



New Marlborough 5 Village News

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Clayton • Hartsville • Mill River • New Marlborough • Southfield



THE END OF AN ERA

Relinquishing a Thirty-Year Tour of Duty

by Joe Poindexter

Here is a riddle: What's three feet tall, twenty-nine miles long, and has 140 doors? Hint: Barbara and David Lowman have visited it about 8,000 times. Give up? Okay, additional hint: As of April 1, neither rain, nor snow, nor sleet, nor hail shall deter David or Barbara from embarking on their appointed rounds. After thirty years plying the back roads of New Marlborough, the Lowmans are giving up their Southfield, Massachusetts, postal delivery route.

They began delivering the mail of zipcode 01259, previously handled out of Canaan, in mid-August 1981, when the Postal Service decided that its vehicles would no longer cross state lines. (Actually, for about two weeks, Southfield mail came out of Great Barrington, which meant that, during that brief period, tiny Southfield had three different zipcodes!)

The Lowmans were a natural choice for the job. The Postal Service rented space in the Southfield Store, which the Lowmans then owned, so the couple didn't even have to step outdoors to sort the mail. "The commute to work wasn't all that onerous," says David dryly. Besides, they each considered the chance to get out of the store for a couple of hours a day a welcome respite - "our mental health break," Barbara calls it. They divied up driving days fifty-fifty.

While the length of the route hasn't changed, the number of mailboxes has: from ninety when they started to 140 today - in good weather it now takes two to two and a half hours to cover the route, plus two hours of sorting. But mailbox creep notwithstanding, it's been a surprisingly smooth three decades. "It's ironic," says Barbara, "that in the final months of our doing this, we are getting the worst snow storms and probably we'll soon see the worst mud season ever."

Their delivery vehicles have been regular Plymouths, Dodges, and, most recently, a Ford Taurus, with bench

seats so that they can slide across to the passenger's side to reach the boxes. Their one right-hand drive car was an American Motors Ambassador built for the USPS, but it had no radio, no heater, and the trunk would pop open at random moments. (David once used the Ambassador to deposit the previous day's receipts from the Southfield Store and, to the puzzlement of a bank employee, smartly lined up his window with the drive-by depository by backing up to it.)

Nowadays, however, the Lowmans are discovering that it is harder and harder to find even left-hand drive cars with bench seats. It's equally difficult to find and keep drivers who can spell the Lowmans for a day a week or for vacations. Then, too, they have reading to catch up on, day-trips they've been postponing, gardens to attend, and some windows at the back of the house that need repainting.

Or maybe April 1 will find the Lowmans serenely lounging on their back porch, luxuriating in their new-found time and the promise of a new spring.

At presstime, the USPS had not yet decided on the Lowman's replacement. □

Barbara and David Lowman sort the mail in preparation for the morning's delivery. Photo by Joe Poindexter.





THE PULSE

This Winter of Our...Content?

With icicle fangs stretching from ice-dammed rooftops to mountains of snow and a mid-February thaw in the forecast, I ventured forth to take the pulse of a community well acquainted with the challenges and pleasures of a real New England winter.

Stopping at the Mill River Store just before lunch, I asked proprietor Dave Herrick about the high points and low points of his winter so far. Skipping not one beat, he replied "High point's about forty-eight inches, low point hasn't happened yet."

Visiting the store to pick up some eggs, Camille Maye said that she and her two-and-a-half year old daughter Mia, "stayed home quite a bit, did lots of sledding," but found the snow not so good for snowman building. At a table back by the deli, I found Yan Capretz finishing the last three bites of his lunch. Ordinarily he'd be out in the woods logging most of the winter but, he explained, this year the deep snow inspired him to clean his basement, get his taxes done early, and order seeds. "This was a pile-buster," he said about his store of firewood, not a winter for having his usual leftovers in spring.

Back at the front counter I spoke with Jeff Snyder who lives in Sheffield but has worked at Kolburne School for the past seventeen years. "I actually enjoy winter, and like all the seasons." He added that the shoveling wasn't too hard with most of the snow "lightweight and fluffy" (which might explain Camille and Mia's difficulty making snowmen.) Just then Jessica Redman arrived with a delivery of the latest batch of her wonderful, homemade chocolate chip and oatmeal cookies. "Loving it! So bright, not muddy, gray, or rainy!" she said about this winter. Her boys have been doing a lot of skiing, leaving her to watch some movies and do a lot of reading. Mike Vincent, as he was leaving after a quick lunch, said the winter was "just peachy... an old-fashioned winter."

