

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus

Plebis



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume I, Number 2

May, 2010

ELECTION! And the Nominees Are...



Photo: Richard Migot

Fifty-four percent of America voted in the last election. A healthy turnout, by any standard. But here in Sandisfield the figure for our last town election was just a measly 33 percent. Only 190 of us voted last time around. Nearly four hundred of us stayed at home.

The Times enthusiastically applauds those local men and women - their election statements are printed on page 8 - who are willing to serve in public office. We admire and offer kudos to those who monitor the polls and secure our wonderful old wooden ballot box. But where will you be on May 17th? Will you be staying home? Watching TV? Sleeping?

Please don't. Please. Do us all a favor: go down to Town Hall in droves, and do what most Americans apparently now like to do on election day: **VOTE!**



BLACK FLIES? NO LIKE-UMS

Susie Crofut

*Black fly, little black fly
Always the black fly no matter where you go
I'll die with the black fly a-pickin' my bones
In North Ontar-eye-o-eye-o, In North Ontar-eye-o*

I first heard this song in a Folk Club in Greenwich Village in the early 60's. I didn't know then that I would live in Sandisfield where the black fly plagues us from Mother's Day to Father's Day, more or less. In fact the black fly is found all over the world. There are 1,800 species (only eleven are extinct) so they're doing pretty well in general. They love Canada and New England especially. They like to breed in running water and we have plenty of that.

cont'd p. 5

DOLORES, OUR HUMAN TORNADO

Rita Kasky

The old adage about life being what happens while you're making other plans is amply illustrated by Dolores Harsyko, Sandisfield's seemingly indispensable and indestructible Town Clerk. There was once a time when she imagined she'd be an oil painter, and trained hard to become one. Then she worked for a decade and a half at a Connecticut insurance firm, dealing with policies and actuarial dilemmas. And then she moved to this remote corner of the Berkshires. And that's when it all changed

She had been here for seven years when in 1998 someone mentioned to her that she might be interested in running for office - and she ran, and she won, and ever since she has occupied the most crucial of all desks in Town hall, running our wayward and eccentric little village with all the determination and skill of a professional cat-herder.

Dealing with money is perhaps the biggest part of her work - budgets take up vast amounts of time. She prepares and watches the budgets for the Highway Department (along with Highway Super Chris Rines), for the Selectmen and the Town Clerk. There are always variables that

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Photo: Rita Kasky



\$2.4 MILLION ON THE LINE

Rita Kasky

The main event for the annual meeting of the town is the presentation, discussion (where necessary) and approval of a line item budget. Starting in January, with support from the Town Finance Committee, all town departments sit down to draft their budgetary needs for the fiscal year that begins, each year, on July 1. For the coming fiscal year (2010-11) the Finance Committee asked the departments to try to level fund (no increases) their budgets or reduce them by \$500 or more where possible. The budget process continued with meetings between the town departments and the Finance Committee, working toward a February 10 budget submission deadline.

For the new fiscal year the town will be asked to vote on a budget of around \$2,400,000.00. New line items on the warrant include a request for funds for a town website, seed money for the town's 250th anniversary celebration (in 2012) and the removal of the two condemned houses on Route 8.

The proposed Farmington River Regional School District budget, which represents close to one-half of our budget, shows an increase of 1.4% over the previous year. Sandisfield's portion of the school budget is \$1,212,429.

"We are doing the best we can to keep the town costs under control while serving our community in a responsible way. We are fiscally conservative and understand that increases in the budget effect the bottom line of the residents who are being asked to support the budget", says Kathy Jacobs, Finance Committee Chair.

TORNADO cont'd from p.1

make it a challenge to keep an eye on expenses and satisfy the needs of our community. Preparing the Annual Report to the town is

another pretty big undertaking.

Elections are a central part of Dolores' responsibility - all of them, local, state and federal. Strict timelines have been established by each of the governments and for the May town elections the work begins in February. Voter registration sessions are conducted, nominees must submit their papers, there's the caucus, the ballot preparation including those for absentees and deployment of staff at the polls on Election Day. "It's a big deal," she laughs, but deadly serious.

Working with the Selectmen is a regular part of Dolores' daily routine: by phone, by email, in person. She works all week long on the agenda for the Monday night Board meetings, organizing the mail to be read, papers to be signed, times for residents who wish to address the board on some matter or other (variances, special permits, road issues); and

then she prepares the minutes for future reference. For new members of the Select Board Dolores does a little coaching, making sure they have their handbook,

WHAT MAKES SANDISFIELD SO SPECIAL? "THE PEOPLE, THE DIVERSITY, THE PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT, THE KINDNESS OF IT ALL."

helping them learn as they go.

What's her favorite part of the job? Dealing with people. Sharing happy moments when wedding licenses and birth records are issued, and dealing with the sadder times when people are making plans as their final days

WHAT'S MISSING FROM OUR TOWN? "A TOWN GREEN, A GATHERING PLACE."

near, and then in the end, issuing the death certificates. Dolores enjoys the interactions with her colleagues in Town Hall and the residents who drop in for information or to say hello, to pass the time of day. "Always busy, but never too busy."

What's the worst part of the job? Fixing toilets. What makes

Sandisfield so special? The people, the diversity, the peaceful environment, the kindness of it all. What's missing from our town? A town green, a gathering place. Dolores reminisces about the days when town folks gathered here for dances, barbecues and games. She doesn't know why those events don't happen anymore - but anyone who wishes to read about the good old days "just give me a call and I'll show you the town scrapbook. It's all there." When they get away for vacation you'll find the Harasykos wherever there's an ocean and a beach and a peaceful horizon. One thing you might not know about our Town Hall star: she did a mean Karaoke performance at a Town Clerk's

Conference and sang Joan Jett's "I Love Rock and Roll". Whistle it, next time

you pass by, Dolores says, "I am humbled and proud of what I've done, along with our staff, for the town. I really enjoy coming to work, regardless of what's on deck. I'm glad to be able to help people day to day. I look forward to being here a long time. I work for the people".



