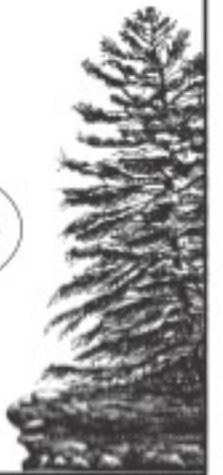




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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield

THE SOUTHFIELD STORE FROM STAPLES TO STICKY BUNS

By Barry R. Shapiro

This is the fourth in an occasional series on the landmark buildings in New Marlborough and the people who make them special.

There has been a store on Norfolk Road in Southfield for over a century and a half, a store that has changed with the world around it. Its interior would be all but unrecognizable to its original patrons — or for that matter, as recently as 2001, and its offerings today would be alien to the shoppers of 1850. But one thing unites them: They have all benefitted from the dedicated ownership that has guided the establishment through thick and thin for 165 years.

What we today call the Southfield Store started in



The Southfield Store in the early 1900s, before having been burnt to the ground in 1928
Photo courtesy of The New Marlborough Historical Society

1850, two doors south of where it now stands, as a country general store. Little is known about the original owner, William Baldwin, other than that he served on the town's school committee and was the village postmaster. By 1907, the store had relocated to its present location and was operated by Arthur C. Lockwood, who sold it in 1923 to Dudley Turner, the owner of the Turner and Cook Whip Factory (now the Buggy Whip Factory).

The store burned down in 1928, and a rebuilt structure, nearly identical to its predecessor, re-opened in 1931. By then, the store also contained the Southfield Post Office.

continued on page 2

*Seasons
Greetings!*



illustration by Ann Getsinger

Gardner Rugg and Tim Oates purchased the store in 1934. Rugg bought out Oates in 1936 and, with his wife, Dorothy, aka "Dot," ran the store for three decades (with a brief hiatus from 1959 through 1963, when it was operated by Joe Decille). Gardner died in 1967 and Dot (having married Bill Stevens) continued to operate the business until its sale in 1970. She stayed on for a time in her capacity as postmistress, and was a fixture around town until well into her 90s.

The buyers were Victor and Pearl Spigarolo of Huntington, Connecticut. Victor, whose work as a salesman for railroad and trucking interests required a lot of travel, wanted to scale back. Friends had purchased a general store in Colebrook and encouraged him to find one for himself. The move to Southfield, and the small house behind the store, suited Victor and Pearl well, and they threw themselves into making it a success — Pearl preparing salads of various ingredients and Victor as a butcher, making sausages and continuing the store's reputation for excellent meat products.

But the relocation did not please everyone in the family. "I was not happy about this," says their daughter, Deb O'Brien, now the New Marlborough town librarian. "I was twelve years old and did not want to leave my friends. I wanted as little to do with the store as possible!" Protests to the contrary, however, Deb pitched in. "I used to run an ice cream stand on the front porch, selling ice cream sundaes, shakes, cones and the like," she says. "That I enjoyed! I also sold some very popular mini-hot dogs with homemade chili that people loved."

The grind of a six-and-a-half-day week eventually took its toll, and in 1980, the Spigarolos decided it was time to move on. Enter David and Barbara Lowman. "Barbara and I had married in 1977 and were working for the Michigan Department of Education but were spending time in the Berkshires, since Barbara had a cottage in Monterey," recounts David. "We had decided that we had had enough of working in education



In the early 1950s, the store sold Admiral television sets — and invited villagers (including Alvin Stalker, center in light plaid shirt) to viewings.

and wanted to live in the Berkshires." An attempt to buy the general store in Monterey fell through. Then, in the summer of 1980, they discovered the Southfield store was for sale. They closed on Halloween and moved into the house behind the store in December.

"We had no idea what we were doing," quips Barbara, a native of Painted Post, New York, a little village west of Corning. "David, who grew up in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, had some limited

retail experience, having run a bar in California at one point, but this was something brand new for us."

The Lowmans initially kept things as they were, selling fresh meats for which the Spigarolos were known, along with canned goods, beer, wine, sandwiches, hardware, video rentals, clothing, newspapers, and all the merchandise one would expect in a general store (but "no bait and no ammunition," notes David).

As opposed to the open look of today's establishment, the store was jammed with shelving and work spaces. "The counter with cash register was on the left as you walked in, with a coffee bar and refrigerated case on the right," says David. "The post office was at the back near the present-day bar and restroom. The rest of the store contained steel display racks that you'd typically find in a retail store. We continued the Spigarolo's practice of offering personal charge accounts and were never

disappointed. People always settled up. As one homeowner said, 'ConEd can wait. You get paid first.'"

"Deliveries were an issue," says Barbara. "David needed to go to Ted's Smoke Shop or Caligari's in Great Barrington daily to get our newspapers and Gorham and Norton to pick up eggs, cheeses, and groceries. Suppliers didn't like to come out here. It was considered

'the back of beyond.'" There was no place to sit indoors, but during pleasant weather, people, including a morning coffee group of retired, mostly male residents, made



As late as the 1990s, the store served not only people but cars.

Photos courtesy of the New Marlborough Historical Society

themselves comfortable on the front porch.

There were two Mobil gas pumps out front, the only remnant of which is a sign, since painted over with the name of the store but with the Mobil logo peeking through, now leaning against the left-hand wall as one enters the store. "We even checked the oil," says Barbara smiling at the anachronistic practice. "We didn't have what is now the parking lot across the street," added David, "but the police always left our customers alone."

After some great times during the 1980s when the Berkshires were "hot," things cooled dramatically and, by 2001, business had slowed. The post office had moved out in 1991.

"General stores were a dying breed," notes David. "People were eating out more, there was less demand for our meat and groceries. After twenty-one years, we were both tired, and when we couldn't locate a buyer, we decided in 2001 to close, something that really disappointed the community. After all, there had been a store here for over a century. We really enjoyed running it, but we simply couldn't go on."

The store was still shut in 2003 when Tim Newman, then a resident of the trendy Soho district of New York City, visited his daughter, Emily, who had already taken up residence in Southfield, and spotted the vacant storefront. "There was a little index card pasted to the door with the Lowman's number. I called, they showed me around the store and I was intrigued," says Tim. "I'm a Los Angeles native and had a long career in New York in advertising, working at ad agencies, directing television commercials, and flying back and forth between the coasts. I was burned out and looking for something new. I loved coffee shops and food, and

I thought that maybe I could create something on this site and sell things I like. I also considered myself a fairly accomplished home cook."



Cindy Walton works wonders in the Southfield Store's well-equipped kitchen.
photo by Barry R. Shapiro

It took some time for Tim to obtain the necessary permits, rip out the gas pumps and tanks and renovate the space, but, finally, in June 2004, he opened for business. "I transformed the space. I installed a wonderful kitchen in the back where a garage used to be. I added seating in the front of the store. I did my own baking and added brunch on Sunday, which became a monstrous hit. We did barbecue, roasting whole pigs, and sold great cheese,

wine, and charcuterie, all the things I loved. We were very successful and the store became a destination with people coming from Lenox, Norfolk, and elsewhere." Tim also put his advertising background to work: "Take a drive in the country. See some cows. Eat well," was a favored tag line.

One year later, it was clear that the store needed to expand its seating. "We were so successful and it had become apparent that people were more interested in eating here than in buying specialty foods. We needed more seating so I applied for, and ultimately got, a permit to do so as well as a pouring license, allowing us to serve alcohol by the glass," Tim adds proudly. "The store then pretty much looked the way it does today, the only thing different being the art."

It didn't take too long for Tim to discover "that running a restaurant is very different from simply enjoying food." Creating was one thing; managing another. "I was used to doing advertising projects, which have a beginning, middle, and end. I enjoyed creating the store but never fully adjusted to running it, so I decided to list it for sale. I kind of felt like I was on the deck of the Flying Dutchman

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with no way off. I had also learned that the winter business was shockingly different from the summer."

Notwithstanding his decision to sell, Tim was thrilled with his experience owning the store. "I got to know the community in a way that would have been impossible otherwise. I also had the vivid experience of living through business cycles and realizing just how we need to supplement economic activity here. For that," Tim adds with a smile, "we need fiber optic cable!"

The store was listed for sale in 2007 and, while he had no way of knowing it, his timing was perfect. Peter Platt and Meredith Kennard, owners of the Old Inn on the Green, were looking for a place to bake the breads, and prepare the sweets, chocolates, and desserts they serve at the Inn. Their two-year arrangement to use the Gedney Farm kitchen, agreed to when they purchased the Inn from Brad Wagstaff and Leslie Miller, was expiring and they needed a replacement.

"Finding the store for sale was a miracle," says Meredith who supervises its operations. "Our Inn kitchen, already very busy serving our Inn guests and restaurant clientele, is too small for our baking needs. We needed a place close by, and this was kismet. We closed in March and were thrilled."

Expanding on Tim's renovation, Meredith and Peter overhauled the kitchen, adding convection ovens, proofing boxes for leavened products, new counters, stainless steel shelving, and a commercial dishwasher. "We made minimal changes to the front of the house, although we did add a few tables and a super high-end espresso machine, one of only two Faena machines in

Berkshire County" says Meredith. "We also installed air conditioning, something the store really needed."

