

AUCTIONING OFF NEW MARLBOROUGH

Among the Winners, the Town Itself

By Joe Poindexter

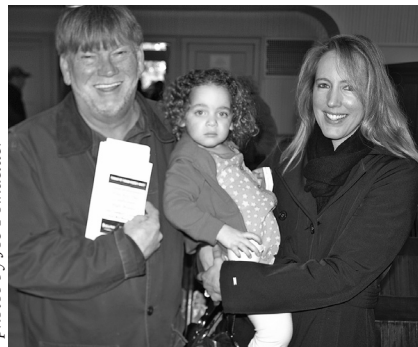
"Even if we get less than is owed in back taxes, we've won," said Selectman Tara White, "because the property goes back on the tax roll." She needn't have worried: the March 29 auction of three properties foreclosed by the Town for non-payment of property taxes covered the amount owing — and then some.

At 10:00 a.m., the Town Hall, site of the auction, was buzzing with anticipation. After reviewing the conditions of sale — prospective bidders were required to post a \$5,000 bank check and, if successful, pay an auctioneer's commission of 7 percent as well as property taxes for both this fiscal year and next — auctioneer Mary



Auctioneer Mary Ann Sullivan launches into the sale.

Ann Sullivan of Sullivan & Sullivan launched headlong into the event. First up was the former Twing property at the corner of the Mill River Southfield Road and Hadsell Street, on which \$28,287, counting back taxes,



Danny Litchfield (with wife, Becky, and their great-niece, Aleeha)

interest, penalties, and legal expenses, was owed. Danny Litchfield opened the bidding at \$25,000. Competition for the one-acre lot notched the price upward by \$1,000 increments until it was gaveled down at Mr. Litchfield's winning bid of \$30,000. Mr. Litchfield said that at present his only plan for the property is to clear it of its disintegrating structures and return the triangular piece to lawn.

Next up, a three-quarter-acre lot on East Hill Road in Southfield, formerly owned by Cliff Richards, on which \$8,000 was owed. The bidding opened at \$5,000 moved quickly from \$10,000 to \$11,000 to \$12,000, where it stalled, the only sound the insistent voice of Ms. Sullivan as she searched the room for another bid. There wasn't one. The winner was Zufer Dervisevic, who says he is a building contractor from Queens, New York, who has been

sloping shoulder of Cagney Hill, considered opinion deemed it a buildable property, raising the prospect of competition. Good for the Town but worrisome for the New Marlborough Land Trust, which needed a corner of the tract to gain entry to its newly established Robert Joffe Nature Sanctuary. The bidding moved briskly in \$5,000 jumps from \$10,000 to \$35,000. The Land



...Queens, New York builder Zufer Dervisevic,...

Trust, represented by its president, Ian Devine, seemed to have taken the measure of the competition at \$40,000, when "Forty-two" sounded from the other side of the aisle. Mr. Devine countered at \$45,000. Ms. Sullivan turned her attention to the other bidder. "Forty-seven...forty-seven," she pleaded. "Forty-five in the back; forty-five, forty-five once, forty-five twice; ladies and gentlemen, last call, forty-five. [A brief pause] Sold for forty-five thousand dollars."

"It was a win-win-win," said Mr. Devine, who was beaming with relief as he and Land Trust Executive Director Martha Bryan made their way to the front of the hall to confirm the purchase. "The Town won, the Land Trust won, and the kids won," said Mr. Devine, in reference to environmental programs planned for New Marlborough Central students at the Joffe preserve.

It was the rare Town Hall event that, barring a disappointed under-bidder or two, seemed to please everyone. □



...and Land Trust President Ian Devine (with Executive Director Martha Bryan) celebrate their winning bids.