CALL FOR ARTISTS

The Otis Cultural Council seeks artists and craftspeople for the **Third Annual Otis Arts Festival, Saturday, July 24,** at Farmington River Elementary School, Otis.

Entry fee is \$15.

Applications are available online www.townofotisma.com/culturalcouncil, or at the Otis Town Hall.

Contact: Arlene Tolopko, Chair Otis Cultural Council.



Letter from the Editor



Photo: Setsuko Winchester

Simon Winchester
Editor-in-Chief

Small English words often signify very big English concepts. Take the word by, for example. Employed as a noun the word is very ancient – thirteenth century, at least – and it survives as a suffix in the names of certain small towns – Whitby, Derby, Granby being the best-known. The word ‘by’, sometime spelled ‘byr’ is in this sense an ancient term for a village. And

so it is from by that we get by-laws, by-laws being village laws, which we know today as the local regulation of small manners by means of “laws established by the common consent of all who live in a by, and having binding force within its limits.”

It used to be an amusing party game to come up with the weirdest bylaw in America – since outsiders like me (if you will accept that this is said respectfully) find this land of the free and home of the brave very much less free and more bizarrely regulated than most imagine. Among the laws I used to like: in Zion, Illinois, it is illegal to teach pets to smoke cigars. Beware of police action should you try to race turtles in Key West. Those wishing to ride bicycles in a swimming pool should take care not to do so in Baldwin Park, California. Women may not wear pants in Tucson. And in certain communities in Arkansas a man may beat his wife, but not more than once in a calendar month.

Here in Sandisfield we are made of more sober stuff. The pale blue folder that offers up the last 47 years-worth of town by-laws is just 36 pages long, and it devotes the last two pages to instructions on changing the

names of some of our roads – for instance Viets Road east of Fox Road became Elk Road back in 1991, that kind of thing. That, and sensible little ordinances relating to the banning of sound trucks and fur farms and unlicensed pedlars and bindlestiffs, all entities and persons we probably quite cordially abhor, and so laws with which we all probably agree.

Except that there is one by-law that intrigues me. Not that there is anything exotic about it – other than for the simple fact that it seems to be so routinely ignored. And that is the law in Section 11 of Chapter VIII, which states:

The owner of premises upon which an unregistered and dilapidated motor vehicle and parts thereof has been allowed to stand shall remove [it] within four weeks of a complaint...failing which... there will be assessed a \$20 fine, for every day each vehicle goes unremoved.

Few could surely object to such a bylaw. Wrecked and rusting cars and trucks littering a backyard repel most people – they are an eyesore, they must be a health hazard, they invite crime, they instill a culture of neglect – all of which were the good and sensible reasons behind the passage of such a law in the first place. And yet in Sandisfield – we either do not complain (one written complaint in twelve years, says our Town Clerk) or those to whom we complain take no notice. A fair number of our roads seem to have some kind of inadvertent amateur junkyard somewhere along their length.

It certainly isn't my intent to compel anyone to do anything at all about this situation. But might we not perhaps begin a dialogue about a topic that I suspect clearly engages people? This is your newspaper, after all – so why not write to us, or email me at editor@sandisfieldtimes.org - and vent. Should everyone be able to use their land exactly as they wish? Or should they, in this particular case, clean up? After which discussion we can all teach our pets how to smoke cigars and let our womenfolk wear pants – and wouldn't Sandisfield then be the perfect place to live, by and by? 🗣️

TOWN HALL NEWS

Dates to Remember:

Annual Town Meeting May 15, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.

Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Rd.

Annual Town Election May 17, 2010 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Rd.

Absentee Ballots will be available for the Annual Town Election on April 26, 2010. There are three valid reasons for obtaining absentee ballots. They are:

1. absence from your city or town during normal polling hours.
2. physical disability preventing you from going to the polling place.
3. religious belief.

You will need to fill out an absentee ballot application before you receive the ballot. You can obtain the application by calling the Town Hall Annex at 258-4711 or you can fill one out in person at the Town Hall Annex.

Dog licenses were due by March 31, 2010. You have until May 31, 2010 before you are fined \$25.00 per dog plus the cost of the license. Remember that May 31, 2010 is Memorial Day and we will be closed.

Public Meeting

On Tuesday, May 4, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Rd. the MassDOT will be holding a public hearing regarding the Route 8 Bridge replacement project. This meeting is open to the public.

The Dump Digest

The Bulky Waste collection will begin May 22, 2010 at the Transfer Station. The Electronics collection will begin May 24, 2010 at the Town Hall Annex. You will need to have a dump sticker to participate in these collections. The Electronic collection is at the Town Hall Annex only. There is a minimal fee to offset the cost of the collection. **Acceptable items are: TV's, computers, stereos, air conditioners, refrigerators, freezers, microwaves, almost anything electronic.**

The cost is \$5.00 per item, refrigerators and freezers are \$1.00 per cubic foot. You will need to come to the Town Hall Annex during regular hours of operation which are Monday, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Tuesday thru Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. You will need to come into the Town Hall first to register your disposal items and pay the fee. Do not just drop items off, you will be recorded on camera and may have to pay a fine for illegally dumping on Town property.

This program has worked wonderfully for the past 4 years. **You can, for no additional cost drop off during regular hours household batteries.** Call the Town Hall for additional information at 258-4711. We have also rejoined CET, Center for Ecological Technology, for hazardous waste collections. We will have more information posted around town when it becomes available.