Meal service also built on Tim's formula. "We continued to serve breakfast and lunch and, for the past nine years, have been offering dinners from Thursday through Sunday from late May to late October, with our popular Oaxaca night on Thursdays, all overseen by our long-time friend and chef, Gustavo Perez," notes Meredith. The Southfield Store is also available for catered events. "We remove all the 'café stuff' and can make the space look however our customer would like," she says.

The history of the store reflects the imprint of changing times, as it has morphed from supplying the myriad needs of a New England village to meeting the sophisticated tastes of diners today. Sitting in the warmth of the café, with sunlight streaming in through the windows and the aroma of excellent coffee in the air, a visitor can think back on the long history of this building and the remarkable group of owners whose hard work has assured its survival for 165 years. □



Former owners Barbara and David Lowman and (seated) Tim Newman

Photo by Barry R. Shapiro



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ONE-WAY

An End to Spontaneity at the Transfer Station

by Joe Poindexter



Freddy Friedman has found a new career: ringmaster of the New Marlborough Circus, a.k.a. the transfer station. A recent Sunday morning found him at the center of the action, directing traffic, calling errant drivers back into line, helping toss bags of household waste into the compactor, even handing out doughnuts. It was all part of an effort by Mr. Friedman, the newly appointed solid waste coordinator, to ease the transition to a new traffic pattern and to end what one resident termed “the pinball” effect during a busy day. “I do like spontaneity,” says Mr. Friedman, “just not at the transfer station.”

In late October, traffic cones were placed in such a way as to direct entering cars and trucks to the right, first to the household waste compactor and then, counterclockwise to the construction debris container, the discarded tire container, and the paper, cans, and bottles compactor — which, as may have escaped the notice of some visitors, can be accessed on either side. Following a traffic back-up one Saturday morning, a second lane was delineated by cones for residents who don't mind a slightly longer carry to the solid-waste compactor. And a parking space has been cleared to the left of the “Gift Shop” for visitors who want to see what's on offer — or just catch up on the latest gossip — without blocking the flow of traffic.

The idea for one-way traffic at the transfer station was a response to a request from the Board of Selectmen to “make it safer.” In August, there was what Alvin Stalker, manager of the operation, called a “fender-bender,” caused when the driver of a large SUV backed into an open rear door of the car behind her. An elderly rear-seat passenger was, understandably, alarmed. Then too, reportedly there have been some near misses and instances of children running around in the midst of moving vehicles.

Starting Saturday, January 2, the hours of operation will be advanced an hour — opening at 9:00 a.m. and closing



Waste Management Coordinator Freddy Friedman gives his blessings to a new traffic pattern at the transfer station. photo by John Schreiber

at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and Sundays and 3:00 p.m. Saturdays. — to accommodate those who want to get rid of their trash and get on with their day. A proposal to switch the Wednesday opening to Friday, presumably to avoid extra days of snow removal, was ditched, following a wave of pre-emptive complaints to the selectmen.

The imposition of the traffic circle has received mixed reviews. Among those in the school of “If it ain't broke, don't fix it,” the old way worked fine. “It's okay — just not sure we really needed it,” says Robert Twing, Jr. “I don't like it,” says Robert DeStefano. “It's slowing things down, and I don't think the area is big enough. I've been coming here for years and never had any problem.” For others,

the change works. “Safe and efficient,” says Trish Killeen. “Seems good,” says Dave Powers. “I just ask people to be patient with us,” says Mr. Friedman.

Down the road, Mr. Friedman would like to make the back side of the household waste compactor accessible. This would require building a lane behind the compactor, but it would double the capacity of this potential bottleneck. And there could be other changes. In the weeks leading up to the traffic cones, Mr. Friedman says he spent several days at other transfer stations, and he continues to analyze New Marlborough's. “I'm still in the process of trying to figure out exactly what happens. Then I'll address changes,” he says. “I'm open to ideas.” □

Additional reporting by Jodi Rothe

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

October 19: With all three members present, the Board turned again to the subject of the school district's budget assessment miscalculation. According to Chairman Michele Shalaby both Monterey and Egremont indicated at the most recent meeting of the Southern Berkshire School Committee's Finance Subcommittee that they are unwilling to pay more than what their actual assessment should have been. As reported last month, both towns were over-assessed a total of \$281,100, and, according to a proposal put forth by the Finance Subcommittee, at least some of that money was going to be used to pay down Sheffield's \$126,000 assessment deficit. Instead, by refusing to pay more than their share, Monterey and Egremont are effectively forcing Sheffield to call a special town meeting to get voter approval for an appropriation to pay the shortfall. Ms. Shalaby noted that no one from Sheffield's board was present at the meeting, so there's no indication of what that town's response would be to these developments. She said a meeting of the full School Committee is scheduled for Thursday, October 29, and that School Superintendent David Hastings is urging all five towns to attend since the subject of the budget assessments is going to be discussed again.

The Board received a request from WiredWest to send a letter to State Representative Peter Kocot in support of legislation enabling towns in the consortium to finance their broadband construction costs with a series of one-year notes, as opposed to financing the entire amount with a single long-term bond, notes that can be rolled over until they've paid off the entire debt. **The advantages, according to the letter, include lower overall interest rates, the ability to place the notes more easily with local banks, and reduced legal and bond issuing costs.** Although Selectman Nat Yohalem cautioned that there is a risk in going back to the debt market every year, rather than locking in a single low rate on a long-term bond, the Board agreed to sign the letter since it offers an additional financing option and doesn't obligate the Town to anything.

The Board received an email request from Representative William (Smitty) Pignatelli asking the towns in his district to add language to the Governor's Community Compact Agreement that expands the collaboration among towns to include public works, public safety, and human services. Originally, the compact was focused on promoting shared services

among school districts. The Board voted to authorize Town Administrator Mari Enoch to amend the agreement as proposed. Separately, the Board authorized Ms. Enoch to structure an agreement with other towns for sharing benefits of part-time town employees who also work for the other towns.

Land Trust Executive Director Martha Bryan and Board member Owen Hoberman appeared before the selectmen to say that the Land Trust would like something in exchange for the 8.4-acre parcel of land it's donating to the Town to expand the Lee Memorial Cemetery in Southfield — possibly a town-owned plot of land that could be turned into a community asset such as a garden or hiking trails. Selectman Tara White responded that, as far as she knows, the Town doesn't own any land that's suitable. "There's nothing that's vacant," she said. "Everything has something on it, a school, a library, the Highway Department garage." **As an alternative, Mr. Yohalem proposed that the Town contact property owners who own property abutting Land Trust land about donating it to the Land Trust.** "We could send out a joint letter saying donate some of your land, and in return you'll get a tax deduction while the Town will get land to expand the cemetery," he said, describing it as "a triple win."

Ms. Enoch reported that Treasurer Peter Gay, who with his wife, Maria, have sold their Aberdeen Lane house in Mill River and will be moving to Cape Cod, has resigned effective October 27. She has placed want ads and put out feelers to other towns to find his replacement. In the meantime, Assistant Treasurer and Town Clerk Kathy Chretien will handle payroll. In other updates, Ms. Enoch said the Highway Department received a Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association, or MIIA, grant for \$4,600 to purchase safety-related equipment, including chain saw chaps and flagging gear.

The Board voted to accept a bid of \$1,000 from Rydemore Heavy Duty Truck Parts of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, for a 1998 International dump truck the Highway Department no longer uses. Separately, the Board awarded a contract to supply propane to the Highway Department garage to Ormsbee Gas Company of Mill River, whose bid was lower than that of Osterman Propane, the only other bidder.

The Board again deferred approving the revised personnel policy to give it another read-through, after making additional changes to sections on severance pay, comp time, and the accumulation of vacation leave.

October 22: The Board met in joint session with the Finance Committee at 7:00 p.m. to share its goals for the 2016 fiscal year. As previously reported, these include developing a broadband direction for the Town, finishing revisions to the Town's personnel policies, and sharing with the Finance Committee what Ms. Shalaby described as "very preliminary results" of a five-year road-repair plan she is developing with Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring. Also on the agenda was a discussion of the town's financial policies, including guidelines for the use of debt, capital expenditures, and the use of reserves. This marks another step in Ms. Shalaby's efforts to formalize the Town's financial policies and procedures.

October 26: With all three selectmen present, the Board held a working session to begin developing a request for proposal (RFP) for selecting a system operator for the town's broadband network, assuming it is approved by the voters. Also present for the discussion were Richard Long and Tom Stalker, residents of the Hartsville New Marlborough Road, who have volunteered to help the Board with the effort. **As the selectmen have previously indicated, they want to provide voters with as much information as possible about the proposed network, including build-out costs, system operator, and subscriber costs, prior to holding a vote on the financing package next spring.** Mr. Long suggested they begin by issuing a request for information (RFI), rather than an RFP, to identify potential system operators before requesting bids on the system. "The parties that would respond to an RFI are likely to be the same people who'd later respond to an RFP," explained Mr. Long, who recently retired as president and chief financial officer of the Boston-based BSC Group, an engineering firm the Town has used in some of its bridge repair work. To get started, the Board has obtained a copy of an RFI developed by the town of Leverett, Massachusetts, a western Massachusetts town whose network went live earlier this year, as a model.