Lacy Leone, a friendly face often found behind the cash register at the store, was out back in the deli area, tidying up. I asked her when her baby was due. "I've got nine days left," she said, with a wide-eyed smile. About winter she said "It's just a little odd, most years nothing, and this year we got hammered." As I was leaving I ran into former Selectman Courtney Turner, on the front porch. He said that his winter was "awesome," and explained that he is an avid snowmobiler and spends most weekends in the Adirondacks. "Winter's great. That's why I stay here." he said as he went into the store.

I decided to stop by the Town Garage on my way home to ask the team there about the numerous long days of plowing, the wear and tear on men and machines, maybe get a less "peachy" report. Since it was a sunny and dry day I saw that all the trucks were neatly lined up in their bays, a good store of sand in the shed, and a general state of order about the place. It all looked ready for the next storm - but no one was around to hear my knocks and "halloo's."

The Pulse is a snapshot, not a survey, but I found it surprising, considering the endless shoveling, scraping, and plowing, not to mention the heating bills, various leaks, drips, ice dams, and assorted struggles, to hear hardly any complaints, but to hear instead of this winter's old-fashioned beauty and brightness, of reading, of sledding and skiing, and ordering seeds for spring. □

reported by Ann Getsinger

photos by Larry Burke



ATTENTION

Watercolor and Ceramic Artists

THE NEW MARLBOUGH MEETING HOUSE GALLERY
INVITES ENTRIES TO THE JURIED SHOW

Fire and Water

TO TAKE PLACE MAY 27TH-JUNE 19TH, 2011

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FORMERLY DEPARTMENT HEAD AT IS183.

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ANNUAL CAUCUS
WILL BE HELD ON MARCH 29
IN THE
MILL RIVER TOWN HALL

GRANTEES TO BE HONORED

The New Marlborough Cultural Council will be honoring the grant recipients for 2011 at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Monday, March 7. Sixteen projects were selected from among forty applications, with awards ranging from \$200 to \$1,600, for a total of \$11,225.

Six of the projects will take place in the Meeting House in New Marlborough village, expanding the variety of events in that venue. Some examples are dual film series for children and adults; a multi-media presentation of Bob Dylan's music to celebrate his seventieth birthday, along with an exhibit of photographs in the Meeting House Gallery; a concert by the Daedalus String Quartet to honor the twentieth anniversary of the Music & More series and its founding director, Harold Lewin; and a murder mystery writers' contest.

Several projects involve the schools, including a sculpture tour and workshop for high schoolers, a trip to Plimoth Plantation for third graders as a focal point of their history curriculum, and two projects which merge the sciences with artistic interpretation.

Project Bee will continue for a second developmental year with its educational activities on beekeeping and the preservation of bee colonies. Finally, as a sequel to the Town Quilt project for the town's 250th Anniversary,

another quilt will be constructed, incorporating the names of individuals and families in New Marlborough from now through the end of 2014. It will be completed in 2015, the 100th anniversary of a similar quilt made in 1915 by the Southfield Ladies Aid Society.

This impressive array of activities is made possible by the contributions of many local residents to supplement the state funds from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The state grant to New Marlborough is less than \$4,000, so it is clear that the local contributions make a huge difference in the number and scope of projects that can be funded. The New Marlborough Cultural Council is grateful for that support, and encourages residents to take advantage of project activities as they occur throughout the year. □

reported by Barbara Lowman

Thanks to our Contributors!

Dave & Jody Soules; Nancy Kalodner;
Yvonne & Gerald Stephens; James Barbieri;
Mary & Walter Simons;
Mary Ann & Thomas Murphy;
Gil Eisner & Kate Wenner;
and Peter & Karla Alfano

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Town Business

Is Your Business

Board of Selectmen

January 17 was a holiday; January 24 and February 7 had no agendas.



January 31: In a brief meeting all three selectmen were present to authorize the closure of the Sanitary Landfill on Wednesday, February 2, due to the predicted snow storm.

March 2 was scheduled for a Special Town Meeting for the purpose, among other things, of voting to establish a municipal lighting plant, as a necessary step in **moving forward with WiredWest's goal of bringing a fiber optic network** to all of New Marlborough. (A second vote at the Annual Town Meeting will be required to authorize the plan.)

The selectmen also voted to approve a **draft business license requirement bylaw** that includes denial of renewals for any business that is delinquent in obtaining its required permits or licenses. This will be presented to the voters for their vote at the Special Meeting.