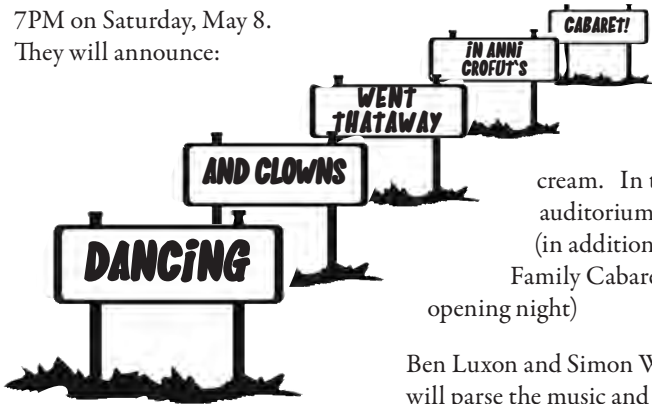
For information contact Dolores Harasyko, Town Clerk at 258-4711 or sandisfieldtownclerk@wildblue.net. 🗣️



ARTS CENTER: GLORIOUS 2010 SEASON BECKONS

Val Coleman

As you read this, the "Burma Shave" signs will blossom on the big hill announcing the grand opening of the Sandisfield Arts Center at 7PM on Saturday, May 8. They will announce:



And that's just the beginning of an extravagant 2010 season that

will last for 8 months, chock-a-block with most every kind of entertainment you can think of... music, smart talk, comedy. Movies, workshops...even antiques and ice

cream. In the auditorium upstairs (in addition to the Family Cabaret on opening night)

Ben Luxon and Simon Winchester will parse the music and literature of the British Isles. There will be an "Antiques Appraisal Day" with appraisers David LeBeau and Steve

Kahn. Guitarist Bobby Sweet, and the folk musician Bill Staines will perform. "Vaudeville on Wheels" with madcap Karl Saliter will show up after an Ice Cream Social. "Walking The Dog," an improvisational theatre, is coming and we'll hear the marvelous soprano Kathleen Callahan. Simon Winchester will talk about his new book, "Atlantic: The Biography of an Ocean" and the season will end traditionally, with a Christmas Extravaganza.

Downstairs, in the café, four successive art shows will celebrate the works of Pam Johnson, Mary & Keith Davidson, Larry Zingdale and Community Access to the Arts. There will be workshops on yoga (Lauren Paul), body

movement (Betsy Polatin), and Scrabble (Michelle Arnot). Classical guitarist and swing clarinetist Joel and Frank Brown will play and the Church Hill Poets will recite. Story-teller Val Coleman will perform with Ben Luxon on piano. Bill Cohn and Val Coleman will conduct a history forum on "War and Peace".

And we'll be reprising the film series that proved such a success last season. "Ruggles of Red Gap", "Chinatown" and "The Motorcycle Diaries" are among the treats in store.

Our most ambitious year yet. We hope we'll see a lot of new faces this season.

Come one, come all. It'll be a feast! 🍷



Country Diary

Mick Burns

First Winter

Even experienced beekeepers saw their colonies perish despite the mild, and at this writing, somewhat foreshortened winter. It was in early March, on a sunny and still day, when I found out. Careful listening while knocking on the hives revealed no audible response. A brief look inside confirmed: no survivors. In April heat, the dead colonies had to be removed. Inside, my two hives portrayed vastly different circumstances. The first contained all the comb and bees intact, the bees clustered in the center of the frames of comb, surrounding their queen; silent and still presumably positioned where they perished. A closer look revealed that many hundreds of others were within individual cells, head in. It turns out that a starving colony will scour the comb for tiny bits of pollen or honey, scraping clean the inside of each cell. (Incidentally, when adult bees first emerge from their cells, their first task is to go back in and clean out the debris of their metamorphosis.) In one small area of one of the combs, about two square inches, the

remnants of the nursery could be seen. Several bees had arrived at maturity and broken the cap, but not had the strength to emerge. On that same comb was an equivalent area of capped honey, the only remaining in the hive, possibly designated for the newly emerging, the best hope for the colony's survival. So, the first hive had run out of food. Not surprising given the weeks of rainy, cool weather last summer, and despite my feeding them (a solution of honey, sugar water and herbs) for the first two months from the time of their arrival.

The second hive, the one I had captured when they swarmed, told a different story. Here had been an invader. Upon opening; "Are those mouse droppings?", "Where are the bees?" The bees – or rather, their wings, legs and other parts not relished by the invader - formed a heap at the bottom of the hive. Large sections of comb, no doubt once containing the stores of honey, were missing. As I removed the individual frames from each hive I found that in many instances they were bound to adjacent frames with bits of comb (called burr comb) or that some sections of comb were not constructed neatly within one individual frame. In several of the frames the comb (beeswax) had been constructed but never used. This virgin comb is a clean, bright, pale canary yellow color, contrasting with the dark golden chestnut of the heavily used areas.

Though gone now, the two colonies left behind many frames of comb, providing a head start for the two "package" bees which are due to arrive in late May. These packages consist of about 20,000 workers (all female), a queen, and no doubt some few drones (males) as well. The queen is raised separately, in this instance, and placed in a small cage of her own. A small hole at the end of this cage is plugged with a sugary, frosting-like substance. The queen cage protects the queen when she is first introduced into this "foreign" group of bees until in a day or so she is accepted and released by this queenless group, which eats away the sugary plug.

The instincts and behavior of the colony are strong and we humans attempt to harness this predictability to our benefit. All our efforts, however accommodating, are nonetheless, intrusions. So, this first attempt on my part has shown me much about the ways of the honeybee, and of the beekeeper. On one level it is quite simple: the bees take in water, pollen, nectar, and sometimes sweet sap from other sources. From these few ingredients honeybees produce wax, honey, and store pollen for food. One mouse or a few weeks of rain can mean life or death for the honeybee, and success or failure from my perspective. Yet, the nuances of nature are not naughty or nice, or simple: they simply are. 🍷

The Gardeners' Almanac



Dassy Herman

If you are wondering how some uninvited guests made it through the winter, join the club. Ladybugs are attracted to older, light colored houses with a southwestern exposure and get into walls through spaces around clap boards, windows and doors. They hibernate in groups, feeding on their own body fat. When the seasons change they try to get out but are confused by the warmth inside and go the wrong way. The yellow stuff that comes out when you disturb them is their blood, a protection against predators since it smells bad and stains. So, if you want to get rid of them use a vacuum and empty the bag outside. They also send out pheromones which can be "read" a quarter mile away, telling their brethren that they've found a new and good place.