In addition, Mr. Yohalem said he will be sending

out a letter to other underserved towns to see if any of them are interested in collaborating on a common RFI, which, as Mr. Long pointed out, is likely to generate more interest on the part of system operators because it represents a potentially bigger opportunity. In the meantime, the selectmen agreed they would start funneling ideas for the RFI to Mr. Stalker, who will be putting the document together. Mr. Stalker currently works in marketing for BSC.

Next on the agenda was a discussion of Governor Charlie Baker's call for public comment on the state's regulatory codes — 2,200 rules and regulations — with a view to updating or eliminating unnecessary and costly requirements. "What they're looking for," noted Ms. Enoch, "are comments on specific regulations, who they affect, how they should be changed and why." She said the administration will also be holding "listening sessions" across the state, including one in Great Barrington at the Mason Public Library November 24, focusing on public administration and finance. The Board agreed to set aside time at a future meeting to identify five or six key examples of where the town has run into regulation-related problems.

November 2: The meeting was convened at 6:00 p.m. with two selectmen in attendance and Chairman Shalaby conferencing in by phone. The first order of business was a special permit hearing for Gail Belmuth of 204 Norfolk Road who was seeking permission to erect a non-conforming barn on the site of a previous barn that had been demolished because it was structurally unsound. The new barn, like the one it replaces, does not comply with the side and rear yard requirements of the Protective Bylaws. With the only abutter present supporting her application, the Board approved the permit. The Board also approved the hiring of Nicholas Felix as a part-time police officer. Mr. Felix, a full-time officer for the town of Sheffield, will cover weekend shifts beginning this week.

In broadband-related developments, Mr. Yohalem

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said he has finally gotten a cost estimate from Massachusetts Broadband Institute of \$4.7 million for construction of the network and that \$1.7 million of that amount will be covered by a grant from the state. That would leave around \$3 million for the Town to finance. He said the estimate covers both public and private roads. It also includes the first 150 feet of driveway. Beyond that there is a \$4-per-foot charge for what Mr. Yohalem referred to as "aerial construction," using existing utility poles, or \$3-to-\$4-per-foot to run the fiber underground through existing conduit. If existing conduit isn't suitable for fiber, the cost is \$15 a foot. Meanwhile, Tom Stalker said he has prepared a twenty-page draft of a Request for Information for the selectmen's review and comment.

Librarian Deb O'Brien appeared before the Board to discuss a drainage problem at the library she said has occurred every winter since the library was built in 1999. **As she described it, when snow melts or there's freezing rain, water runs down the walkway and floods the entryway to the building.** She proposed, as a temporary fix, that local carpenter Tony Pontier build a twenty-inch-high wooden wall down both sides of the walkway and across the front of the building to divert water from the entryway. "If it works, then we can come up with something a little more attractive than pressure-treated plywood," she said, adding that the anticipated cost would be \$1,300 to \$1,600. The Board approved.

Solid Waste Coordinator Freddy Friedman updated the Board on the changes he has been making at the transfer station and other planned improvements. He said the new one-way traffic flow appears to be working. "Most people are complimenting us on it," he said, "although we've had some bumps in the road. But hopefully we'll get it all worked out." He said he would like to move up the operating hours by an hour and open on Friday rather than Wednesday. "Pushing the three days together," he said, should save winter

plowing and sanding money, adding that transfer station attendants Alvin Stalker and Bob Litchfield like the idea. The Board gave him its tentative approval to implement the changes starting Friday, January 8, depending on the feedback they receive from the community. (For a story on the changes, see "One Way", page 5.)

Chairman Shalaby reported that the financial fallout from school district's budget assessment problem is complicating the Town's efforts to set its tax rate for the current fiscal year. The School Committee — after two tries — has finally certified a new budget that incorporates \$216,700 in budget cuts, effectively eliminating New Marlborough's \$40,000 assessment deficit. But that still leaves Sheffield with a \$126,000 deficit, and the School Committee is asking the town to hold a special town meeting seeking voter approval of an appropriation to pay it. But if the voters reject the appropriation or the town chooses not to hold a vote, then the school budget after forty-five days — according to a legal interpretation by the School District's counsel — will revert to its original version, leaving New Marlborough with its original \$40,000 deficit. So the Board must now decide which version of the school budget to use in setting its tax rate for the year.

Although Ms. Shalaby said she would prefer to see a tax rate that's based on the original, higher budget number, the one that was approved by the voters last May, the state's Department of Revenue (DOR) has advised the town to use the new, lower budget number. **Ms. Enoch isn't sure the DOR fully understands the fluidity of the situation here. "I think the important thing is A) obviously respecting what the tax payers voted on, and B) using a number that the DOR is going to accept,"** she said, **"But I want to make sure they know what we're doing and that it's okay with them."** Fortunately, the town has until the end of the month to set the rate.

Separately, Ms. Shalaby said that Sheffield Board

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Chairman Nadine Hawver would like the support of the New Marlborough Board in seeking further cuts to the school district's budget. The Board agreed to write a letter to that effect to School Superintendent David Hastings.

November 9: With all three selectmen present, the Board voted to award all but one of the heavy equipment rental contracts to Joe Wilkinson Excavating of Sheffield. The other contract, for a \$150-per-day bucket truck, went to Fields Tree Service of Sandisfield, as did the contract for the Town's tree work.

Asked by the state's Department of Transportation for comment on a scope-of-work proposal for replacing the one-lane wooden bridge just west of Umpachene Falls Park, the Board will inform DOT that it would prefer another wooden bridge, but at the very least, one that "maintains the rural character of the area." The \$732,000 replacement, scheduled for 2020, will be paid for by the state.

After interviewing two candidates for the recently vacated treasurer's position, the Board voted to offer the job to Danielle Delaney-Morin of Becket, who holds an accounting degree from Southern New Hampshire University and currently works as clerk/treasurer for the Sherwood Forest Road Maintenance District in Becket. The position carries an \$18-an-hour salary and would involve seventeen to eighteen hours of work per week.

Mr. Yohalem reported on a meeting he and Ms. Shalaby attended in Becket last week hosted by WiredWest. The purpose of the meeting, which was attended by other area towns including Sandisfield, Tolland, and Becket, was to review a draft of a proposed WiredWest operating agreement. Mr. Yohalem said his principal objection to the document is that WiredWest, and not the towns, would own the network, "even though it's the towns that are paying for it." He explained that under the terms of the agreement each town would convey its broadband system to WiredWest in exchange for an ownership interest in the consortium proportionate with the amount of its "contribution," or investment in the network, primarily its build-out costs.

Mr. Yohalem's stated preference would be for the towns to own the systems and license WestWired to operate them. That way the towns would not be vulnerable, say, to a bankruptcy filing by WiredWest where the creditors could end up owning the systems. Instead, the licensing agreement would include a termination clause, such that if there is a bankruptcy, "the license would simply end and the systems would remain in the towns' hands." Mr. Yohalem noted that, while WiredWest representatives "were vehemently opposed to this," counsel for MBI, who was also present, "also had qualms" about the ownership arrangement and that her board would have to review it. As Ms.

Shalaby noted, MBI has to approve any agreements of this kind, adding, "If MBI doesn't say it's okay, then it will never go."

Other concerns that came up during the session, according to Mr. Yohalem, involved the effective date of the agreement, which WiredWest agreed, at his request, to move from early January to June 30, 2016; the length of the lock-in period, that is, how long towns have to remain in the consortium; and whether or not town representatives, board members, and executive board members would be compensated, and if so, by how much. He said WiredWest will review these issues and come back with another draft of the agreement.

By unanimous vote, the Board finally adopted the revisions to the Town's personnel policy and will

distribute a finalized version of the document to all Town employees. The Board also approved a tentative schedule for completing this year's budget. Working backward from the presumed date of the Annual Town Meeting of May 2, 2016, the Board decided budget requests from Town department heads will be due January 8, and that a finalized budget will be adopted on or around April 7.

The Board confirmed by voice vote its previous approval of the new operating hours for the transfer station, as proposed by Solid Waste Coordinator Freddy Friedman, but rescinded its approval to switch the Wednesday opening to Friday. So, effective January 1,

A Cool Million



New Marlborough has been awarded \$1 million to "improve safety and access to 2.8 miles of Clayton Mill River Road through improvements to pavement and drainage, as well as a reconfiguration of the Konkapot Road intersection," says a press release from MassWorks, the state agency that awards money for infrastructure repair in the commonwealth. "These will insure that the road remains open for residents, school buses, and emergency services." The grant application, written by Administrative Secretary Sharon Fleck, Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring, and Selectman Nat Yohalem, was one of just ten awarded for road, bridge, and infrastructure improvements to western Massachusetts towns. According to the terms of the grant, the work must be completed in 2016. Permitting, according to Ms. Fleck, will begin next April.

the transfer station will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Wednesdays and Sundays, and from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

Chairman Shalaby reported on a meeting the Board attended last week in Tolland to discuss a strategy for getting the state to take over maintenance of Route 57. Also attending were representatives from Granville, Sandisfield, Monterey, and Tolland, other towns through which Route 57 passes. She said the towns agreed they would continue to do the winter plowing and roadside mowing, "but any kind of reconstructive work we want the state to take over," Ms. Shalaby said. As the Board noted at an April meeting, the New Marlborough portion of Route 57 will need major reconstruction in the next few years at a cost that's likely to be in the millions of dollars. The towns agreed to meet again December 2 to discuss how best to make their case to the legislature. In the meantime, they will compile profile data for each town along the route to include population, annual town budgets, number of road miles, bridges, and culverts, and the number of Route 57 miles.