February 14: All three selectmen were present to ask the Board of Assessors to explain **the failure to properly update an assessment on a piece of property** that, for approximately six years, had been assessed for a foundation only, in spite of the fact that the building was fully completed in the first year. The taxes generated by \$9,000 in value would add, at an average millrate of eight, \$720 a year, or \$4,320 over six years for the lot on which the completed building stands. The explanation given by Marsha Pshenishy, chair, and Board Member Fred Friedman was that an employee of the appraising firm employed by the Town assessed the foundation and then mistakenly coded the property as 100 percent completed (indicating that the entire building was completed), with the result that the actual property value was undiscovered. Selectman Chuck Loring asked how often property values were updated and Mr. Friedman reported that the law required one-third of the town properties were to be re-evaluated every three years. He went on to say that in the past, when a Certificate of Occupancy was issued, the Assessors office was frequently not notified, compounding the failure of that control mechanism. This has now been corrected by Town Building Inspector Tom Carmody. The selectmen asked Mr. Skorput to refer the matter to Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard, to determine if there might be any possibility of recouping the loss.

A bylaw addition outlining certain police

authorizations was approved for submission to the voters at the March 2 Special Town Meeting, specifically, providing for penalties to anyone plowing or pushing snow on to Town roads, thereby impeding traffic flow. Town counsel will be asked for his opinion as to the legal rights of the Town in this proposal.

Finally, all details for the new Town website have been completed. The site will be opened on March 18, with the address of newmarlborough-ma.gov. □

reported by Charlie Parton

Editor's Note: *In other Town-related business since Charlie's report was filed, Selectman Chuck Loring has declared that he will not be seeking re-election in May.*

Also, Moderator David Lowman has notified the Board of Selectmen that he is resigning his position, effective immediately, as a result of his disappointment over the selectmen's decision to add six warrant items to the Special Town Meeting on March 2, which was originally to have been devoted to the WiredWest article alone. (See accompanying letter from Mr. Lowman.)

Dear Board of Selectmen:

I note that the Special Town Meeting to be held on March 2 has seven (7) articles on the Warrant. The Special Town Meeting was, in my understanding, originally scheduled to present the Wired West article (Article 4) to further the cause of high speed Internet infrastructure development in western Massachusetts.

Special Town Meetings are called, "special," because they arise from a sense of urgency; they are time-sensitive. Articles 4 and 6 are time-sensitive. The remaining five articles are not and would be more appropriately handled at Annual Town Meeting which is only two months later than the March 2 meeting.

I believe your decision is unwise, and I do not wish to be connected to it. Therefore, I resign my position as Moderator effective immediately.

Once upon a time, there was a certain amount of collaboration and cooperation between the Board of Selectmen and the Moderator in planning and developing the items that would be presented to the public at Town Meetings. That practice should, in my opinion, be revisited.

Sincerely,
David Lowman

cc. Kathy Chretien, Town Clerk
New Marlborough 5 Village News

THE MARCH 2 WARRANT Here's What's in It:

The March 2 Special Town Meeting was initiated to consider a proposal that New Marlborough establish a municipal lighting plant as a necessary step in the direction of bringing fiber-optic cable to town, so that all our citizens might have access to high-speed internet connectivity. However, other issues, some of them needing prompt attention, have come to the fore, so the Board of Selectmen has added six other articles for consideration at the upcoming meeting. Herewith, a brief summary of each:

Articles 1 and 2 are linked toward the objective of giving the Town the power to enforce the collection of taxes and fees that are delinquent for a year or more. Article 1 calls for the Town to accept a Massachusetts state law that allows for the denial of licenses or permits to delinquent taxpayers. Article 2 would adopt a Town bylaw enabling it to use that power.

Article 3 would add to the Town's bylaws a state law prohibiting property owners from plowing snow onto public roads "so as to impede the flow of traffic on such way[s]." Offenders would be liable for fines up to \$100.

Article 4 is the fiber-optic network article. It would establish in New Marlborough a municipal lighting plant (MLP), a legal entity that would enable the Town to join WiredWest. This newly forming cooperative plans to

make fiber-optic, currently state-of-the-art in high-speed communications, available to member towns. State law requires a two-thirds vote to create an MLP, not once but twice. So if an MLP is endorsed on March 2, voters will be asked to confirm their decision at the Annual Town Meeting in May. (The two votes must be held at least two months apart: thus the hurry-up meeting on March 2.)

Article 5 asks voters to let the Town place a preservation restriction on the oldest section of the New Marlborough Village Cemetery. This provision allows the Historical Society to apply for a grant from the Massachusetts Historic Commission, due March 25, to help pay for much-needed gravestone repair in the cemetery.

Article 6 asks voters if they wish to reject a January 28 decision by the Southern Berkshire Regional School District School Committee to borrow up to \$3 million for building repairs and technological upgrades. Massachusetts General Law states that the bond issue becomes effective if no town within the school district votes its disapproval within sixty days. While the Board of Selectmen would prefer that this matter be considered at the Annual Town Meeting, the sixty-day window necessitates action at this meeting.

