He always kept a positive attitude and no matter what the obstacle, he continued to work hard and push ahead.

We were involved, too. It was our idea to bring Karen Akers to the series when someone bowed out unexpectedly. We will always be proud of that. After the shows, which were so enjoyable, we would gather at Susan and Hal's place for a celebratory dinner. We always met interesting people, and Hal, no matter how difficult it was for him, insisted on creating some of the food.

It is those times — and Hal's good spirit and lasting legacy — that we will always remember.

— Nina Weber Worth and Don Worth

Though I only knew Harold for a very few years, he made a wonderful and lasting impression on me. He certainly made me want to do my best for Music & More. I felt honored that he would invite someone from the lowly worlds of cabaret and musical theatre to grace what was clearly a classical music festival! Harold and my musical director, Don Rebic, shared an alma mater in Indiana University — perhaps that made the invitation more palatable! I feel that his openness and curiosity, his commitment to art, his love of musicians and music in a variety of forms, and his desire to create something lasting and unique are all reflected in Music & More. I'm grateful not only to have known him, but also to have played a small part in bringing his vision to life.

— Karen Akers

Hal was a fine pianist and had a distinctive vision about how a mostly classical concert series could also engage other audiences in our community. Among the alternative offerings were jazz and popular song concerts as well as literary events with recently published authors, hosted by former *New York Times* Literary Editor, Mike Levitas. Hal worked all year long assembling an appealing cast of attractions and supervising a professional level publicity campaign. His encroaching illness would have been considered by many, especially musicians, to be living in a nightmare. But he seemed to accept it without complaint, continuing to fashion a series of inviting events every summer and fall. Next season's concerts, which he had already set up, will present us with a wonderful opportunity to remember Hal, and to understand how he was spending his time during his last days.

— Lucy Bardo

For almost a quarter of a century Harold Lewin has brought the Meeting House alive each year with Music & More. A wonderfully varied series, it has enriched our community with performances by top-notch classical musicians. Many of us can recall when the series began, with musicians precariously perched on a narrow temporary stage, and the audience treated to seating on thin horsehair-filled cushions certainly dating back to the Victorian era. To some it may have seemed like an improbable experiment in such a small town and in light of so much else on offer elsewhere in the Berkshires. But they didn't reckon on the scope of Harold's creative vision, his incredible network of connections in the arts world, and the intensity of his commitment to build something of lasting value.

He was an extraordinarily talented person who challenged us all to reach for the highest professional standards in anything we did at the Meeting House — and to do something about the stage and those cushions! I regret deeply his passing.

— David Hosford

The Board of the New Marlborough Village Association mourns the death of our colleague Harold Lewin. We are grateful for his outstanding work as founder and director of Music & More, which contributed so much to our community. Thanks to Harold's work, the Meeting House thrived and will endure to serve future generations. Our sympathies go out to Harold's family and his many friends. He will be greatly missed.

Louise Yohalen, President; Margaret Phillips, Vice-president;

Ian Devine, Secretary; Barry Shapiro, Treasurer.

Lee Backer, Ben Harms, David Hosford, Charles Jones, Elizabeth Lombardi, Richard Stebbins

NEIGHBORS



Holly Morse offers this tribute to her son:

Asher Samuel Morse Lipson, of Mill River, died at home surrounded by his family on October 18, of a rare sarcoma. He had just turned twenty-five.

Asher started coming to Mill River, to the house on Hayes Hill Road built by his grandparents, Leon and Dorothy Lipson, as soon as he was born. He moved with his parents, Holly Morse and Michael Lipson, to live in the house full-time in 1999, when he was nine years old. Asher delighted in exploring the woods in Mill River with his brother, Rody, fishing in the Konkapot, and skiing at Butternut and Catamount. Always a gifted student, Asher attended Hotchkiss School and Harvard College. At Hotchkiss,



Asher in Argentina

Asher became captain of the debate team and an internationally ranked debater. An enthusiastic actor, he also loved theater and began to charm audiences with his comedic timing even as a teen.