November 16: With all three selectmen present, the Board discussed a request from Highway Superintendent Loring to have the state Department of Transportation take over not just reconstruction work but also maintenance of Route 57. In a note to the Board, Mr. Loring pointed out the state has a "much larger snow removal budget and more manpower" and can keep its roads "treated and clearer and have them safer for travel sooner." He said he assigns one truck and sometimes two just to do Routes 57 and 183 during winter storms and that he uses more than \$30,000 of salt annually on Route 57 alone. **Having the state take over all maintenance would save "wear and tear on equipment, overtime, and salt,"** he said, adding, **"I don't think the request would be unreasonable."** After some discussion, the Board agreed it would go for the "whole thing," and that

its offer to do the plowing and mowing, would only be a "fallback position."

The Board reviewed a twenty-page draft of an RFI, put together by Tom Stalker to identify potential system operators for the proposed broadband network. The Board said it will need another week to finalize the document, after which it will be posted on the state's procurement website, the Goods and Services Bulletin, and sent directly to a number of system operators, including Crocker Communications, Matrix Design Group, Fiber Connect, and Axia, all of whom have indicated an interest in bidding on the network. Respondents will have until January 4 to return completed RFIs to the Town.

Prue Spaulding made her annual presentation to the Board on her work as the Town's Animal Inspector. She said she inspected forty-nine barns in the past year, making sure the farm animals housed in them have food, water, and adequate shelter, as required by the state's Department of Agriculture. She stressed the need for protecting farm animals from the threat of rabies, and reported that the town has a small population of "retired" farm animals, animals though no longer productive, whose owners "keep them around anyway and take care of them." They include a pig, at least nine cows, six horses and a twenty-year-old ox. **"I think it's kind of nice we have homes for retired animals here,"** she said.

Chairman Shalaby reported that Denielle Delaney-Morin turned down the offer of the Treasurer's position. She apparently wanted to work remotely from home at least part of the time, which was not how the Board envisioned the job. The Board will renew its search for a treasurer and in the meantime will consider restructuring the job to make it a more flexible position with fewer hours.

The Board then voted to go into executive session to discuss legal strategy regarding an insurance claim against the Town. □

Peter Schuyten



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THE SCHOOL BUDGET IMPASSE: A PROPOSAL

The school budget mess can be fixed — if the School Committee agrees to re-certify a new, slimmed down budget every forty-five days until next April. This was the gist of a report from Board Chairman Michele Shalaby on a November 10 meeting of the selectmen from the five school district towns, arranged by state Rep. Smitty Pignatelli and held last week at the Sheffield Senior Center. The proposal hinges on a provision in the Regional School Agreement that says if the School Committee makes a change to the budget that raises the assessment of any of the five district towns, that town must call a special town meeting within forty-five days to approve the increase.

As recently reported, there was such a change: Sheffield is facing a \$126,000 assessment deficit (originally \$240,000 but reduced by a series of budget cuts enacted by the School Committee) due to an accounting error on the school district's part. Sheffield's Board, however, has been adamant that the school district look to additional budget cuts, not Sheffield's taxpayers, to pay down the deficit, and it has opposed even considering the scheduling of a special town meeting. Thus the impasse. The selectmen's proposal, said Ms. Shalaby, is intended to preserve the latest budget cuts without compelling Sheffield to call a special town meeting.

The meeting began with a presentation of a letter received by Sheffield's Board of Selectman earlier in the day from Vito Valentini, chairman of the School Committee's Finance Subcommittee. It stated that he, Superintendent David Hastings, and Business Administrator Bruce Turner had uncovered additional

budget savings amounting to \$69,000 that would further reduce the Sheffield deficit to \$89,000. In response, both to preserve this latest reduction and insure that \$89,000 is the maximum excess assessment Sheffield would have to pay, the five towns are asking the School Committee 1) to agree to reexamine the budget on a monthly basis and incorporate any further savings, no matter how small, and 2) to certify a new budget every forty-five days until April 1, 2016, when a final budget can be approved by the School Committee.

That way Sheffield can continue to pay its original assessment based on the school budget that was certified last March, while the other four district towns would pay revised assessment amounts based on the most recently certified budget. (New Marlborough's new assessment would result in a credit of close to \$20,000.) In return, Sheffield would agree, if it becomes necessary, to convene a special town meeting immediately prior to its annual town meeting in May to address any remaining assessment deficit in the final school budget. (The need for any earlier town meeting is eliminated by the budget re-certification every forty-five days.)

The towns have engaged Pittsfield attorney Richard M. Dohoney to draw up a formal memorandum of agreement that can be signed by the towns and presented to the School Committee. In addition, Rep. Pignatelli said he would run the final agreement by the appropriate state officials to insure that it passes muster. One question remains: Will the School Committee will buy it? □

Peter Schuyten

THE VIEW FROM THE BOARD

*"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better. It's not." — Dr. Seuss*

As volunteers are well aware, the work can be demanding, burdensome, tedious, slow-moving, unappreciated, and even criticized. But we do it because we understand it is intrinsic to our way of life; that the accomplishments are rarely community-changing and the work certainly isn't glamorous, but that we are participating in a collective act that is vital to our society. Our aid organizations, schools, emergency responders, arts, politics and business communities would not be the present force they are without volunteerism. Volunteers hold the spirit of our community.

Our lives seem to get busier by the minute, and free time, a precious commodity, is disappearing. Filling it with volunteer work is just not an option for many New Marlborough residents. As a result, the first person an organization looks to for help is another volunteer. But as these people already know, giving time to your

community has its own rewards. You'll discover feelings of community, pride, satisfaction, and accomplishment. So this is a plea to those who aren't yet serving: Please contact me and let's find a place for you.

We have roles to fill on several boards and commissions, and we can never have enough volunteers in the ranks of our vital first responders (see story, page 12). Email me at mshalaby@newmarlboroughma.gov or call me at home 229-9050. □

Michele Shalaby, Chairman, Board of Selectmen

SNOWBIRDS!

If you are going away this winter, please let us temporarily change your mailing address.

Reach us easily at 413-229-2369, or drop a note to P.O. Box 243, Southfield, MA, 01259, or email us at deeuell@yahoo.com. Let us know when you're leaving, what your temporary/winter address will be, and, if possible, when you expect to return.

WHO YA GONNA CALL? (PART 1)

by Larry Burke

Every so often *The New Marlborough 5 Village News* likes to give our readers a little refresher on the state of our emergency services in New Marlborough. As one of our staff members pointed out recently, we should all know who the wonderful people are in our community who give freely of their time in order to render aid when troubles arise. In this issue we would like to focus on the group of volunteers who handle medical emergencies in town. In January, we would like to concentrate on the fire personnel.

First, though, just a little background on the various entities that constitute our emergency services – it's a little complicated for such a small town! There are actually four organizations in the mix, but, to simplify things a bit, only one of them, New Marlborough Fire & Rescue, does the hands-on, tactical response. Two of the other three – the New Marlborough Fire Company and the New Marlborough Volunteer First Responders – focus more on the auxiliary functions, supporting the mission of the firefighters and emergency medical technicians in a variety of ways, such as the recent fundraising and community-building event held at the firehouse in Southfield. (See page 16) The fourth entity is the New Marlborough Volunteer Emergency Services Fund, or ESF, and its primary focus for the past few years and into the future is the raising of money to pay off the debt on the new firehouse. All three organizations have non-profit status, so citizens who desire to support one group in particular with tax-deductible contributions may do so.

Getting back to New Marlborough Fire & Rescue, and more specifically to the people who are likely to administer medical care in emergencies here in town, these are a precious few. According to Maureen Krejci, who is newly installed as chief medical officer, there are currently nine EMTs on the rolls. Along with Maureen, they are Ed Harvey, who has the rank of captain and



who is the training officer; Michelle Dawson, who is the infection control and safety officer; Joe Krejci; Matt Wright; Neil Crawford; Graham Frank; Bill Gillette; and Alexis Preisendorf. These folks, the frontline of New Marlborough's emergency medical response, are under the overall command of Fire Chief Chuck

Loring, and are backed up by the firefighting members of NMF&R, as well as by the non-tactical members of the First Responders.

Given that most of these volunteers have day jobs in Great Barrington or elsewhere, the ambulance is not always able to respond with the required minimum of two EMTs, in which case the call is covered by New Marlborough's mutual aid partner, the Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad. Nighttime calls are currently easier to cover by NMF&R personnel, but guaranteeing that at least two EMT's will be available to answer the call every night of the year is a source of stress for such a small squad. Consequently, as Maureen Krejci points out, recruiting new members is of the highest priority, but she is well aware of just how difficult it is to ask New Marlborough citizens with full-time jobs, sometimes with several jobs, to take on the added responsibility of training and responding as a volunteer EMT. The problem of daytime coverage has been a concern for a number of years now; one solution that has been voiced would be the hiring of on-call EMTs or paramedics, but the cost may be more than taxpayers are willing to bear.