Article 7 would allow the transfer of \$1,750 from the police chief's account to maintain the current level of police patrols by part-time officers. Without the voters' endorsement, such intra-department transfers are not permitted until the end of the fiscal year in May or June. □

reported by Joe Poindexter

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING, ARTICLE 4: Wiring the Last Mile

Today, the most fortunate New Marlborough residents surf the net using DSL from Verizon. Others connect via a satellite internet connection. Some, sadly, have no choice but to rely upon dial-up connections. On March 2, residents will have the opportunity to approve at the Special Town Meeting a warrant article which could change all of that by bringing fiber optic internet access to every home in our community.

Article 4 calls upon the Town to form a municipal lighting plant. This may seem rather odd at first, but the formation of such a department, under Massachusetts General Law 164, will allow New Marlborough to join together with other western Massachusetts towns to undertake the capitalization, buildout, and operation of a municipal fiber-optic network.

Forming such a department requires a two-thirds vote of the majority of the voters present at two town meetings,

two to thirteen months apart. The March 2 meeting is exactly two months before the town's annual meeting in May. Thus if the warrant passes at the March meeting, it will appear again on the warrant of the Annual Town Meeting.

While the state, through the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), is building what is termed the "middle mile" network that will bring fiber to a distribution hub, or "end point," in each town, WiredWest seeks to build the "last mile" network that will extend the fiber from the MBI's end point out to homes and businesses in each town. Completing this last mile will make reliable, high-performance, fiber-optic service available to all who want it.

If New Marlborough establishes a municipal lighting plant by June 30, 2011, our town will be invited to become a founding member of the WiredWest Communications Cooperative. Representatives from such towns will make up the Board of Directors of the Co-op, will approve the articles of incorporation, and will begin forming bylaws. Once the Coop is formed, the process of procuring financing will also begin, which is the first step in building

Continued on the next page

the network.

WiredWest sees the creation of this fiber to the home network as “a first critical step to getting every business, student, institution, and citizen connected to the 21st century digital world, and ensuring we have access to the same advantages our urban and suburban counterparts enjoy.” New applications such as live video conferencing, internet television and telephony, as well as other perhaps not-yet-dreamed-of applications demanding a very high volume of data coming down the digital “pipe” at a high rate of speed are becoming standard. These increased demands will leave even those with a DSL connection in the digital dust. For this reason, it is important that citizens familiarize themselves with WiredWest’s plans and cast an informed vote at the special meeting.

You can get more information about the WiredWest initiative at <http://wired-west.net/>. □

OPEN FOR BUSINESS The Fire Department Shows Off Its New Home

It was open house January 30 at the New Marlborough Volunteer Fire Company’s recently completed headquarters, and visitors got quite an eyeful: a gleaming three-bay garage, a computer-equipped dispatch room, a kitchen, a meeting room with two boardroom-size tables, two television screens, and two dozen or more high-backed leather chairs. Here are a few other particulars:

Started: August 1, 2010

Completed: December 1, 2010 (basement floor awaits interior finishing)

Appraised value: \$1.5 million

Square footage:

5,250 square feet on the main floor, and 1,750 square feet on the basement floor.

Fire Chief Peter Scala was awarded a plaque in recognition of his leadership in the construction of the new firehouse. (to the right) photo by Ed Harvey



Above: Attending the open house, here in the new boardroom, were current Fire Company President David Smith, flanked by two past presidents, Rob Scott, left, and David Herrick. Photo by Joe Poindexter



Above: The three bays accommodate Engine 1, Tanker 2, and Engine 4 in the front row and, behind them, the new Brush 6 and Truck 5, an ice-rescue pickup. Photo by Joe Poindexter



To the right: The well-equipped kitchen is tastefully finished in oak and stone. Photo by Joe Poindexter



NEIGHBORS

Sadly noted was the death of **Sydney Weinstein**, longtime pillar of New Marlborough, on January 23 at the age of ninety-five. He received his BA from City College of New York and his MA from Teachers College at Columbia University. He enlisted in the U.S. Army during World War II, serving with the Texas 36th Division, and remained active in veterans' affairs all his life. He married his wife, Jeane Kolburne, in 1949, and taught at the family's Kolburne School in Norwalk, Connecticut. In the 1960s, the Kolburne School relocated in New Marlborough; since then he and Jeane have been co-executive directors.

David Herrick, of the Mill River Store, remembers him fondly: "My buddy Syd ~ a great conversationalist ~ he'd talk, intelligently, to anyone, about anything, and most of the time he really knew the subject well.