At Harvard, Asher majored in romance languages and literature. Like his father and grandfather, Asher had a great gift for languages. Fluent in French and Spanish, he was studying Italian and Portuguese at the time of his death. He traveled to France, England, Denmark, Italy, and Chile studying cooking and local languages. He traveled to Greece and Nicaragua to do volunteer work. His last term of college, the fall of 2012, he spent in Buenos Aires where he polished his Spanish studying Argentinian literature, art, history, and political science. Asher made all this travel possible through grants and awards from Harvard, the Rockefeller Foundation, and other not-for-profit and educational sources. Just as likely to mail-order a full-sized banana costume as to study a Buddhist sutra, Asher served as co-“czar” of Harvard’s improv troupe, the Immediate Gratification Players (IGP). He was a committed vegan and president of Harvard’s vegetarian society, Vegitas. Asher wanted to reform the criminal justice system and had accepted a place at Boston College Law School just as he became ill. Even late in his last months, Asher continued to co-lead a book club in Massachusetts’ only maximum security prison, Souza-Baranowski. He also continued to tutor high school students through Veritas Prep and to work as a paralegal in the offices of Ridley M. Whitaker of New York and Egremont.

His brother Rody remembers how, a few years ago, when he proposed a visit to Boston’s Aquarium, Asher seemed against it. Rody says that he couldn’t understand until Asher admitted he was concerned that the fish might not be treated well: “That was the type of person Asher was, deeply kind and compassionate, even to fish.” *Tricycle* magazine’s blog published an excerpt of Asher’s writings just after he died. They titled it, “But for a Moment” (<http://www.tricycle.com/blog/but-for-a-moment>). It shows that Asher kept striving to find the most important and vital contributions he could make to life even though he knew death was imminent. In another piece, Asher wrote: “Facing death (perhaps within the year) at twenty-four, I’m discovering that warmth, sweetness, and loving kindness are the good things in life. Let’s practice and cultivate them together, each day that we can.”

Asher loved coming back to the woods on Hayes Hill and the fields of Mill River. Late in his illness, stretched out on our couch with a book in front of a roaring fire, he remarked, “They say you can’t go home again, but I haven’t found that to be true.” □

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OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

photo by Scottie Mills



On October 22, **Scottie Mills**, of New Marlborough village, writes: **John McGinley** found this little **sharp-shinned hawk** on his back deck, beautiful and dead, showing no apparent injuries (perhaps a broken neck?). My grandson **Milo** got to examine the hawk close-up. (John used to live in New Marlborough village and Mill River and is “family” to many of us.) **Tes Reed**, of Calkins Cross Road, reports that sharp shinned hawks are one of the few hawks that can hunt, at great speed, low to the ground. She ventures that some small animal scurried under John’s house and the bird struck the siding.

On October 23, **Don Beauchamp**, of Clayton, writes: I had a visit today from **two pairs of bluebirds** checking out their house. I had just cleaned out the nesting material last week.

On October 26, **Jean Pollock**, of New Marlborough village, writes: On my way into Great Barrington I often will see a **flock of turkeys** on Lake Buel Road just before the Great Barrington line, so I’m used to slowing down and preparing to avoid them as I head that way. As usual, I spotted what I thought were the turkeys one morning, but when I got closer I realized that they weren’t turkeys. It was **three baby bobcats**, playing in the road! Wish I had been able to get a picture, but they scooted away too fast. What a treat it was to be able to see not one but three baby bobcats!

On November 2, **Liana Toscanini**, who lives in Hartsville, writes: No photo, of course, but I saw a **mountain lion** cross Route 57 by the old Hillside restaurant last weekend. No mistaking it. It was big! And that beautiful tan color. It wasn’t until I saw it from behind that I was 100 percent sure what it was: too large to be a dog, sort of the color of a deer, loping across the road. I think it was the visual of the paws that did it. Or maybe the tail.

At any rate, Hartsville is humming. I saw a **bald eagle** that same week (which was featured in the November issue of the MN5VN with Richard Migot’s photograph). Five of us – Richard and my mother and a sister and her husband and I — were looking at the river by that little bridge on Hartsville Mill River Road and the eagle was above us for a good ten minutes. He didn’t mind us being there at all.