On the positive side of the ledger, Ms. Krejci reports that the level of cooperation between the Fire & Rescue and the Police Department is extremely high, due, in no small part, to Chief Graham Frank's close participation with the Rescue Squad. Currently both the Town's police cruiser and ambulance are housed in the old firehouse, with a move of the police office space from Town Hall to the new firehouse being planned for the near future. Another good development, going back to the stress of being a small squad, is that the overall volume of calls for the ambulance has declined somewhat in the last year, as the Southern Berkshire Squad

From top, Maureen and Joe Krejci, Michelle Dawson, Neil Crawford, Ed Harvey, and Matt Wright.

photos by Ed Harvey

is now fielding three ambulances and a larger roster of EMTs, which results in New Marlborough Rescue 1 being summoned less frequently on mutual aid calls to Great Barrington.

The range of medical calls that New Marlborough Fire & Rescue responds to is typical, in some cases sadly so, of small rural towns in New England – motor vehicle crashes, drug- and alcohol-related emergencies, severe cases of depression, medical conditions of an aging population, fire scene support – the list is long and varied. Training to handle any situation begins with an intensive EMT course over the period of several months. Once the certification is achieved, an EMT must take a minimum of ten hours per year of continuing credits in

specific subjects, along with a monthly training session at the Southfield firehouse. Maureen Krecji emphasizes the gratification that she and many of her cohorts experience in giving back to the town of New Marlborough. She also urges townspeople who may not want to get into the down and dirty, tactical aspects of the job to nevertheless consider supporting by becoming members of the First Responders, or the Fire Company, or to contribute to the efforts of the ESF. If you want to find out more about our critically important medical responders, you may reach Maureen Krecji or Michelle Dawson, President of the New Marlborough Volunteer First Responders, at nmrescue@gmail.com. □

NEWS FROM THE COUNCIL ON AGING

The New Marlborough firemen gave a warm welcome to the New Marlborough Council on Aging on October 23, when seniors celebrated fall by sharing a delicious luncheon provided by the Southern Berkshire Regional School District. Seniors were reminded of a number of programs available to them: the Southern Berkshire Elderly Transportation Corporation for weekly errands and doctor visits; the Fuel Assistance Program administered by the Berkshire Community Action Corporation for those who qualify; the Wellness Aerobic Swim at the Kilpatrick Athletic Center, which is offered Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays for just \$3 a session; and the Massachusetts Food Bank, which delivers food to those of all ages on the first Tuesday of each month from noon to 1:00 p.m. at Community Health Programs on Stockbridge Road.

Marsha Harvey, reporting on a Medicare fraud conference she attended in September, urged seniors to guard their Medicare number, keep detailed medical records, scrutinize their Medicare bills, and report any



Seniors were treated to a luncheon at the Fire House.

errors. Sonrisa O'Toole from Berkshire Health Systems invited the seniors to take advantage of programs on diabetes, falling prevention, and monitoring of high blood pressure.

Seniors are invited to enjoy a holiday luncheon and a special Christmas program put on by the Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) on December 3 at Mount Everett High School in Sheffield from

noon to 2:30 p.m. A reservation can be made through the Sheffield Senior Center at 229-7022. And, as always, the SBRSD's culinary department welcomes diners every Wednesday from 11:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. to enjoy a lunch of soup, salad, choice of entrees, and dessert. The cost is only \$8.00.

If seniors need help in accessing any of these programs, the members of the New Marlborough Council on Aging are always more than willing to help. Call Prue Spaulding at 229-8407, Marsha Harvey at 229-9965, or Joan Hotaling at 229-8575. We are now looking forward to our spring luncheon to be held in May. □

Marsha Harvey



**Starting early 2016:
Community Police Advisory Committee
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See Town Clerk Kathy Chretien. Town Hall, 229-2878

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

November 14: With Ned Wilson, John Schreiber, and Freddy Friedman in attendance, first up on a busy agenda was Ben Naylor from Berkshire Engineering for Sheryl Zagoria of 814 Brewer Hill Road. Mr. Naylor presented a Request For Determination (RDA) to permit a Title 5 upgrade to a failed septic system. He explained that the site was constrained and that the proposed septic site location was by default the best option. Referring to a site visit earlier in the day, the Commission agreed, giving a negative determination, meaning the work was approved as submitted, on the condition that the site be mitigated to include seven shrub plantings.

Next, Simon Hildt from Stantec Consulting requested an amendment to the Notice of Intent (NOI) issued June 2014 to the New Marlborough Highway Department for work on the bridge on Clayton Mill River Road. Mr. Hildt recommended, upon further consideration, replacing the previously proposed bridge structure with a precast concrete box culvert. Having visited the site that morning, the Commission understood the merits of the amendment and approved the request.

Brent White of White Engineering appeared next for Michael Levi of 170 Adsit Crosby Road. Mr. White said that his client wanted to extend the footprint of an existing screened porch by ten feet. He explained that helical techno posts would be used in construction. The Commission noted that the work was in the buffer zone but agreed that it would not alter the wetland resource. The permit was approved as presented.

Next, Jane Tant of 331 Hadsell Street, accompanied by Al Thorpe of Accord Engineering, presented her plan to add an attached garage to her existing residence. The Commission had consulted with Mark Stinson of the state Department of Environmental Protection regarding this RDA. It was agreed that the proposed work was permissible as a Redevelopment Project in a previously disturbed area even though the work was subject to regulations for work within 200 feet of the Umpachene River. The Commission requested that Ms. Tant mitigate the work by planting six to eight native plantings in the riparian zone to the river. The permit was approved.

Mike Parsons of Kelly Granger and Parsons appeared next with an RDA for Sandra Levine of 21 Hartsville Mill River Road. Mr. Parsons explained that the existing septic system had failed and that the house was going on the market requiring a Title 5 septic upgrade. For the five bedroom residence the new design required two new septic tanks and a forty chamber leach field. The Commission agreed that the proposed septic location was overall a significant improvement in terms of the wetlands regulations. The permit was approved.

Next Tim Herigan, the contractor working at Werner

Kunz' residence at 1574 Hartsville New Marlborough Road, came before the Commission after being invited to the meeting to discuss the current construction of a garage. At issue was whether the construction, which did not have a permit through the Conservation Commission, was within 200 feet of the Konkapot River. After consulting several topographic maps, the parties agreed that Mr. Herigan should measure the distance at the site and notify the Commission. If the structure is within 200 feet to the river, any further work would require permitting.

After completing the formal agenda, discussion moved on to new business. Dr. Schreiber reported that he had visited the site of Berkshire Mountain Spring Water to clarify a complaint issued to the Commission that the business was drilling new wells in a wetland area. Dr. Schreiber asked that his Commission members also visit the site before any determination was decreed.

Forester James Kelly then asked the commission to comment on work planned at the Buggy Whip Factory for owner Ned Odegaard. Mr. Kelly explained that he proposes to use an approved chemical foliar spray treatment to control the phragmites at the property. The Commission advised that he submit an RDA. Mr. Kelly also noted that he would be coming before the Commission with a permit to install a foot trail over a brook for Mark Walker of New Marlborough Monterey Road. The Commission advised that he research the threshold for impact and whether an RDA or a NOI would be required.

Tom Scheffey of New Marlborough Monterey Road appeared next to discuss the need to lower the water level and repair a dam at his property. The Commission allowed that all permitting for dam work should be directed to the state Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Lastly Michael Nahmias of the Lake Buel area appeared before the Commission to express his concerns about the reduced water level on the lake. He gave evidence of what he perceived to be part of the problem and asked that the Commission further review the activity. The Commission agreed to notify the Lake Buel Restoration District via Paula Hatch, a formal official of the organization, to ask for clarification of the activity.

Finally the mail was reviewed. Two Forest Cutting Plans, one by Weinstein Realty for work on Route 183, and one by Josh Labshere for work on Leffingwell Road, were submitted. Next the Commission agreed that if the work involved in the Special Permit before the Board of Selectmen for Gail Belmuth of 204 Norfolk Road is within a regulated area the applicant would need to come before the Commission. The next meeting was scheduled for December 12. □

Martha Bryan

THE PLANNING BOARD'S NEW MANTRA: KEEP IT SIMPLE

The Planning Board has spent the last six months listening, reaching out to the community to understand what New Marlborough residents want. It has solicited feedback at the transfer station and the library; met with the Fire Department; and reviewed commentary from former selectmen and current Board member Tara White. The Planning Board has also sought guidance from community leaders and invited Chuck Loring, in his roles as both fire chief and highway superintendent, to attend a November meeting to discuss building setbacks. On the schedule ahead are a proposed business breakfast to be held at the Firehouse; a meeting with the School Committee; and a meeting with the chair of the Historical Commission, Helen Liveten. Response from the community has been loud and clear: Keep it simple.

This advice is aimed at any possible changes, as the Board revisits the Town's Protective Bylaws, rejected in October 2013, to see what might be worth a second look. With a reorganization last May — life-long resident Mark Carson was added to the Board; Holly Morse was appointed chair, Charlie Parton vice-chair — and the assistance of Brian Domina of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Board has narrowed its focus

to a single facet of the Protective Bylaws: a revision to allow for different dimensional standards for the lots in the villages, thereby matching Bylaws to the actual settlement patterns. The current Protective Bylaws, written in 1966, specify that any change to a non-conforming structure in a village requires a special permit. With the exception of New Marlborough Village, more than fifty percent of all village properties are non-conforming.