"He was: A humorist ~ would joke with all comers ~ he had more jokes than most comedians; A singer ~ knew more Irish songs than St. Paddy! He would often break into song during coffee or lunch and get all to join him; An American ~ World War II vet ~ VFW officer ~ always bragged about being the only Jew in the Texas Infantry ~ He was proud to say 'Y'all' in Yiddish.

"He was proud to be an American! He did the 'poppy' drive until he was ninety-two. I knew him as a fixture in New Marlborough ~ he was a friend and I'll miss him."



Photo by Ed Harvey

Warms a mailman's heart: One afternoon as the Lowmans were delivering mail, they encountered **Richard Goewey**, of Lumbert Crossroad, meticulously clearing around his mailbox from the previous day's storm. After they thanked him, he said, "I spend all day trying to reach people's propane tanks, so I know what it's like, and I'll do all I can to make your life easier." What a good neighbor!



Photo by Tony Pontier

Although a disappointed Patriots fan, **Paulette Pontier**, of Berkshire Woods Road, found a way to generate some Super Bowl spirit. A prior job had often sent her to Wisconsin, and she really likes Green Bay as a city. Her "cheesehead" hat arrived at the Southfield Post Office just three days before the Super Bowl. She was joined in her enthusiasm by her childhood friend, Kathy Boyd, now of Southwick. And who knows? Maybe the temporary cheeseheads of Southfield tipped the balance toward Green Bay!

Paulette Pontier (l.) and her friend Kathy Boyd get a bit cheesy.

Archival photo: About fifteen years ago, **Pamela Gillette** saw this encounter between their golden retriever, Madison, and a great blue heron, in her yard in Southfield. Luckily, she had a camera close at hand. Madison and the heron saw each other, and then slowly, warily approached each other until they were practically nose to nose, or beak to muzzle. Pam later learned that a heron can use its beak to peck out the eyes of its opponent, but in this case there was no hostility. Exploration complete, they peacefully went their separate ways.



Neighbors is compiled by Barbara Lowman: deeuell@yahoo.com

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Editor's Note: Because of the unexpected shortfall in revenues in the 2010 fiscal year (in which a deficit of \$154,000 had to be covered by an override), the New Marlborough Finance Committee determined that it needed to intensify its oversight of the Town budget. The New Marlborough 5 Village News in turn decided that a resumption of coverage of the meetings of the Finance Committee was overdue. The present report is summarized from the Finance Committee's minutes, as recorded by Secretary Prudence Spaulding, collated by Joe Poindexter.

The Committee – whose elected members include, in addition to Mrs. Spaulding, Bill Dowling, David Herrick, Burt Imberman, Pat Mielke, Nat Yohalem, and Edgar Zukauskas, chair – meets, on average, bi-weekly, but more frequently as budget requests for the coming fiscal year begin to accumulate, typically in mid-December. For the budgets of FY12, the review began at the meeting of December 16.

December 16: Twenty-eight budget requests, ranging from \$95 for constable expenses to the renewal of loans to the Highway Department (\$52,738) and the Fire Company (\$38,475), and most of them identical to the amounts budgeted for FY11, were unanimously approved on a single vote. Four other budget items were approved following discussion.

The committee put a hold on requests from the treasurer, the building inspector, and the Board of Appeals for lack of itemization. It raised a question as to whether \$1,000 of “seed money” requested by the Cultural Council couldn't be provided by private donations. And it questioned the \$3,000 for “furnishings” that was itemized in the New Marlborough Rescue's request for \$25,000 of expenses. These, too, were put on hold.

Prior to adjournment, the budget requests of the Police and Fire Departments were circulated to help prepare for the next meeting.

January 6: Highway Superintendent Peter Marks appeared before the Committee to defend his request for \$22,728 for parts to repair the department's seventeen-year-old grader, labor to be provided in-house, as cost-effective compared to the expenditure of \$300,000 for a new grader. The Committee agreed and approved the request.

Louise Yohalem, vice-chairman of the Cultural Council, persuaded the committee that the Council's request for \$1,000 would be well spent on behalf of the group's support of activities that benefit the children of the town, the library, the Village Association, and other worthy town causes.

Police Chief Scott Farrell reviewed a discussion he had last year with the committee regarding replacing the police cruiser during the 2012 budget year and possibly increasing the size and the scope of the Police Department. At present, he said, the Town is getting police coverage of about thirty hours a week, even as needs are increasing. At this meeting, Mr. Farrell asked the committee to consider adding a patrolman and a new cruiser, while retaining the present one.