On November 4, **Don Beauchamp** writes: I put up small feeder — a tuna-fish can on a piece of four by four, and ten minutes later it was loaded with birds — **chickadees, nuthatches, titmice, goldfinches, a pair of house finches, blue jays, juncos, a red-bellied woodpecker, and a downy**. Now, just back from a walk in the field across the Konkapot, I saw a flock of cedar waxwings with some bluebird friends, down by the bridge.

On November 11, **Laura Endacott**, who lives in Mill River, reports having had “a fleeting glimpse” of a big cat while she was running on the Dry Hill Reservation on November 9. She forwarded this notice, posted by “Pam” on October 28, on the message board of the New England Mountain Lion Sighting Bulletin: “We spotted a **mountain lion** cross the road at 6:15 p.m. last night in Salisbury, CT, on Forest Road.”

Laura points out that hikers should be vigilant in light of the fact that, out West, there have been isolated cases of big cats attacking lone runners and mountain bikers.

Editor’s note: New Marlborough residents who believe they have seen a mountain lion — the animal’s large size and long tail are distinguishing characteristics — might consider reporting the sighting not only to the 5 Village News, but also to the Sighting Bulletin. Contact: katchaya@gmail.com

On November 14, **Don Beauchamp** writes: On Tuesday, November 11, I had a **red-breasted nuthatch** on the feeder all day. Same day, **three bluebirds** were in and out of the birdhouse. The next day, while I was looking out at the snow, a **great blue heron** flew right over my head. I looked up just in time to see him but didn’t see where he went.

On Saturday, November 15, **Leslie Wheeler** writes: “I woke up this morning to the sight of a **coyote and pup** in the snow-covered field on the other side of my pond on Cagney Hill Road. While the pup wandered off, mom enjoyed a contemplative moment until she realized he was gone and took off after him. About a month ago, **four young deer** came close to the house. One went on the alert, and when I looked in the direction it was looking, I saw a coyote some distance away. The deer and coyote were obviously aware of each other’s presence, but went about their business. Eventually, the deer left and so did the coyote. □

Compiled by Jon Swan, joncswan@gmail.com

photo by Don Beauchamp



photos by Don Beauchamp

photo by Leslie Wheeler



FROM TREES TO BEES: Observing Differences in Nature

By Norah Smith (Norah is in the fourth grade at New Marlborough Central School)

Back in September Dale Abrams came to our school from Flying Cloud. He told us that we were going to be part of a project about the environment because our whole school got money from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to do science and theater.

In Mr. Masters' third and fourth grade class, Mr. Abrams helped us learn about trees. First he showed us about how to tell a deciduous tree from an evergreen. We got to see that there are different kinds of leaves like broad or lobed, and there are different kinds of needles. We learned that you can figure out trees using a key. He took us on a field trip to the Robert Joffe Nature Sanctuary to look for mystery trees. I used the steps on the classification key to find out that my tree was a Norway spruce. I also saw a beautiful oak with orange, yellow, and red leaves.

In November Kristen Sparhawk came in and we started putting together a play. We used the tools Mr. Abrams gave us to identify trees. The characters in the story are two scientists and a bunch of trees. The plot is "what is the mystery tree?" Each person in the class played a particular tree and figured out how to show its special traits using their bodies. The evergreens feel left out because the deciduous were getting all the attention with their fancy leaves. The evergreens gave us a challenge to identify them because they had no leaves, only needles. We scientists have to define evergreen single needles and spiked needles, flat needles and roundish needles.

Our whole school, kids and teachers, went to Undermountain Elementary School for a dress rehearsal on Monday (November 17) and it went well. It will be different to perform when there is a big audience on Wednesday.

The most interesting, fun part for me was classification of trees and using a key. That's something I've never done before – how you can figure out the different species yourself. Really cool.



photo by Jane Burke

I have always had fun doing acting. You can pretend you are someone else and you are still yourself. It is also really fun working on all school projects with Mr. Abrams and Kristen. It is something unique, not what every class in the world can do.