Ideally, villages and small towns create a pedestrian-friendly outdoor space. New England villages have ever been so — buildings gathered along a main street or around a common green. Today's Bylaws prevent the continuation of this pattern. In response to community input, the Board seeks to bring forward a simple, single-focus proposal that will promote, rather than prevent, traditional village settlement patterns in New Marlborough.

Comments and questions are most welcome. Voicing concerns early allows the Board to bring a well-refined proposal to Annual Town Meeting. □

Holly Morse

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THANKS FROM A STUDENT TROOPER

Christian Wells of Mill River thanked members of the Harold D. Rood American Legion Post 350 for sponsoring his attendance at a week-long Student Trooper Program in New Braintree, Massachusetts, in July. The program is a cooperative effort of the American Legion Department of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts State Police Academy. Its purpose is to provide young people with first-hand experience in police work and to give them an opportunity to consider law enforcement as a career.

Christian came to Post 350's November Legion meeting to assure Legion members that the program offers a



From left, Courtney Turner, Heather Atwood (Christian's mother), Ann Riou, and Christian Wells.

valuable experience. Pleased with the successful completion of a very challenging week at the academy, Christian placed the highest value on the confidence he gained through the academy training. Christian's mother, Heather Atwood, made special note of the program's leadership-building effectiveness.

Post 350 usually sponsors one male or female high school student each summer, fifteen to seventeen years old and in good academic standing. Preference is for a New Marlborough resident. The application process begins with the high school guidance counselor. □

Ann M. Riou, Adjutant, Post 350

photo by Don Johnson

SPIRITED FELLOWSHIP

More than 100 guests gathered at the Firehouse in Southfield November 14 to taste wine and cheese and enjoy the company of their fellow townspeople. It was the second annual fall wine-tasting hosted by the New Marlborough Volunteer First Responders to raise scholarship funds for college-bound family members of the First Responders. Food and beverage was provided free of cost by a group of highly civic-minded businesses, including: Domaney's, Les Trois Emme Winery, Cantina 229, Big Elm Brewery, Meat Market, Berkshire Mountain Distillers, Southfield Store, Mario's, and Aegean Breeze, "and a big thanks to Gedney farm, which provided a stunning array of food," says Maureen Krejci, a First Responder who helped organize the event. "We extend our gratitude to all those who generously donated and to the community for their support," adds Ms. Krejci. □

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Herbert W. Eichstedt III
Jason W. Eichstedt

Because of a computer malfunction, we are unable to publish the names of new contributors to the 5 Village News. A complete list will appear in the January issue.

CHRISTMAS AT SOUTHFIELD CHURCH

Our daylight is dwindling, the darkness of our nights enfolding us more and more each day. The candlelight of our menorahs, advent candles, and Christmas trees shine to remind us that each of us is to serve as light for those struggling in darkness. Though you will be reading this article days after Thanksgiving, I am writing it to you weeks before, pondering the gratitude I have for the Southfield Church and the community in which it stands, and for all the "lights" who, though not parishioners of our church in the traditional sense, have joined our efforts to provide support to those who are in need. I'm thinking of all the canned foods and soups we've carted to Old Parish for the Sheffield Food Pantry, the anonymous gifts of turkeys and Christmas presents donated to us to pass on to struggling families, the mountains of coats, scarves and blankets we've hauled to the community center, the monetary donations at our concerts that both support budding artists and let friends and neighbors enjoy music they might not otherwise experience, and the gifts that enable us to support Volunteers in Medicine, Construct, Sheffield Food Assistance Program, and Hearts of the Father (which we will be doing again this year).



And so as darkness envelopes us all and winter's white stuff waits in the wings, I'm reminded of the portly gentlemen who insinuates himself into Scrooge's dreary counting house and attempts to impress upon the old miser how during "this festive season of the year" we step up for a month-long effort to bring us all together in community to enjoy each other's company, raise awareness and raise some additional funds for our neighbors in need. As Scrooge's portly intruder implores, "We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices." Please join us.

Holiday Market: On Saturday, December 5, from 10:00

a.m. to 3:00 p.m., thirteen local artisans, crafters, food makers, and gift purveyors will be on hand offering up their unique creations for your holiday giving. The table fees the vendors have donated, along with the money raised by our hot drink and cookie sales, will directly support our mission giving. Your support of our vendors will encourage them to return for future markets.

The Berkshire Hillsmen: Having performed this summer at Tanglewood and recently at the Red Lion Inn, this men's chorus will bring holiday cheer to the Southfield Church Hall, December 13 at 4:00 p.m. Founded in 1957, The Berkshire Hillsmen is a barbershop chorus based in Richmond, whose members come from all over the Berkshires and from Columbia County. The group recently captured the small chorus trophy at the Mountain Division held in Schenectady, New York. A reception will follow. Admission is free; a parting collection will be taken, which will support both the Hillsmen and our mission giving.

A festival of lessons and carols on Christmas Eve: As candlelight flickers around our beautiful sanctuary, walk with us into the mystery of Christmas as voices from all faiths join together to retell this ancient story through scripture and glorious songs, old and new. Throughout the service the congregation is invited to join with the choir, singing familiar, beloved carols. There's nothing more beautiful than when we sing "Silent Night" by candlelight. The service, which begins at 7:00 p.m. with the ringing of the bell, lasts approximately one hour. A missions offering will be collected during the service. Everyone is invited and wholly welcome.

We wish you all health, happiness, love, and peace. And, as Tiny Tim exclaims, "God bless us! God bless us, everyone!" □

Robert Olsen

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UPCOMING: Events Calendar for December and January

December 3: Seniors Luncheon, and a special Christmas program, Mount Everett High School in Sheffield, noon to 2:30 p.m.; reservations can be made through the Sheffield Senior Center at 229-7022

December 5: Southfield Church Holiday Fair, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

December 12: Holiday Fair at New Marlborough Central School, with a silent auction of dozens of valuable items, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

December 13: Berkshire Hillsmen, Barber-shop harmonies at the Southfield Church Hall, 4:00 p.m.

December 19: Santa visits the Meeting House, plus carol singing, led by Berkshire Children's Chorus director Julie Bickford, 5:30 p.m., refreshments and a wonderful way to start the holidays

January 17: Winter House Concert, Metropolitan Opera musicians playing clarinet, cello, and piano, perform the Brahms Clarinet Trio and other chamber works, in the warmth of a private home; call (413) 229-2785 for tickets — \$25, \$20 for members of the Village Association



DEALING WITH BEAVERS — AND ICE

The New Marlborough Highway Department has received funding from the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to assist the town in the purchase of "Beaver Deceivers." By discouraging beavers from blocking culverts (to them, a culvert is nothing more than a hole in a dam), these water flow devices humanely, non-lethally, and ecologically control beaver-related flooding. There are twelve locations throughout New Marlborough where these devices have already been installed. As a result, highway workers are able to spend less time dealing with blocked culverts. For more information see www.beaversolutions.com.

The Highway Department is preparing for winter and

would like to offer guidelines to residents. On school days, bus routes are treated by 6:30 a.m., before all other roads. During a rain storm, when road temperatures are below freezing, unpaved roads freeze instantly and the sand that is applied is quickly frozen over. It is impossible to keep unpaved roads passable at all times. We will treat roads during storms, and as soon as the storms are over. Good snow tires or studded snow tires (legal on Massachusetts roads from November through April) are a better choice than all-season tires. Tune in to the local weather forecasts and pay attention to changing conditions. □

Highway Superintendent Chuck Loring

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A WINTER HAIKU IN PHOTOGRAPHS

These photos were taken over the last few years at a beaver pond near my home. As winter approaches I think back to last year's endless cold and snow, but I also look forward to the season's quiet beauty and the frozen stillness of the pond in winter.

— Lee Backer
www.leebacker.com



NEIGHBORS



Pat Hall, who with her second husband, James "Toad" Hall, farmed the Goodnow property on Keyes Hill Road in Southfield for many years, passed away on October 24. Also a private housekeeper, Pat had five children, including Selectman **Tara White**, and a large extended family to which she was very close. She maintained friendships with many New Marlborough residents long after she moved to her home in Monterey following Toad's death in 1982. Her feisty but warm personality, blunt practicality, and straightforward approach will be missed by family and friends alike.



After two years of negotiations, the **M114 armored reconnaissance**



vehicle that had graced the front of the former American Legion Hall in New Marlborough for many years was finally moved to its new location. This was accomplished by the 304th Transportation Company of the Massachusetts Army Reserves from Westover Air Force Base, according to **Courtney Turner**, commander of American Legion Post 350. The large vehicle involved in the move was a hemmet, essentially a giant wrecker used to recover combat vehicles, according to Mr. Turner. The delay in moving the reconnaissance vehicle was caused, at least in part, by the number of Legion halls that had hoped to claim it. The winner: a combined American Legion and VFW Post in Rocky Hill, Connecticut.