On the other hand, ladybugs can eat 50 aphids a day and since these same aphids endanger roses, honeysuckle and other plants, ladybugs are considered great friends of the garden.

May to do:

- ✂ Cut back any perennials left over after the winter.
- ✂ Clean dead leaves and other debris out of garden beds.
- ✂ Add compost to flower and vegetable beds.
- ✂ Side dress blueberries with ammonium sulfate.
- ✂ Feed asparagus with an organic fertilizer.
- ✂ Plant peas, spinach and other cold weather crops.
- ✂ Visit trees and shrubs and prune off any branches suffering from winter kill.

Addendum:

A good friend and neighbor suggested to me that the easiest time to move or get rid of shrubs was when the ground was still wet, but not soggy. I followed her advice and was able to dig out several plants that were taking over much too much real estate. 🍷

HISTORY BOOK PLANNING UNDERWAY

A committee of residents has formed to guide preparation of a history book for the Town in conjunction with Sandisfield's 250th anniversary in 2012. The members are: Anina Carr, Marty Cormier, Norton Fletcher, Kathy Jacobs, John Kuzmech, Don Peet, Beth Perry, Bob Royce, Tina Sotis and co-chairs Ron Bernard and Liana Toscanini.

Project consultants include Anne Hoffman, author of "Sandisfield, Biography of a Town"(1998) and Town Clerk, Dolores Haraskyo, as well as other residents with technical expertise. The Sandisfield Historical Society and other local heritage organizations will also play important roles. All current and former residents and friends of the town are encouraged to contribute in any way they can.

Bernard A. Drew, the well-known historian from Great Barrington, will be the Editor. Mr. Drew's columns on local history are popular regular features in the Berkshire Eagle. The hardcover book, which is expected to run about 300 pages, including many photographs, will be entitled: "Sandisfield, Then and Now, 1762-2012." The book will complement the many activities that are being planned by Town-sponsored committees to celebrate our 250th birthday in the summer of 2012.

The Committee is gathering historical

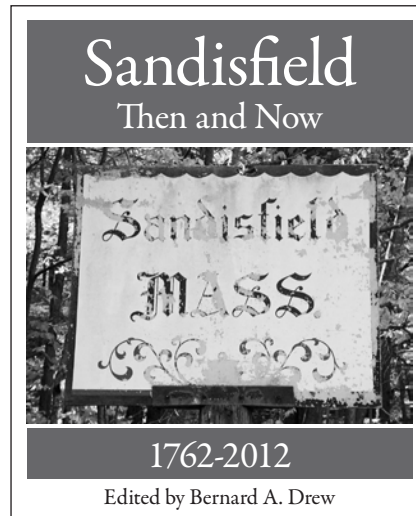
background for major sections including our farming traditions, sections of town, commerce and rural industries, the role of municipal institutions, education, arts and culture and the religious congregations among others. Co-chair Ron Bernard said, "The purpose of this book is to honor our ancestors ...not only the pioneers, but also the newcomer groups through the eras. Their work ethic, sacrifices and all sorts of contributions created Sandisfield's rich heritage. We owe this as a tribute to them and to foster pride in the town by future generations." Part of the story will be told through sketches of our many old houses

and the people who built them and lived in them. There are at least 120 surviving 18th and 19th century houses. The book will dedicate one page per house.

If you have historical information about your old house or family, including photos or anecdotes, or wish to help research or write about some aspect of town history, please contact any committee member or call Ron

Bernard at 413 269-0012 or email info@sandisfieldthenandnow.org. The project is going to be largely self-funded using proceeds from events, contributions, advance book sales, support from the town and local grants. The first fund-raiser will take place July 4th weekend featuring a family cookout with fun historical activities and a photo preservation opportunity for those wishing to have their old photographs digitized.

Can you help? Please contact Liana Toscanini at Tel 413 441-9542 or liana@communityaccesstothearts.org. 🍷



NO LIKE-UMS cont'd from p.1

After a long Berkshire winter when the ground thaws and the daffodils bloom the first of them arrive. For a number of days they just buzz around but don't seem to bite. That's because its the males who come first and they don't look for blood. Its the female who starts in on us in earnest as she needs a meal of fresh blood to lay her eggs.



In Sandisfield you'll see us coping with these annoying insects in various ways. Some people just stay inside. Black flies, unlike mosquitoes, don't come in the house. We gardeners resort to covering up, wearing hoods and even jackets which are made of screened fabric. This lets in some air and

you can see out (sort of) and the dreaded bug can't enter. There's insect repellent which is moderately effective. Most important are the neck, ears, face, wrist and hands. Then there is finding the right time of day - black flies love early morning or late afternoon - or choosing the right weather, they don't like wind so we welcome a windy day.

Some people don't seem too bothered by the black fly, perhaps they develop immunity. Then there are others who react when they are bitten with big red itchy bumps which can last for days.

And there's no question, as I have seen at first hand, the blood of a new British immigrant is especially desirable. *Fee! Fi! Fo! Fum! I smell the blood of an Englishman!* 🍷

LETTER FROM THE SELECTMEN

The Sandisfield Board of Selectmen would like to thank Robbin Campetti and the entire Sandisfield Recreation Committee for the wonderful Easter egg hunt they put on for the kids of our community this month at Yanner Park. This important committee continually provides memorable experiences for our children and reminds us why living in small town New England is so special. Thanks again for a job well done!

The May warrant will include an article for funding a town web-site. Three bids have been received for building and providing maintenance on this site and a group of residents will pick a winning proposal in late April. If approved by the voters, a town web site will allow residents to check minutes from the various town departments, have an updated calendar of community events, download permits, and hopefully in the future to be able to pay bills on-line. A town web-site would go a long way towards improving communication and fostering a sense of community within the town.