The cost of a new vehicle – \$22,000 to \$25,000 –

would be increased by the cost of equipping it with patrol-car gear, since equipment in the present cruiser could not be fitted to a new model. Sale of the present cruiser would yield, by Mr. Farrell's estimate, not more than a few hundred dollars. The committee tabled the request for a new vehicle and the question of expanding the Police Department but approved its request for expenses of \$16,365.

It then approved seventeen other budget requests, including \$67,440 for Berkshire County Retirement, an amount that is some \$15,000 less than the current year because the Highway Department has one less employee. Eight other requests, including police salaries, were put on hold.

January 20: A review of the Department Expenditure Report as of January 17, flagged a possible overrun in the Town Hall account, which is three-quarters expended with almost six months remaining in the fiscal year. At the same time, expenditures for “Roads and Bridges” and “Winter Roads” appeared to be on budget (although subsequent storms may have stressed these budgets as well).

Mr. Yohalem requested that Ms. Mielke, the Town's treasurer, provide the committee with a periodic tally of revenues, which would let the committee determine whether the books were being balanced from month to month. Eight budget requests were approved, including \$8,200 for the town attorney (a raise of \$200), \$2,000 for upkeep of the town website, and \$700 for Memorial Day celebrations.

January 27: Satisfied with a report on the activities of the Visiting Nurse Association prepared by Mrs. Spaulding, the committee endorsed its request for \$2,334 and suggested that visits be announced on the Town website and on the sign outside the library.

The committee rejected requests for a \$6,000 grant-writer salary and \$500 of grant-writer expenses. The Town does not have one. A request of \$16,000 for an audit was put on hold because one was recently conducted.

Mr. Zukauskas reported that Maureen Guidi of New Marlborough Rescue had stated that the \$3,000 expense for furnishings would be devoted to establishing a First Responders office in the Fire House, where the organization's records would be kept. The budget request was approved.

Claudette Callahan, representing the New Marlborough Public Library, explained that the \$3,000 increase in FY12 budget request (\$33,994 compared to \$30,769 in the present year) was occasioned by the fact that the investment accounts, which had in past years supplemented library expenses, now produced only meager yields. The committee endorsed the library's budget request.

Informed by Mr. Skorput that the Highway Department Budget was still under review by Selectmen

Larry Davis and Chuck Loring, Mr. Zukauskas urged that deliberations proceed with all due speed. He pointed out that the committee's decision on a new police cruiser hinged in part on whether the Highway Department would be seeking any big-ticket capital equipment in FY 2012. □

A CONVERSATION AT QUESTING

A group of New Marlborough residents braved the snowy, narrow road to Questing on January 30 at the invitation of its owners, John and Rebecca Schreiber, whose house lies within the reservation. The purpose of this Sunday morning meeting was to meet the new leadership of The Trustees of Reservations, the organization that oversees the Questing and Dry Hill Reservations that were donated to them by local landowners. The eighteenth-century house provided a welcoming setting for conversations about land conservation and a discussion about the future health of the town of New Marlborough.

The assembled group included representatives from town boards and organizations as well as some land owners interested in learning more about what The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) can offer the town. In attendance were Owen Hoberman, Ian Devine, Martha Bryan, and Richard Stebbins, all representing the New Marlborough Land Trust; Tara White from the Board of Selectman; James Mullen from the Planning Board; Joe Poindexter, Historical Society; Jeane Weinstein, Land Trust and Kolburne School; David Hosford, New Marlborough Village Association; Maureen Hosford, New Marlborough Cultural Council; Jane Burke, Land Trust and Flying Cloud Institute; Herb Abelow and Betsy Calhoun; and Brad Wagstaff and Leslie Miller, of Gedney Farm and Mepal Manor.

After some welcoming remarks, Dr. Schreiber turned the meeting over to Jocelyn Forbush, the new Western Region director of TTOR. She explained that these financially difficult times had necessitated structural reorganization, resulting in the closure of its office in Stockbridge and the combining of the Berkshire and Pioneer Valley areas into one Western Region. This change, she explained, does not mean that the organization has lost interest in the Berkshires. On the contrary, she pointed out that south Berkshire County, where several of their most important properties are located, has been identified as one of the three focus areas for the Western Region office. With a small staff and a big area to oversee, she expressed the hope that there would be an increase in the number of local volunteers who would help support the reservations in their communities. She suggested that through the town organizations, especially the Land Trust, community members could help maintain trails and promote the use of the reservations for recreation and education.

Another message from The Trustees of Reservations concerns its interest in helping towns like New Marlborough succeed in any efforts to conserve the landscape and character of the locale. With its experience on the national scene, TTOR can play an advisory role. This generated a lot of discussion about the challenges faced by the Planning Board in implementing the town plan that has been adopted. Ms. Forbush talked about her experience working with towns where there are opposing views about land preservation. Her observations have been that, without constructive dialog, progress is not possible.