On August 9, **Tom Stalker's** Troy-Bilt lawn tractor caught fire. Though the blaze was extinguished by the New Marlborough Fire Department, the tractor's burnt-out hulk sat for the rest of the summer in the front yard of Tom's house on the Hartsville New Marlborough Road, across from John Miller's barn. In mid-October, that lonely skeleton was joined by another. They remained companions until early November, when they departed, perhaps seeking warmer climes. □

Compiled by Barbara Lowman: deeuell@yahoo.com

OUR WILDLIFE NEIGHBORS

photos by Don Beauchamp



Donald Beauchamp wrote: "On October 13, while bike riding by Howden's farm in Ashley Falls, I spotted a northern **harrier** swooping and diving among the rows of corn, and then, by the river, an **American eagle** sitting in a dead elm. Two days later, in same tree, there was a **peregrine falcon**. He was too small for a clear photo. In *The Berkshire Edge* there is a story from October 18 about a young peregrine falcon found shot in Ashley Falls. It was gravely wounded and may never fly again. It was brought to the Sharon Audubon Center for treatment and later transferred to a rehabilitation center in Killingworth, Connecticut."

Donald continues: "In our Christmas tree lots I found a huge **white-tailed hornet's nest**."

"On November 6 in the waterway close by, I came upon several pairs of **mergansers**, and took this photo of a female. Many **house finches** are showing up at my bird feeder and this morning (November 17) I walked out across a nearby bridge to watch two pairs of **bluebirds** flying around in the wet area. I quickly set up a perch with a cup of dried mealworms. I now have to leave for work, but hope they will find it."



photo by Don Beauchamp



photos by Liz Goodman

This from **Anita Ormsbee Cook**: “On Tuesday, November 17, around 7:40 a.m. in my school bus traveling east on Route 57 just past the old Lake Buel general store, a **bull moose** came trotting out of some brush. Almost a near miss! It felt like we were nose to nose. It made a U-turn in the road and went back the way he came. What a thrill for the children and myself.”

Canaries exist in the wild, including, we should not be surprised to learn, the Canary Islands, where they are quite abundant. Canaries who live in New Marlborough, while perhaps wild at heart, nevertheless rely on the hospitality of humans to get along in our rougher climate. One such human is **Liz Goodman**, who has been hosting a pair of canaries in her greenhouse in **Clayton**. Recently she observed and recorded the arrival of new additions to the canary family.

Liz described the experience this way: “The nest building and hatching are my two favorite parts of watching my canaries, although hatching can be very nerve-wracking! My mama canary is very particular about where she chooses to build her nest. Canary breeders usually go through a specific process of transferring their birds to breeder cages and regulating the amount of light, etc., to successfully get their birds to breed. My canaries fly around the greenhouse and live a pretty natural existence. Mama canary builds her nest starting with mostly burlap string, adding grass and Spanish moss, and finishing off with soft dog hair and dryer lint. I place the nesting materials all over the greenhouse for her to find. Sometimes I find a few dried leaves and other materials in the nest. She has always made her nests high in the canopy of bougainvillea vines that grow in my greenhouse, and she lays one egg a day until she decides she is finished. The eggs hatch after about two weeks, but they don't hatch all at once – they seem to hatch in the order they are laid. This doesn't always work out very well for the latecomers because they have a difficult time competing for food with their older, stronger nest mates. Two weeks after they hatch they start to fledge, at which point I move the entire family into a large cage in my house. About two weeks later the babies are ready to be on their own, and I return mama and papa back to the greenhouse.”

Compiled by Larry Burke, lburke2@me.com

Editor's Note: We are pleased to welcome a new contributor to the NM5VN, and in particular to our reporting on the wildlife goings-on in our town. Angus Kerr lives in Mill River and is in Grade 8 at Mount Everett. For his initial installment, Angus looks for some of the answers to the dodgy behavior of gray squirrels, as critiqued by Ari Korpivaara in last month's issue.

WHY DID THE SQUIRREL CROSS THE ROAD?

By Angus Kerr

You're driving down Old County Road, admiring the last of fall's leaves when a squirrel dashes out in front of your car. You brake, but the inevitable happens, and the kamikaze squirrel is crushed beneath the tires. Vehicular squirrel calamities are common during fall, but have you ever stopped to wonder why?

Our local Eastern gray and red squirrels have a tendency to run back and forth when a car goes by, which is why most of these roadkills occur. However, the squirrels do not have a deliberate death wish. Long before roads and

vehicles were common, squirrels were mainly worried about predators like hawks, which would swoop down to make a kill. These mammals then developed ways of avoiding predators, by dodging unpredictably back and forth. Squirrels (and chipmunks) are still hardwired to act in this pattern, rather than staying still and waiting for the threat to pass. When a vehicle comes roaring down the road, a squirrel believes that it is a large predator, and, trusting its natural instincts, it quickly takes the evasive action that often results in disaster.

During fall, when acorns are plentiful along the roadsides, the squirrels are rushing to collect enough food to make it through the winter months. If it seems to you that there are more now than back in the summer, you are correct. The year-olds are also preparing for their first winter, and their inexperience often leads to their downfall.

So, when driving your car during these late fall days, don't just watch the leaves; also be on the alert for our furry kamikaze-friends. □

THE LOG

POLICE DEPARTMENT (SELECTED ENTRIES)

- Oct. 2 12:00 p.m. A Downs Road resident requests a no-trespassing order be issued to a Lake Buel neighbor who he has seen unscrewing lightbulbs on outdoor fixtures around his house (he also reported declining a peace offering of a bottle of wine)
- Oct. 3 7:30 p.m. No trespass order issued to the lightbulb-disabling neighbor
- Oct. 6 7:49 a.m. Vehicle roll-over in a marshy area off Caulkins Cross Road
- Oct. 7 2:23 a.m. Cow reported on Route 57 near Gedney Farm
- 1:00 p.m. The Mill River General Store reports no progress has been made on the repair of a railing on the ramp to the store, caused when a Berkshire Mountain Spring Water truck backed into it last June (the store has since been contacted by Berkshire Mountain's insurance company)
- 10:04 p.m. Mill River Southfield Road resident complains of noise from fireworks in the neighborhood
- Oct. 8 10:44 a.m. Resident reports electric wires down on Norfolk Road
- Oct. 9 5:32 p.m. Sheffield resident reports that his bike, stored at a friend's house on Canaan Southfield Road, is missing
- Oct. 11 1:36 p.m. Resident complains of vehicle ascending New Marlborough Hill Road at an excessive speed
- Oct. 22 7:55 a.m. Pick-up truck hits a telephone pole on Mill River Great Barrington Road
- 1:38 p.m. Two Chicopee, Massachusetts, hunters who had set up blinds and placed geese decoys at the edge of the beach area at York Lake are told to move away from buildings and roadways
- 3:31 p.m. Driver who had locked himself out of his vehicle while asking directions at the intersection of Route 57 and South Sandisfield Road assisted in re-entering his vehicle
- Oct. 23 5:22 a.m. East Hill Road resident, having barricaded himself in an upstairs bedroom, reports that an intruder armed with a knife has broken into his house; a subsequent investigation reveals no sign of forced entry
- Oct. 24 9:30 a.m. Canaan Southfield Road resident charges a neighbor with trespassing by using his driveway; the neighbor counters that it is a right-of-way, a claim that appears to have been upheld in Southern Berkshire District Court
- Oct. 26 1:00 p.m. Caller from Ormsbee's Garage reports that a check presented in payment for an auto inspection by a Lenox resident had bounced
- Oct. 28 11:41 a.m. Caller reports finding what he suspects is drug paraphernalia on the stone wall at the entrance to the Meeting House Gallery; an investigation reveals it is a glow stick
- Oct. 29 8:51 a.m. Motorcyclist complains of being chased by "guard dogs" as he passed a residence on Clayton Mill River Road
- Oct. 30 11:50 a.m. Mill River resident complains that cars are being parked on Hartsville Mill River Road where it passes New Marlborough Central School; school administrators advised to confine parking to one side of the road or on school property
- 2:45 p.m. Canaan Southfield Road resident alerts the Police Department that she intends to restore a 911 sign taken down, possibly by the neighbor with whom she shares her driveway