Thanks to the Land Trust for the trip to the Robert Joffe Nature Sanctuary, Flying Cloud Institute for Dale, Kristen, and Meghan, Massachusetts Cultural Council for the money, and the teachers helping it all happen. □

This was Flying Cloud's fifth year of collaborating with New Marlborough Central to do a science theater project and the third year the project has included the EK - 4 grades. The unifying theme of this year's theater project is learning how to observe organisms closely so as to be able to classify them. Environmental educator Dale Abrams provided the science investigations; theater artist Kristen Sparhawk helped kids translate their knowledge into performance. Mill River artist Meghan Orbek helped the children design and make costumes and props. Funding was provided by Massachusetts Cultural Council's STARS program, the New Marlborough Cultural Council, the New Marlborough Land Trust, and the Eagle Fund.



photos by Larry Burke

Shakespeare at Mount Everett: Mount Everett Regional High School's contribution to Shakespeare & Company's Fall Festival of Shakespeare was Henry V. Members of the cast from New Marlborough included Jake Christinat, Angus Kern, Olivia Marchione, Mary Shalaby, and Samantha Twing. Overall there were thirty cast members, and thirty-eight students participated in the staging of the play. The play was performed at the Thomas A. Consolati Performing Arts Center on the Mount Everett campus on November 14 and 15, and at the Tina Packer Playhouse in Lenox on November 22. Left: Olivia Marchione, on the right, engages in a bit of swordplay. Center: Mary Shalaby. Right: The cast.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT THE SOUTHFIELD CHURCH

By Robert Olsen

The gift of music continues at the Southfield Church as voices of the church choir are once again joined by voices from our community in preparation for our annual Christmas Eve service, A Festival of Lessons & Carols. This year's dedicated ten-voice choir began rehearsing Sunday evening, November 2, and will continue rehearsing each Sunday until Christmas Eve, polishing and fine-tuning this annual gift to the community. This year's service will be accompanied by Zack Cross on piano.

Lessons & Carols was first introduced on Christmas Eve, 1880, in England by Edward White Benson, the first bishop of Truro in Cornwall. With the construction of a new cathedral under way and a wooden shed serving as the temporary home of the Truro Anglican Cathedral, Bishop Benson, in keeping with the humble surroundings for the celebration, devised the simple order of service. Eric Milner-White adapted the format in 1918 for the Chapel of King's College in Cambridge,

England, where it has become an annual tradition. The Lessons & Carols service has since gained popularity in churches across all denominations.

Lessons & Carols is a simple service consisting of nine scripture verses (or lessons) accompanied by a carol sung by the choir and occasionally the congregation. The service gets off to a ringing start with the always popular "Carol of the Bells." The choir's carol arrangements range from the traditional, such as "Silent Night" sung by candlelight, to the jazz-influenced "In the Bleak Midwinter," reminiscent of the sound of the jazz vocal group, The Singers Unlimited.

Everyone in the community is invited. The service begins promptly at 7:00 p.m. with a rousing ringing of the bell. The service continues to grow in popularity, and people now arrive early to get a good seat, though truth be told – and it better be, this is church we're talking about here – there isn't a bad seat to be had at the Southfield Church. □

We asked Leslie Miller, of Gedney Farm, to share a favorite holiday dessert recipe that could be made by a "normal" person, with ingredients easily purchased at a supermarket. Her response is below:

TOFFEE DATE PUDDING

In looking through my Holiday Baking notebook, I settled on this dessert as it always seems to be a crowd pleaser, and can be made in advance. A note of warning though: it is particularly irresistible fresh and warm from the oven, to the point where you might hear yourself innocently asking... "Oh, was I supposed to make the dessert?"

Pre-heat oven to 350°. Grease a 9" springform pan.

For the Pudding:

- Simmer 10 oz. of pitted and chopped dates with just enough boiling water to cover. Simmer over low flame for 2 minutes. Remove from stove and stir in 1 tsp. baking soda, then set aside.
- Cream together in a mixer 1 stick butter and 5 Tbsp. sugar and beat until light. Add 2 eggs and 1/2 tsp. vanilla and mix together well.
- Sift together - 1 1/4 cup flour, 1/2 tsp. salt and 1 3/4 Tbsp. baking powder and fold into butter/egg mixture.
- Carefully fold into the batter - the dates and 1/4 cup of the date water.
- Pour batter into prepared pan and bake for 20 minutes. Prepare sauce at this point (see below)
- After 20 minutes, drizzle all of the warm sauce all over the cake and return to oven for another 10+ minutes, or until cake tester comes out clean.

