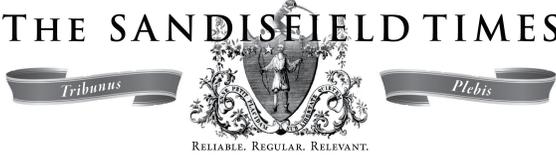


THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



PO Box 584  
SANDISFIELD, MA 01255

November 2020

When I wrote to you last year, we had just experienced a ferocious windstorm, and fallen trees and blocked roads were everywhere. It was a brief crisis that allowed me to note with some pride how our then nearly ten-year-old newspaper had survived the drama, as it survived all those many other alarms and excursions - mostly weather-related - which seem to afflict remote communities like ours.

But like all of you, I never imagined what would come next. An historic crisis which has affected the entire world still has us firmly in its grip. And though our remoteness has spared us much personal grief, it has changed us. As one example: many pandemic refugees from the big cities who fled here to get away have decided to stay - taking comfort in the safety, serenity, and seclusion that Sandisfield offers and expressing delighted amazement at the beauty of our forests and streams, our hills and valleys.

Many of these same newcomers have also expressed their delight in coming across this newspaper - and like many of you have written to say how vital and necessary it has turned out to be as a means of binding our community together. We are hugely gratified - that as we enter our eleventh year, our value is being ever more keenly appreciated. And this at a time when other, larger newspapers - the Berkshire Eagle comes to mind - are drawing in their horns, retreating in the face of digital competition.

We are indeed still here: old-fashioned, printed, hand-delivered (though a new arrangement with the Post Office means everyone with a local address will now receive a copy in the mail) volunteer-run and firmly wedded to our resident readers. We are pledged to cover the town government in ever more detail; we profile local celebrities and young businesses; we run small ads at no charge (and ask no fee for local obituaries); we print the work of local poets; we stage an annual writing competition and will soon do the same for a local photographer; we award a prize in our name to the local school. We are your newspaper - regular, reliable and relevant, as ever and always.

Costs still bear down on us, though, and so once a year - and only once a year, unlike WAMC and public television, who seem to beseech unceasingly - we ask for your financial support. Anything you can spare to further guarantee our survival, and to help us boost our coverage of local events and government goings-on would be appreciated. You can drop a check to us at PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or contribute online and we'll happily inscribe your name on our monthly honor roll as having helped to keep us working for you for another year, no matter what Nature - whether with windstorms or germstorms - might throw at us.

It gives us the greatest pleasure once again, to wish all of you in our beloved town - and far away; Tasmania now sports a reader, for example! - the happiest of holidays. And may life very soon come back to normal for all of us.

Simon Winchester



Founding Editor

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



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