Town residents will be able to participate in three mini-site household hazardous waste collections through the Center for Ecological

Technology (CET). Funding for this program was made available through the dump sticker account. We will also be participating in this program for the fiscal 2011 calendar year. Listed below are the location, dates and times for this program. Products being accepted at these sites include **motor oil, oil based paints, turpentine, stains, and thinners. They will not accept latex paints. Pre-registration for participating in this program is necessary and can be done by calling 888-577-8448 ext.10 or ext.30 or e-mail Jamiec@cetonline.org.** For more information on this program please visit <http://cetonline.org/Events/events.php?id=97>

Great Barrington Recycling Center
Saturday, May 8, 2010 9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Lenox DPW
Saturday, June 5, 2010 9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Great Barrington Recycling Center
Saturday, June 23, 2010 4 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Please come out for the Annual Town Meeting on May 15th at 10:00 AM. We have some important items on the Warrant this spring and would love to see as many residents as possible take place in the deliberations. Participation in New England town government is the backbone of our democracy. Make your voice heard. 



POLICE/FIRE BLOTTER

The Sandisfield Volunteer Fire Department and Ambulance Squad responded to the following incidents during Jan, Feb and March of this year:

Fire Calls:

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Chimney fires | 1 |
| Brush Fires | 2 |
| Power lines down | 2 |
| Flooding | 1 |
| Motor Vehicle accidents | 3 |
| Mutual Aid | 2 |

Ambulance Calls:

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Motor Vehicle Accidents | 4 |
| MVA with Extrication | 1 |
| Medical calls | 14 |
| Total all calls | 30 |

Please contact Chief Ralph Morrison at 258-4742 if you are interested in joining the fire department or becoming an EMT on the ambulance squad. 

AVIAN NOTES

Margaret O'Clair

THE CHOIR COMMENCES

Not all our summer visitors come up from Manhattan. Members of the warbler family travel much further to reach their nesting grounds here in New England. A few species over-winter in our southern states, but most of this family spend their cold months in the sunny Caribbean and in Central and South America. Some come from as far as Peru and Argentina - a remarkable feat for a bird tinier than a sparrow.

The geographic distribution of the warblers, once they reach the north, varies enormously depending on the species. The Yellow Warbler (right) is found all over North America, breeding as far north as Alaska. Compare this to Kirtland's Warbler, which occupies just a tiny

niche in a few square miles of northern Michigan's pine woods. Bachman's Warbler is considered the rarest of North American song birds, huddled in the impenetrable swamps of Georgia and Alabama, and is listed as so endangered that some experts believe it may already be extinct.

Given the family name one would think these little birds could sing up a storm but in fact they are rather hard to hear and tell one from another by song. *The Field Guide* descriptions of their songs can be quite charming. The Chestnut Sided Warbler greets you with a "very very pleased to meet cha!" The Yellow sings "sweeter than sweet - sweeter than sweet". Most of the other vocalizations are rather more confusing; try telling the "zhe-zhe-zhe-zhe" of the Palm Warbler from the "zee-zee-zee" of the Prairie Warbler, or the "zizizizi" of the Blackpoll.

The birds' names can be confusing too. The Connecticut, Cape May Tennessee and Nashville warblers are seldom found near

where you'd think - but nest along the Canadian border and head to South America at the hint of a snowflake. Some common warblers that really are Sandisfield summer visitors and are not just passing through include the Black and White, the Black Throated Blue, the aforementioned Chestnut Sided, the Yellow and my favorite, the Yellow-Rumped. I love it because it is easily recognized in both summer and winter from its canary yellow backside. The breeding plumage is a soft blue grey overcoat and handsome black mask. It is a friendly little bird that tolerates people and most importantly it enjoys the same places that I do... summer in Sandisfield and in winter, Fort De Soto Park in Florida. 





OAT BAG AT TIFFANY'S

By Times Reporter

For almost two decades, Sandisfield's very own horse-whisperer, Katie Rocco, has searched for a way to honor and immortalize her amazing mother, Robin Thew, the Connecticut-born artist famous for sculpting whimsical window displays for Tiffany's in New York City.

Now, new technology has finally provided an answer. Combining a series of drawings by her mother with her own passion for everything equestrian, Katie recently decided to present the story to the world as a privately-produced children's book. It has just been published.

Katie's Dream
- and the fact

that it exists at all is not just a testament to Katie Rocco's persistence: it shows also just how publishing has become so radically changed, and how the old axiom that everyone has a book in them could be made true, and real, and put on sale.

Katie's Dream is the quintessential children's book, with the sparest of texts alternating with illustrations that are uncannily similar in style to the horse-sculptures which many New Yorkers may recall seeing in the jeweler's Fifth Avenue

windows back in the early Seventies. The story - think *My Friend Flicka*, *National Velvet* - is an all-too-familiar one, of a little girl obsessed with horses. And yes, the little girl is Katie (who as a grown-up is now a career dressage judge, event trainer and instructor, and currently runs her own instruction business, Dragonfly Farm).

Katie and her mom conceived the original idea for the book, and found a ready supporter in the late Gene Moore, formerly Creative Director of Window Dressing at Tiffany's, and the man who first commissioned Robin Thew's extraordinary sculptures. (The new book is dedicated to him, in gratitude.) The idea languished for years, but when Robin fell ill eighteen months ago, daughter Katie decided to push ahead quickly and publish the book herself - as technology now allows the enthusiast to do.

Sandisfield neighbors Fred & Diane Swartz, after seeing the first draft, then offered to help turn *Katie's Dream*

into a digital book. Katie then registered herself with the Library of Congress as Scribbles Publishing, and found ten investors who were kind enough - or savvy enough if she becomes a best-seller - to put up sufficient seed money to allow her to print a first run of 250 copies. And now the book is properly out - and a dream is realized, and a fine testimony to Robin Thew's

remarkable artistic gifts is available for the world, from the new publishing hub of Sandisfield, Massachusetts.