For the Sauce:

- In a large pot (2-1/2 to 3 quart as sauce will bubble up) combine - 1 stick butter, 1/4 cup heavy cream, 1/2 cup brown sugar (light or dark) and 1/2 tsp. vanilla. Cook over medium heat, then once bubbling, lower heat and simmer sauce for 3 minutes. Remove from heat.

Let finished cake cool for at least 10 minutes on a rack and carefully remove springform edge. If not serving right away, store in airtight container and then re-warm gently in container so it doesn't dry out (ideally in oven on pilot heat for an hour).

Serve with soft whipped cream or vanilla ice cream if desired. Enjoy!



MAILBOX

To the editor:

I have my second home in New Marlborough, and am able to keep up with New Marlborough happenings via the *5 Village News*. THANKS.

The November edition started with the discussion of the New Energy Option. It said that the price would drop from National Grid's 16.27 cents per kWh to 12.19 cents. I looked at my September 27, 2014, bill from National Grid and the price of the Supply Service was .0922 per kWh.

Can you forward this to Mr. Wagstaff, whom I think wrote the article, and ask him if he would help me by clearing up my confusion?

Thank you.
Gerald Rosenberg

And James Wagstaff replied:

Hi Gerald-

Joe Poindexter from the *New Marlborough 5 Village News* shared your note with me. Here's some information in response to your question:

Each electric utility bill is composed of three parts:

- 1) Delivery Charge. This is the fee National Grid receives for maintaining the poles and wires throughout the state. The delivery charge is set by regulators and there are no alternative providers to National Grid so this portion cannot be shopped competitively. The cost drivers that impact this charge are very complicated and as a result the total cost is variable each month. I suspect this is where you see the 9.22 cents per kWh.
- 2) Basic Service Charge. This is the cost of the actual electrons that flow through the wires and power your home. Any number of vendors can provide this commodity service and so there is competition available to source from alternative suppliers. The New Marlborough plan addresses this element of the bill. If you're using National Grid as the provider of Basic Service the rate from August through October of this year is 8.277 cents per kWh. Starting in November, that will have changed to 16.27 cents per kWh through April. If you're using a third party other than National Grid currently, then the rate is whatever you've negotiated or contracted for previously. The bill will tell you if there's a third party supplier.
- 3) Tax. Local and state taxes apply to all fees on the bill.

Let me know if you have any further questions.

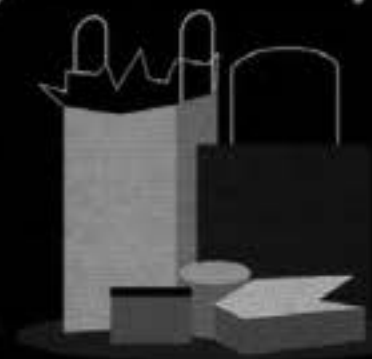
James Wagstaff

SUSAN M. SMITH
Attorney At Law

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VACANCY LOOMS AT TOWN HALL

By David Lowman

Michael Skorput, age sixty-five, administrative assistant to the New Marlborough Board of Selectmen, is retiring. Mike's tenure in Town Hall, which began in October, 2002, will officially end on January 2. During his time in New Marlborough, Mike has also served the Town as procurement officer, and he has represented the Board of Selectmen with all Town departments and the general public.



Prior to coming to New Marlborough, Mike, a life-long resident of West Stockbridge, served that town in many capacities: as a selectman for eight years, as a fireman, as an EMT, as a member of the Board of Health, and as the interim administrative assistant to the Board of Selectmen, replacing the prior incumbent, who was convicted of embezzling public funds.

