

Marc Taylor Memorial Service June 24, 2012

Comments by: Ed Edelson, Southbury First Selectman

For years I have used the observation of a professional football coach and commentator. He said that after years of watching professional football, he had come to the conclusion that at any time on the football **field**, there are 3 types of players – those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who have no idea **what** is happening.

He then would go on to say that the same holds true on the **field** of play **outside** of football. I thought it was a fair assessment based on all the people I had met; that is until I met Dr Marc Taylor.

Marc was a different type of player than I had ever experienced. Of course he could make things happen. And he did.

However, what made Marc so special was that he had a gift and a passion for helping others make things **happen**. Some of you, like me, had no intention of volunteering or at least not volunteering with the level of commitment that Marc inspired. However, once we came under the influence of Marc, we realized we could do more, we should do more and we would do more. This phenomenon deserves a name and an acronym: VUI – volunteering under the influence of Marc Taylor.

I know this was the case for me. I went to a Southbury planning commission meeting to see - well, what were they planning. That night there was a science-based presentation by the Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition. One should never use Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition in a sentence without saying science-based. I was so impressed, I offered to volunteer. I said I had some spare time if they needed envelopes stuffed or newsletters folded. I thought I knew my skills and capabilities.

I set up a meeting to learn about volunteering with Marion Griswold who was the very able administrator at that time. Soon I found myself in a room with Marc. Marc quickly surmised that I would not be good at stuffing and folding. I left that meeting as the chair of the development committee, which was interesting since I did not know what development meant.

My story is not unique. All of us who were fortunate to experience a VUI – that is volunteering under the influence of Marc Taylor - have become better as a result – more aware of our environment, more engaged in our community and more involved in the important movement to strive for sustainability.

As many of you know, Marc was the personal physician to every Southbury First Selectman from the time he and Ira Mickenberg began their practice. That is why he advised against my running and definitely against my serving if by some strange twist of fate I won.

Now that I have had an opportunity to work in Town Hall, I have come to more fully appreciate Marc's involvement in this community. All the people who work there or have worked there know of Marc and speak of both his kindness and caring. I have truly appreciated their thoughtful observations about Marc these past few weeks. They show how Marc cherished this community and how he was involved in so many different ways.

The respect that he earned over the years was demonstrated last January at a Town Hall meeting about what could have been a divisive issue regarding clean-up from the October snow storm. When it was Marc's turn to speak in his quiet, knowing way, you could feel the tide of opinion shift in the room and with that the controversy dissipated. To paraphrase an old advertisement, when Marc spoke, people listened.

I have been thinking more lately about what is Southbury. It is more than a boundary on a map. It is more than the 40 square miles. It is more than its mix of geology, hydrology and ecosystems that Marc appreciated so well. It is most of all the people who have gone before us and what they have passed on to those who live here today. Marc Taylor, through his work, caring and civility will continue to make Southbury a great place to live because of the impact he has had on all of us.

Now it is time for us to accept the **torch** that Marc carried for so long and did so **well**. We have to **step** up to the task, get **involved** and get **others** involved. The health of our town is too important to let the **flame**, that Marc carried so well, go dim.