Katie's Dream costs \$20 and can be purchased online at www.katierocco.com or by calling 258-4459. But be warned: when she answers she may whisper, especially if you are a horse. 🐾



Weather & Stars Randy Siddell

New England's Dark Day

*The low-hung sky was black
with ominous clouds, save where
its rim was fringed with a dull glow,
like that which climbs the crater's
sides from the red hell below*

John Greenleaf Whittier

New England's Dark Day refers to an atmospheric event that occurred on May 19, 1780, when an unusual darkening of the day sky was observed over most of New England. According to one witness, "To the southward it was observed all along the seacoasts and to the north as far as our settlements extend..." Another person observed, "Candles were lighted up in the houses, the birds having sung their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent..."

For several days before the Dark Day, the New England sun appeared to be red, and the sky appeared yellow. Soot collected in rivers and in rain water, suggesting the presence of smoke.

A combination of smoke from forest fires, a thick fog, and cloud cover is believed to be the cause of this event. Despite a full moon, which appeared blood red, the darkness was so complete that candles were required from noon on. The gloom did not disperse until the middle of the next night.

The Beehive Cluster

This month, around 9pm if you gaze overhead and just southward you will find Mars, a dazzling orange planet. It is stationed between the constellations Cancer and Gemini, although Cancer can rarely be seen because of light pollution. On a dark, clear night, lying to the left of Mars and just slightly below it you may notice a small "fuzzy" spot, a cluster of around 200 stars called the Beehive Cluster, one of the nearest star clusters in the solar system - a distance of only 577 light years.

If looking without the aid of binoculars or a telescope, you might be able to see the cluster by gazing just to the left or right of the cluster, a technique called "averted vision." Through a pair of average binoculars one should be able to see clearly 12 to 15 brighter stars and many fainter ones.

The classical astronomer Ptolemy called it "the nebulous mass in the breast of Cancer." Galileo was the first to observe the Beehive in a telescope in 1609, and was able to resolve it into 40 stars.

I love the differences in observation and conclusions drawn about celestial objects between the east and the west: In Chinese astrology, the Beehive Cluster is the main celestial object in the 23rd lunar mansion (Hsiu Kuei or Xiu Gui). Ancient Chinese skywatchers saw this as a ghost or demon riding in a carriage and likened its appearance to a "cloud of pollen blown from willow catkins." 🐾

2010 Election: Can

TARA BEARDSLEY

Library Trustee – 1 year



My name is Tara Beardsley. I am running for Library Trustee in the town's next election. My family moved to Sandisfield five years ago. My husband Dana

and I have been married for 12 years and we have two children. Janey is 11, and many of you have met her at your home when she went door-to-door selling Girl Scout cookies. Our son Joey is 7, and you are likely to see him riding his bike in our driveway or running around the yard with some form of stick in his hand.

We live at 90 Sandisfield Road, which is commonly known as "the old Bidwell Chicken Farm." My husband runs a successful carpentry business, which has fortunately allowed me to concentrate on what I hold most dear, being a full time Mom. I am also a Junior Girl Scout Leader for the girls of Sandisfield and Otis. And I volunteer at my children's school as often as I can.

I decided to run for Library Trustee because I believe in the importance of a successful town library. I have ideas on how to make our library more enticing to the community. It was my idea to have an additional computer station, and that idea is currently in progress, thanks to a generous donation acquired by Clare English. The current Board hopes to have it installed and available to the public quite soon. I would also like to focus on involving more families with children into the library. I have several suggestions in mind, which I believe will be simple to achieve and valuable to the community.

RICHARD CAMPETTI

Selectmen – 3 years

Hi. My name is Richard Campetti. I am running for Selectman of the wonderful town of Sandisfield, a position I have had the distinguished honor of holding for the past 9 years. I am back again asking for your support to elect me for another term of service to our

town. I, and much of my family, have lived in Sandisfield our whole lives. I care for this town and wish to have a hand in guiding it through these tough times. I believe my experience of the last 9 years as Selectman, and 12 years as a Conservation Commissioner, give me an advantage to accomplish this. If you elect me, I promise to serve to the best of my abilities. Thank you. Sincerely, Richard Campetti

ANINA CARR

Library Trustee – 1 year

I began coming to Sandisfield for the summer at the age of 18 mos. My grandfather and father built our house on Sears Road around 1954, using a pick and shovel to dig the foundation. I've lived here full time since 1979. In the past, I served as Chair of the School Committee and Chair of the Conservation Commission. Currently, I work as a Paraprofessional at Muddy Brook Elementary School and serve on the board of the Sandisfield Arts Center, and as Treasurer of the Paraprofessional Unit of Berkshire Hills Education Association. I also serve on the Sandisfield Cultural Council and the Sandisfield Scholarship Committee with Elaine O'Brien. I hope that I can help to keep the library an important resource in town and if possible increase its use and value for the townspeople.

TERESA DELLAGIUSTINA

Board of Assessors – 1 year

NICHOLAS DELLAGIUSTINA

School Committee – 1 year

Teresa and Nicholas DellaGiustina live at 45 Clark Road, with their daughters, Madison 5, and Brooke 3. They have lived in Sandisfield for 10 years, and five years ago they built their own home.

Teresa has worked in many fields over the years, but has been working at H&R Block in Winsted for the past 15 years. She is also a certified Medical Assistant, with a degree in Marketing and Retail. But for the past five years she has been working as a "Mom".

Nicholas is a carpenter with Tolland Mountain Builders, a business that he started seven years ago with his father, Steven DellaGiustina. He is also an EMT, who served with the town when they first moved to Sandisfield.

Nicholas has been standing in for the School Committee for a few months. Teresa knows that it will be hard to fill Elaine O'Brien's services to the community, but says, "I feel I can with the support and teachings of the other assessors."