Here in New Marlborough, Mike's duties included day-to-day operations for the Board of Selectmen, overseeing staff, preparing meeting agendas and the Annual Town Report, preparing the Board's annual budget, and every-

day problem-solving.

Mike's post-retirement plans are somewhat sketchy at this point, but he plans on seeing more of his two grandchildren and his daughter and son-in-law, all of whom share his home. He'll go fishing with his grandson, tend to household repairs and improvements, and restart his dormant garden.

Reflecting on his years in town government, Mike feels (and he's not alone) that dealings with the commonwealth have become more complicated and tied to increased compliance with ever-new rules and regulations. In a word, the state has become more "meddlesome."

Looking ahead, Mike sees as priorities for New Marlborough the repair and maintenance of our roads and bridges, the upkeep of Town Hall, and the funding of the schools. He thinks his replacement should be experienced in municipal government, but not necessarily formally educated in government.

New Marlborough will miss him. □

Photo by David Lowman

From the Board of Selectmen:

After twelve years of service, our administrative assistant, Michael Skorput, is retiring. During that time, Michael oversaw twelve annual budgets, warrants, and town meetings, town hall renovations, the building of a new highway garage, union and employee agreements, evolutions in our fire and police departments, major roadway and bridge repairs, and endless hours of conversations on schools, just to mention a few of his duties. He was the "go to" person for the Board of Selectmen and all the other boards, committees, volunteers, and residents of the town.

Michael was also a teacher. He taught new selectmen how to do their job. He told us, "In your first year you listen and learn. In your second year you can ask questions. In your third year you run the show." He was right. He knew more about town government than the governing body. He answers questions before you ask them, and he is never afraid to voice an opinion.

All Boards of Selectmen and town residents are grateful to Michael for his countless hours of dedication to our town. We wish him all the best in his retirement.

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Revival, by Stephen King

First Impressions, by Charlie Lovett

The Children Act, by Ian McEwan

Quartet for the End of Time, by Johanna Skibsrud

Bellingham Bloodbath, by Gregory Harris

Murder 101, by Faye Kellerman

To Dwell in Darkness, by Deborah Crombie

The Girl Next Door, by Ruth Rendell

The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher, by Hilary Mantell

Adult Nonfiction

41: A Portrait of My Father, by George W. Bush

The Great New Orleans Kidnapping Case: Race, Law, and Justice in the Reconstruction Era, by Michael A. Ross

Poisoned, by Steve Shukis

Children's Fiction

Missing Pieces of Me, by Jean Van Leeuwen

Nest, by Esther Ehrlich

Better Nate Than Ever, by Tim Federle

Centaur Rising, by Jane Yolen

Pathfinder, by Angie Sage

Shh! We Have a Plan, by Chris Haughton

WINTER HOURS

Mon., Wed., Sat.: 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Tues. & Thurs.: 1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Fri. 1:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Library Holiday Closing:

The Library will be closed

December 24 and 25,

and January 1.

Adult Nonfiction

41: A Portrait of My Father, by George W. Bush

The Great New Orleans Kidnapping Case: Race, Law, and Justice in the Reconstruction Era, by Michael A. Ross

Poisoned, by Steve Shukis

Children's Fiction

Missing Pieces of Me, by Jean Van Leeuwen

Nest, by Esther Ehrlich

Better Nate Than Ever, by Tim Federle

Centaur Rising, by Jane Yolen

Pathfinder, by Angie Sage

Shh! We Have a Plan, by Chris Haughton

► Book Discussion Group

Join us for coffee, bagels, and a lively discussion of the book, *The Housekeeper and the Professor*, by Yoko Ogawa, December 20 at 10:00 a.m. at the Library.

(413) 229-2544
Free Estimates



A family "Make your own scarecrow" workshop at the library on October 18 was followed by the annual Halloween party in the New Marlborough Meeting House Gallery on October 24. photos by Debbie O'Brien and Sheila Fitzpatrick

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE NEEDED TO CONTINUE THE PAPER!