FIRE AND RESCUE

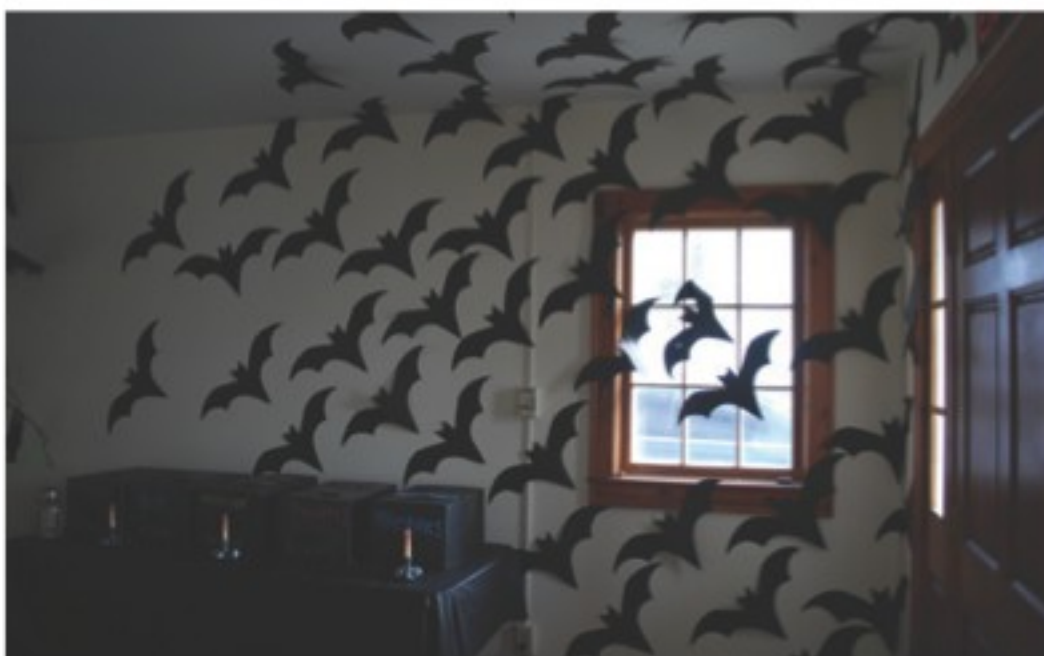
JULY:

- Oct. 1 9:27 a.m. Hotchkiss Road Fire Alarm
- Oct. 1 11:19 a.m. Hartsville Mill River Road Fire Alarm
- Oct. 3 11:56 a.m. Church Road Fire Alarm
- Oct. 3 5:47 p.m. Clayton Mill River Road Chimney Fire
- Oct. 4 10:55 a.m. Mutual Aid to Sandisfield Medical Call
- Oct. 6 2:05 p.m. Clayton Mill River Road Fire Alarm
- Oct. 9 10:47 a.m. Norfolk Road Power Line Down
- Oct. 10 7:01 p.m. Konkapot Road Fire Alarm
- Oct. 13 3:20 a.m. Norfolk Road Medical Call
- Oct. 17 Woodleigh Avenue Fire Alarm
- Oct. 20 4:00 p.m. Brewer Hill Road Medical Call
- Oct. 21 9:45 a.m. Mill River Great Barrington Road Medical Call
- Oct. 25 5:23 p.m. New Marlborough Monterey Road MVA/Medical
- Oct. 30 7:01 p.m. New Marlborough Hartsville Road Medical Call

SPOOKY — BUT SWEET

Severed fingers and giant spiders showed up, but party-goers young and old had a scary good time at the Halloween celebration at the Southfield Church Hall. □

Photos by Melissa Zdziarski



Rubbing Elbows with Working Artists

By Jane Burke

No, this is not the usual November review of a stellar student performance of a Shakespeare play in the Fall Festival. But yes, our school has distinguished itself again, this time in the visual arts. On November 5, the visual arts faculty at Mount Everett hosted a public gathering for the induction of eight



Outstanding art students are inducted into the Arts National Honor Society at Mount Everett High School.

outstanding art students into its newly formed chapter of the Arts National Honor Society. The guest speakers at the ceremony were internationally known photographers Sally Eagle and Dan Mead of Great Barrington. Their photographs are on display until December 19 in the new Community Gallery Space located adjacent to the Superintendent's office.

Mr. Mead was enthusiastic about the new venue for his work. "Until now," he said, "our educational shows have hung in private schools and museums. Mount Everett is the first public school to invite us to display our work and meet with students." The students' questions ranged from what is the protocol of photographing strangers on the street, to how are shots planned, to can you make a living as a photographer. They replied to the latter that there is no money in selling travel photos, just a lot of hard work and the new understanding gained in being in new places. They urged students to get out into the world to broaden their horizons.

The Community Gallery Space and National Art Honor Society would not have come about without the efforts of two dedicated high school visual arts faculty members, Kari Giordano and Stephanie Graham, who are always looking for ways to bring new opportunities

to their students. They pursued a grant from the Eagle Fund to install hardware and lighting for exhibiting local professional artists. They were inspired to establish a chapter of the art honor society to add rigor to the art program. On November 17 society members travelled to R&F Paints in Kingston, New York, for an encaustic

painting workshop led by Laura Moriarty.

In their classrooms they are pushing beyond the standard art syllabus. Kari has written a new curriculum she calls "Foundations of Design." She said, "Design is all around us, all of the time. It is about looking for a way to improve the world we live in. Through design thinking, students have the power to change their lives for the better. Being able to teach students these skills and give them effective tools of empowerment makes my job very satisfying."

Stephanie's passion for travel has led to her developing a course called Global Arts. She said, "I try to encourage students to constantly reinvent themselves and change how they see the world. I bring my love of art, travel, wellness, positive relationships, and community, and I go outside the classroom to reach students." So far she has taken students on art trips to Boston and New York City during the school year and Costa Rica and Italy during the summer. In her new course, students will be learning about how art depicts the identity of cultures around the world. Students will also be learning about how art can communicate reactions to current affairs. Fittingly, the photos on exhibit in the Community Gallery Space are portraits of people the photographers encountered India.



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HELP DRESS THE BAND

In the seven years Courtney English has been its director, the Mount Everett Golden Eagle Band has more than tripled in size. Currently, says Ms. English, “we are looking at having nearly 100 students in high school band plus another 60 in middle school band in the next four years.” The schools have received budget approval for the needed band instruments, but it's not enough for a marching band to sound like one; it also has to look like one. The bands need 150 new uniforms, which, at

roughly \$350 apiece, comes to \$52,500.

To augment recent donations of \$25,000 and \$5,000, the Music Boosters Club is planning a fund-raising spaghetti dinner, \$10 for adults, \$8 for children and seniors to be held at the Sheffield campus December 10, 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. The high school jazz band will be performing throughout the dinner.

Help them toot their horns — stylishly. □



NEWS FROM THE LAND TRUST

Ghosts vs. Garbage

When you go trick or treating, it's nice to have tidy roads to travel. On Halloween morning, the New Marlborough Land Trust did its part by dispatching more than two dozen volunteers — plus a ghost or two — on its fall cleanup. The crew found plenty of wrappers, bottles, and cans but not a single skeleton—in hiding, no doubt until after sundown. □

Among the volunteers; at right, Lily Sanzone, Martha Bryan, and Hazel Louw (and Awesome Possum) and lower right, Don Cook.



photo by Kristin Sanzone



photo by Maureen Hosford



photos by Martha Bryan

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The Bazaar of Bad Dreams, by Stephen King
A Banquet of Consequences, by Elizabeth George

Adult Nonfiction

War of Two: Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, and the Duel that Stunned a Nation, by John Sedgwick
Fear, Fathers, and Family: In Search of the American Dream, by Jon J Masters
Between the World and Me, by Ta-Nehisi Coates
The Three Year Swim Club: The Untold Story of Maui's Sugar Dutch Kids and Their Quest for Olympic Glory, by Julie Checkoway

Children's Fiction

I Really Like Slop!, by Mo Willems
Click, Clack, Ho! Ho! Ho!, by Doreen Cronin
Mother (Goose) Bruce, by Ryan T. Higgins

Children's Nonfiction

How To Cook in 10 Easy Lessons: Learn How To Prepare Food and Cook Like a Pro, by Wendy Sweetser
The 50 States: Explore the U.S.A. with 50 Fact-Filled Maps!, by Gabrielle Balkan
William Shakespeare: Scenes From the Life of the World's Greatest Writer, by Mick Manning

Young Adult Fiction

The Lunar Chronicles, by Marissa Meyer

Books on CD

Killing Reagan: The Violent Assault That Changed a Presidency, by Bill O'Reilly
The Muralist, by B.A. Shapiro
See Me, by Nicholas Sparks
Rosemary: The Hidden Kennedy Daughter, by Kate Clifford Larson

DVD

Boulevard *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*
Perfect Pitch 2 *Mr. Holmes*
Inside Out *Jurassic World*

PIRATES LAND AT THE MEETING HOUSE!

Families, in costumes, gathered at the Meeting House October 23 for the New Marlborough Library's annual Halloween Party. They were treated to a swashbuckling sea-faring adventure, featuring bold buccaneers, a mysterious map with a riddle, cursed treasure, a visit to an island that you can't see, a pirate ghost, and a magical journey to the bottom of the sea. The performance, by Nutshell Playhouse, featured Berkshire County actors.

Nutshell Playhouse pirates looking for trouble



Library Hours
Mon. Wed. Sat.
10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Tues. Fri.
1:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
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photo by Don Johnson

Contributions are needed to continue the paper!

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

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

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

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

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Martha Bryan, Jane Burke, Larry Burke, Kenzie Fields,
Barbara Lowman, David Lowman, 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

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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

PO Box 243, Southfield, MA 01259

5villagenews@gmail.com

SERVICE SECTOR 12/15

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- ♦ **Project Bee** meets on the last Saturday of every month from 10:30 until noon at the New Marlborough Library in Mill River. See www.projectbeeline.org or Project Bee on Facebook.
- ♦ **James Edelman:** General Contractor, Real Estate Sales. Best Results. Construction License #090773. Home Improvement Registration #152035. Real Estate Sales License #9086247. 413-528-0006 or cljvedelman@aol.com
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