Both Teresa and Nicholas say that they want to "be part of this wonderful town. It has so much to offer. Our community just needs to get more involved and become more aware of what the town's needs are as well as the resident's needs. This is the first step for us to learn more about Sandisfield, and hopefully our views, values, and ideas can help in its future."

ROBERT FREDSELL

Selectman – 3 years

Editor's Note: Rob Fredsell was nominated at the Town Caucus for the 3-year term of Selectman, accepted the nomination, and will appear on the ballot. In the interim, **he decided not to run, but his name cannot be taken off the ballot at this point.** He apologizes for the inconvenience. **Please do not check the box with his name!**

JEFFREY J. GRAY

Selectmen – 1 year

I live on Stump Road on the Annecharico family farm with my wife, Sonja, three children, 36 alpaca, 4 cats and a dog. My partner, Alan Annecharico and I run Annecharico Construction, specializing in "ground work" including excavation, foundations, driveways, septic systems, culverts and stone walls. I have a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston, MA. My civil engineering degree has been useful in my construction work, and in my previous job as an engineer for the Commonwealth for ten years overseeing the construction of roads, bridges, and local highways. That's where I learned how to handle large quantities of administrative paperwork

didates' Statements

and I still maintain connections with the State personnel. I am familiar with town bylaws and building codes, as well as officials from the various town boards. As Selectman, I think I could help the town with everything from estimating and analyzing bid contracts, to administrative paperwork. I might even be able to save the town some money! Having arrived here in 1996, it's clear to me that Sandisfield is where I will be spending the rest of my life. I feel settled and ready to get involved. The one-year position is a great opportunity to learn the ropes. I'd like to think I have an open mind and can serve the people of Sandisfield fairly. I'd like to be a responsive Selectman, addressing concerns of residents in a timely manner. And I'm all for a town web site and hope to have a feature that would automatically email all local contractors when a project is put out to bid. I would appreciate your vote on May 17.

KATHLEEN JACOBS

Selectmen – 1 year term



I've been visiting Sandisfield since the 1970's and moved to Hammertown Road full time in 2004 with my husband of 29 years, Tom, and two dogs, Happy and Yak. I work full time as an

Information Technology Consultant and am currently co-chairing the town's 250th Birthday Celebration Committee. I have served as the Chair of the Finance Committee for the past two years and am a member of the Sandisfield History Book Committee. I'm running for office because I believe that if we all do just one thing to make our community better, we can accomplish a lot. I bring to the table the ability to bring together diverse groups of people to resolve issues. We all work hard and we need to have government do the same for all the people in town. I'm not adverse to change or improvement projects for the town but:

- The requests must come from the community.
- They must be analyzed and planned to ensure that they are in the best interest of all members of the community.
- If there is a cost associated with the project or request it must be funded responsibly.

Over the next few weeks I would like to meet with as many people in the community as I can. I will be holding a "Meet and Greet" on Saturday May 8th at Firehouse #2 on RT 57 starting at 10am. Stop by and have a cup of coffee or tea and a home baked treat. While we chat, tell me about your vision for the town in the years to come and more importantly, what you love about this town. I would like to speak with you about keeping our taxes affordable and how the town can grow but maintain our rural charm.

I would appreciate your vote on Election Day.

EDNA LEAVENWORTH

Tax Collector – 3 years

My name is Edna Leavenworth. I reside at 2 River Road with my son, his wife and two daughters. My husband and I and our three children moved to Sandisfield in June 1976 from Waterbury, CT. I believe it is the best move that I have ever made. I have many friends in Sandisfield and appreciate each one.

I was appointed Tax Collector on October 1, 1989, and have been re-elected for the last 21 years. I have worked diligently to clear up the delinquent taxes, and the town is now current with taxes due. I believe that my record as Tax Collector is a good one, and I would like the opportunity to continue to help the Town and keep the taxes current.

MARGARET O'CLAIR

Board of Health - 3 year term

I am running for re-election to the Board of Health for the same reasons I spelled out in my first election letter six years ago. I can offer some prior experience in this area and I am fortunate to have the time and energy to devote to the position. I hope I can have the Citizens of Sandisfield's support. Thank you.

BETHANY PERRY

Assessor - Three years



My name is Bethany Riiska Perry and I live on New Hartford Road in Sandisfield with my Husband Billy and our two daughters. I have been a resident of

Sandisfield for the last 10 years and enjoy helping my parents with their apple orchard across the street each fall. I have 18 years of banking and finance experience and I am currently employed as the Branch Manger of Legacy Banks in the Otis office. I have worked for Legacy for the past 10 years throughout Southern Berkshire County.

I am running for my third three year term as a Sandisfield Assessor. For the past 3 years I have also served as the chairperson for the Board of Assessors. The reason I am running again is the dedication I feel towards Sandisfield. Although I did not grow up in Sandisfield myself, my father Bill did. I have family in Sandisfield and feel proud to be an active resident within the town. I believe that we need more people to step up and help the town run smoothly.

GENE RIISKA

Planning Board – 5 years

I've lived in Sandisfield all of my 54 years and want to make sure that the growth of the town goes in the right direction. We need growth and more businesses. Farms are close to my heart since I grew up farming. My parents own the last active dairy farm. I think the town also needs to get up to date with a web site. I've been a volunteer for the Sandisfield Fire Department for 29 years and have almost never missed a meeting. I plan to be just as reliable on the Planning Board where I have served for the past nine months filling a vacancy.

Moderator – 1 year No nominations

Auditor – 1 year No nominations 



David Fitzgerald

1960-2010

David Fitzgerald, who died on April 4th when the plane that his uncle had built for him crashed soon after takeoff at a small airfield near Ghent, NY, was known widely as one of our town's more vigorous and adventurous residents. For the previous 25 years he had run a small contracting business – which among other projects rescued from near-collapse the old church that now houses the Sandisfield Arts Center – but was known principally as an adventurer and an amiable daredevil, a man “always up for anything,” as one of his relatives put it, “always enthusiastic, always full of life.”