The conversation became very lively as members of the group began to talk specifics about New Marlborough. James Mullen expressed his frustration with the lack of community support for the Planning Board's efforts to follow through with the plan it had put forth to the town. He reiterated the importance of forward thinking and being proactive about shaping the future of the town, not leaving it to chance. Brad Wagstaff added his hope that disused agricultural lands could be brought back into productive farms by connecting energetic young farmers with landowners. He went so far as to say that the survival of the region depends upon our return to agriculture. Martha Bryan enthusiastically agreed, pointing out that there is no Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) group in New Marlborough and suggested that one be established here. Jeane Weinstein offered that perhaps some of her land near the American Legion Hall might be used for this purpose.

The meeting was adjourned with many questions unanswered, but one left feeling that there were shared interests. Those in attendance sensed the potential power in working together and in inspiring others to become involved in a shared effort to keep New Marlborough prosperous. The group agreed to meet in the near future and hopes that others in town will join the conversation. □

reported by Jane Burke

Conservation Commission

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting was not held due to lack of business.



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Coming Soon: YOU'RE A GOOD MAN CHARLIE BROWN

This year the Mount Everett Regional High School spring musical is *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. This is a happy and uplifting musical comedy with music and lyrics by Clark Gesner was inspired by the Charles M. Schulz comic strip *Peanuts* and the famous character of Charlie Brown. *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* reopened on Broadway in 1999 as a fresh approach to the all-time 1967 classic. Two new songs have been added to the twelve wonderful numbers of the original version.

The Mount Everett production boasts a cast and crew of over thirty students from grades seven through twelve. The show is staged and musically directed by Ralph Petillo and features Mount Everett junior Gabriella Makuc as rehearsal and performance pianist. This is the first time in the history of our theatrical programs that a student has been given this enormous responsibility. The combination of a delightful script, wonderful staging, and ebullient student performances will make for an enjoyable audience experience.

There will be five performances at the Thomas A. Consolati Performing Arts Center in Sheffield between Thursday, March 17, and Sunday, March 20. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evening performances are at 7:30 p.m.; the Saturday and Sunday afternoon matinees are at 2.00 p.m. General admission tickets are \$8.00, while tickets for students and seniors are \$6.00. All ticket sales and proceeds from the silent auction and raffle will benefit the Southern Berkshire Regional School District's Arts Programming. Tickets for the performance will go on sale Monday, March 8, and can be purchased in advance by calling 229-8754 ext. 127, or at the performances. □ *reported by Travis Daly*

NEW MARLBOROUGH FIRE CO. TO HOLD RABIES CLINIC & BAKE SALE

The New Marlborough Volunteer Fire Company will hold a Rabies Clinic on Saturday, March 26, at the new Emergency Services Center on Norfolk Road in Southfield. The clinic will run from 10.00 a.m. until 12.00 p.m. and will include coffee and a bake sale for pet owners. Additionally, a representative from the New Marlborough Town Clerk's Office will be on hand to provide dog owners with licenses for their pets. Massachusetts law requires all dogs, cats, and ferrets be vaccinated against rabies.

For more information about the NMF&R Rabies Clinic, please contact David Smith, President, New Marlborough Fire Co. at 229-0291, or Peter Scala, Chief, New Marlborough Fire & Rescue at 229-8100. □

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THE SIGNATURE QUILT Wants You!

As was reported in the January issue of the *New Marlborough 5 Village News*, a group of quilters and embroiderers is planning a new signature quilt for the Town of New Marlborough (modeled after the Ladies Aid Society Quilt of 1915) that will record the names of full-time and weekend residents living in the five villages today.

Some of you have already submitted your names - at the Town Library and by mail (to Barbara Kelly, PO Box 305, Southfield, MA 01259-0305) but for those who might find it easier to forward names electronically, the quilting group now has a designated email address - [nmquilt@gmail.com](mailto:nmqilt@gmail.com). The opportunity to have your name sewn into the quilt is free to all residents of New Marlborough.

The group is eager to receive the names of all who are interested as soon as possible, as it will be a great help in planning the quilt and the arrangement of the names. If you have questions, please email or call Barbara Kelly 413-229-3126. □

Did you know that you can download the NM5VN ? For this issue, go to:
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www.newmarlborough.org/NM5VN.htm



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Middle School Buzz – EXPO ‘11

The Middle School Expo Project has been a rite of passage at Mount Everett for twenty-seven years. Students immerse themselves in a topic over a period of months with the expectation that they will produce a museum-style display, complete with an informational display board and a model depicting their area of interest. This year, seventh graders were asked to focus on aspects of ancient cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia, while eighth graders concentrated on mathematics and science. The culmination of many hours of preparation is the Expo Night, when hundreds of community members come to view the students' accomplishments.

