



Photo Credit: Jason R. Henske

When I was about 13 years old, my folks bought some land in Marlboro. I didn't spend a lot of time here during my teen years, but the time I spent was relaxing and regenerative. In 1970, my brother built a house on the land. After college, living in New York City, I came here only occasionally, but as I grew older, I found myself gravitating here more and more, spending time out in the woods, busying myself with various projects. Eventually I got married, and when we were expecting our first child, we decided to spend maternity leave up here. In the six months we were here, a lot of things changed for us.

Living with profound silence went from being pleasant to necessary. Breathing fresh, unadulterated air and seeing millions of stars in the sky went from novelties to necessities. Being able to spend a lot of time with our baby seemed very important but hard to pull off in a big city.

So at the end of our stay, we stayed.

Being filmmakers, this felt like a potential end to successful careers. Yet we found ways to make a living up here, although it often required traveling to New York. Eventually, we founded a film production company, Ames Hill Productions, and we now make the vast majority of our living through clients within 100 miles of here. In the course of 16 years, our lives have taken root in the Marlboro community. Both our children have been nurtured in the Marlboro Elementary School. We have served on the Volunteer Fire Department, on the School Board, the Marlboro Park Association and other community organizations. We have skated on a frozen South Pond, sharing hot chocolate and a warm campfire with our neighbors; we have celebrated New Year's Eve with bonfires, champagne and dear friends. We have participated in numerous house-raising, where the entire community comes together to raise a post and beam frame in a single day. We have come to love small town living.

The Marlboro Fair—second Saturday in September—is the epitome of a small-town gathering. It is infinitesimal compared to most fairs, but in its smallness lies its charm. The entire fair is run on solar power, provided by a locally built system. The agricultural tent holds maybe 30 entries, but you will see some of the finest displays of locally grown produce and flowers you'll find anywhere. The Arts and Crafts tent holds a similar number of objects, but you will see artistry of the highest order. My favorite annual display in that tent is the Marlboro College anthropology professor's journal of her most recent international travel, full of observations, beautiful sketches, memories, revelations. Last year, several magnificent handcrafted musical instruments were on display. The volunteer fire department cooks hot dogs and hamburgers and runs a raffle with a cord of firewood—cut, split and delivered—as the top prize. There's a tea tent with fine English tea, scones and clotted cream. On a tiny stage, a wonderfully strong lineup of local musical talent performs throughout the day; recently, a small dance floor was added to allow for group folk dances or the occasional improvisational performance by a 3- or 4-year-



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Andy Reichsman

Filmmakers Kate Purdie and Andy Reichsman run Ames Hill Productions from Cowpath 40 in Marlboro. They usually produce documentary-style films for non-profit organizations, artists and companies. Among their current projects are films for Dartmouth College, the Student Conservation Association and a hotel workers union. The photo above shows Ames Hill's production for Sterling Publishing, promoting *Begin Smart Books*. For more information go to ameshillvideo.com.



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Marlboro Fair

old or two. There's a small animal display ring and usually a sheep herding and shearing demonstration by one of the best shearers in New England. There's a kids' tent, a human-propelled "faerie wheel" (ages 5 and under, please) and numerous contests for the young set. Speaking of contests, the nail hammering event is the highlight of the afternoon, with four or five divisions. Considering that many Marlboro residents make their living as carpenters, the professional division always draws a crowd, to see who will

have bragging rights for the next year. Of course, the skillet toss also draws a big crowd and since it is only open to females, any man interested in competing must don a dress to be eligible to participate. The day ends with the singing of the "Fair Song," a new verse added each year, incorporating that year's theme into the lyrics. If we sang all 30-plus verses, we'd be singing a long time, but it's generally trimmed down to a manageable 10 or so.