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

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

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

HERE IS A TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF \$_____ (payable to NM5VN)

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Town Times

- * **Board of Selectmen:** Every Monday at 6:00 p.m.
- * **Planning Board:** Second and fourth Wednesday at 7 p.m.
- * **Board of Health:** First Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.
- * **Conservation Commission:** Last Saturday of the month at 10 a.m.
- * **Board of Assessors:** Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
- * **Fire Department training:** Every Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the fire station
- * **Building Inspector:** Monday 5 - 7 p.m. Wednesday 8 - 10 a.m.
- * **First Responders:** meeting/training: First and third Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the fire station
- * **Cultural Council:** Second Thursday at 4:15 p.m at the library
- * **Town Treasurer:** Wednesday 3:30 p.m. - 6 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. - 10 a.m.
- * **Tax Collector:** Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- * **Selectmen's Administrative Secretary:** Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- * **Dog and Animal Control Officer:** John Springstube 413-232-7038
- * **Town Clerk:** 229-8278; 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. weekdays; Saturday by appointment
- * **Town Hall:** 229-8116
- * **Police:** Business office: 229-8161

Emergency calls: Police, Fire, and Medical: 911

Transfer Station hours:

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

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

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

PERMITS ARE DUE ON JULY 1

They are available at
the Town Hall in Mill River
FEE IS \$125 AFTER AUGUST 15
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Highway Department

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We welcome advertisements from businesses owned by New Marlborough residents.

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

NM5VN Editorial Team

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

New Marlborough 5 Village News

appears monthly,

also online at our new website! www.NM5VN.org

The next issue will be dated January, 2015.

All copy must be submitted no later than December 15.

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

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- ♦ **Campbell Falls Carpentry:** Licensed and insured contracting at campbellfallscarpentry@gmail.com (413)229-6097 and (413)429-7677. Mass Contractors # 7614140, HIC# 170377
- ♦ **Corashire Realty:** Serving New Marlborough for 40 years. Let experience, knowledge, and personal attention work for you. 528-0014
- ♦ **Dellea:** Dellea.biz offers affordable on-site Windows computer repairs, virus removals, and more to homes and small businesses in southern Berkshire County. Browse <http://www.dellea.biz> or call (413)528-1141.
- ♦ **Design+Planning:** Christopher Blair; Since 1986, creative, budget aware design. Achieve your goals for additions, alterations to an existing home or new construction. 413- 528-4960. christopher.f.blair@verizon.net.
- ♦ **DesignFirstBerkshires:** Architectural design, space planning and renovation management. 413-528-6169 or info@designfirstberkshires.com.
- ♦ **Eileen Fitzgibbons:** Experienced massage therapist with advanced training and 6 years' experience at Mepal Spa wishes to continue work in New Marlborough. www.efwellness@gmail.com, 860-309-7775
- ♦ **Fine Jewelry:** Designers and manufacturers; custom orders/commissions welcome; expert repairs. 45 years experience. Sachs Reisman, Inc. 25 Maple Ave., Sheffield 229-0050
- ♦ **One call does it all!:** Vinyl siding cleaning; pressure washing; deck refinishing; floors refinished; window washing; odd landscape jobs; all odd jobs. David Goewey, (413)229-2787
- ♦ **Project Bee** meets on the last Saturday of every month from 10:30 until noon at the New Marlborough Library in Mill River.
- ♦ **James Edelman:** General Contractor, Real Estate Sales. Best Results. Construction License #090773. Home Improvement Registration #152035. Real Estate Sales License #9086247. 413-528-0006 or cljvedelman@aol.com
- ♦ **Quality Painting Services:** Beautifying homes in the Berkshires. Offering interior/exterior painting, staining, sheet-rock repair. Pressure washing decks. Contractor registration #173566. Josh Taber, 413.269.8948
- ♦ **Susan M. Smith:** Attorney At Law; Concentrating in the areas of Estate Planning, Estate Administration, Elder Law, Real Estate and Zoning Matters. ssmithlaw@hughes.net or 229-7080
- ♦ **Reiner White:** General Contractor; 413-229-8450
- ♦ **Woodruff Mountain Landscaping:** Excavation and landscape contracting, all forms of stone work and masonry, and outdoor services, including lawn mowing and yard work. 413-229-2919 woodruffmountain@aol.com

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