The excitement among the students at this year's event on February 16 was palpable. Dressed in their best, they stationed themselves in front of their elaborate projects in order that they might answer questions posed by the throngs who streamed past them. For each student it was an affirmation of the hours of effort he or she had put in over the last several months.

In talking with four of the seventh graders from New Marlborough, this reporter got a sense of the depth of this educational experience. Sam Hess of Southfield explained that the process began in early November when social studies teachers supplied students with a list of possible topics. After making his choice of the Egyptian step pyramid, he began the journey of preparation for the final night: submit a pre-proposal, submit a final proposal, do research, write a research paper, complete a three-dimensional model, prepare a poster board, give a ten minute oral presentation to classmates, finally, stand with your display on Expo Night, and discuss your work with visitors. Sam remarked that his favorite part was making the scale model together with his father. He actually finished it a month in advance, it was so much fun. "It was a big challenge with measuring and getting the scale just right."

For Nathan Redman of Clayton, his choice of Egyptian Canotic jars stemmed from his interest in how the dead were buried, as well as from his love of ceramics. Before starting in with the clay, he did research and made scale drawings of what he intended to make. This planning process required by the teachers helped him slow down and work systematically to achieve his vision of making four terra cotta jars with sculpted lids that depicted the deities. It was obvious that he had taken the work very seriously and had completed the work on his own initiative. As people passed by his display, he was prepared to share his knowledge of the role of these jars in Egyptian life, and afterlife.

Lauren Scapin of Mill River was interested in ancient Egyptian mud brick huts and chose to find out more about them. After much research she built her model with the help of some of her relatives. She really enjoyed the whole process of doing the research and especially building the clay model to scale.

Hartsville resident Samantha Twing was drawn to the topic of mummification. She made a sarcophagus and created a wrapped mummy using a life-sized doll. She said that in Egypt slaves prepared the cadavers by using natron, a natural salt, to embalm the mummy. She found what she learned "pretty interesting." She was very enthusiastic about her experience listening to each of her classmates' final oral presentations the day before Expo. "Everyone had interesting information to share. It is a very good way to learn, I think."

Strolling through the middle school, catching as many of the 150 exhibits as possible, a visitor is easily caught up by the energy and pride of our middle school students. It is obvious that this opportunity for students to focus on their own projects generates excitement and some very impressive results. In the eighth grade science and mathematics displays, the maturity and originality were particularly impressive. One student explained his home-made generator, another her model home, another genetically engineered e.coli, and yet another the amazing properties of laser beams.

Students are now expected to meet high standards including learning the Twenty-first Century skills of problem solving and communication. The Expo at Mount Everett started this process in the Twentieth Century and it continues to inspire students and their families. □

reported by Jane Burke

The Mailbox

To the Editors,

Thanks to you all for the fantastic coverage that the New Marlborough Volunteer First Responders has received from your newspaper over the years, and especially the past year. Without the support from your newspaper, it would have been more difficult to take care of the townspeople of New Marlborough.

Sincerely,
Marsha Harvey
Ashley Falls



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Vegetarian Times Everything Vegan
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Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother, by Amy Chua

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Super Snow Day Seek and Find, by Michael Garland
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Snowmen All Year, by Caralyn Buehner
The Fantastic Secret of Owen Jester, by Barbara O'Connor

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Joe Poindexter, Barbara Lowman, Jon Swan,
Martha Bryan, Pam Stebbins, Debra Herman, Diane Swartz,
Contributing writers: Janice Boult, Laura Endacott,
Ann Getsinger, Mary Richie Smith, and Tara White.

New Marlborough 5 Village News appears monthly.

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All copy must be submitted no later than March 15.
For advertising, contact: Barbara Lowman,
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5villagenews@gmail.com

Town Times:

- * **Board of Selectmen:** Every Monday at 6:30 p.m.
- * **Planning Board:** First and third Wednesday at 7 p.m.
- * **Board of Health:** First Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.
- * **Conservation Commission:** Last Tuesday at 7 p.m.
- * **Board of Assessors:** June 1 - Aug.31 Monday through Thursday 7a.m. - noon
- * **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.
- * **Town Treasurer:** Monday- 9 -12 a.m.
- * **Tax Collector:** Monday - Thursday. 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
- * **Selectmen's Administrative Secretary:** Monday - Friday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- * **Dog and Animal Control Officer:** John Springstube 232-7038
- * **Town Clerk:** 229-8278 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays; Saturday by appointment
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