David Hoeg Fitzgerald – his middle name given by his late mother, who was Danish – was born in Bronxville, NY, in 1960, and moved to Massachusetts when he was sixteen. After graduating from Smith Academy he worked in the construction industry in a variety of small towns between Goshen and Pittsfield until setting up his own business in Sandisfield in the 1980s. He remodeled the house on North Beech Plain Road where he would live for most of his later life, with his wife, the former Michelle Lindeen, who came to New England from San Francisco.

While Michelle adored Massachusetts, Dave was passionate about the American west, and after learning to fly at the Great Barrington airfield in the 1990s, would take cross-country trips to go hunting, fishing or skiing in the great western wildernesses. He would also fly to remote lakes and rivers in Alaska and western Canada. Ebullient and forceful by nature, he was very much a man's man, respected and admired by most who knew him. He was also a kindly man: he volunteered to fly pro-bono medical evacuation runs for the charity Angel Flights North-East, turning out in all weathers to help impoverished victims of desperately bad accidents and transport them to area hospitals.

But he was formidably accident-prone himself. In his youth he crashed countless cars and motorcycles, managing always to emerge smiling from the wreckage. But not on April 4th: he and a companion, Linda Christensen, 52 of Atlanta, had gone to deliver some architectural plans to a client in Columbia County, and were returning to Pittsfield in the single-engined Piper Cub that had been rebuilt by his late uncle, Marty Fitzgerald. The plane rose into the air but then turned unexpectedly and dived into the ground, bursting into flames on impact.

The plane – one of two owned by David – was something of a symbol. “Marty had built it, but then had been too old to fly it himself,” said a friend, “But years ago David went down to Mahopac and gave him a flight in it – it was such a kind and decent thing to do. It was a mark of the man. He was a memorable guy, and a good guy too.”

Sigrid Ruth Dieterle

1944-2010

Sigrid Ruth Dieterle, 65, of Stansen Lane in Sandisfield, died early Thursday morning April 15, 2010, at her home. Born on July 16, 1944, in Jersey City, NJ, daughter of Nils and Sigrid Tellefsen Stansen, she attended local schools in New Jersey. Ruth married her husband, Charles J. Dieterle, on July 17, 1965, at Bethany Methodist Church in New Jersey. The couple made their home in Sandisfield. For the past 22 years, she worked at Kolburne School in New Marlborough. Ruth's last position was as a team supervisor. She will be missed by all. Ruth leaves her husband of 44 years, Charles Dieterle, along with her son, Joseph C. Dieterle of Sandisfield; her sister, Mildred "Honey" Christ, and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her brother, Raymond, and two sisters, Mabel and Ellen.



ATTENTION LOCAL BUSINESSES:

If you're interested in a monthly business listing in *The Sandisfield Times*, starting with the June issue, please send a check for \$60 for 12 months (that's only \$5 per month!) to: **PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255**. Include five lines of text with your business name, address, phone, email and website if applicable. If you do not have a website you may substitute a tag line or short description of your services.



A FAMILY AFFAIR: LIFE ON SNOW FARM

Courtney Maum

One day Sue Tarasuk, newly landed in town from southern Connecticut, and with a freshly-minted diploma in plant science from UMass, put an ad in the paper advertising the fact that she might be available for garden work. The phone calls started coming in thick and fast, and Sue soon found herself with more jobs than she could handle. Luckily, her daughter Emily shared her love of the miracles of botany – and the pair began a business, Snow Farm Greenhouse and Nursery, that is now well on the way to becoming a Sandisfield institution.

When she was little, Emily Tarasuk thought she might be a photographer or teacher. In 2008, with a Plant, Soil, and Insect Science diploma of her own, she did become a teacher of sorts to would-be gardeners of the Southern Berkshires, who were in need of a little assistance. During the winter, while the seeds are hibernating, Emily helps her father with his company, Tarasuk Forest Management, preparing firewood and learning more about the principles of sustainable forestry management. Although the Snow Farm season doesn't officially begin until late April, Emily and Sue are busy in the greenhouse as early as



March, sowing seeds and potting up plugs. Once the season is underway, they tend to over 45 gardens of varying size, designing, installing and maintaining plots, while avoiding the occasional run-ins with black bears and poison ivy.

When asked what they loved most about their profession, mother and daughter had similar responses. "I love the hands-on nature of getting dirty, and being outside, and watching these tiny seeds grow and mature throughout the years." "And I love working with Emily," added Sue. The team attested to the ups and downs of working with, and in the elements.

"Trying to beat Mother Nature is tough," said Sue. "It's either too rainy, too hot, too cold, too dry. In the end, do you really make a profit? I don't think so. And yet, every year I just can't wait for spring, for the whole jump-into-it process. Watching a seed grow to a flowering plant, and having people enjoy it. I always look forward to a new beginning."

Their professional recommendations for the coming season? Emily suggests a cutting garden, her mother, an herb garden. Both are

easy ways to bring some home-grown love to the table. If it turns out that you're short on Thyme, you know who to call.

Snow Farm Greenhouse & Nursery. 413.255.4929

3/4 mile off of Route 57 on South Beech Plain Road, Sandisfield, MA.

www.snow-farm.com open from 9am to 3pm, Thursday through Monday. 

GOT FIBER?

*Patricia Hubbard with
Jean Atwater-Williams*

When it comes to technology, Sandisfield seems to have been behind the curve. For example: Beech Plain and Cold Spring Road didn't receive electricity until the early 70's, there were still telephone party lines in the 80's...and now... in 2010, 50% of the homes in Sandisfield are not able to get high speed internet service.

OK, so you may have chosen to live in Sandisfield because of the isolation, but enjoying

the woods, and the wildlife, and the solitude, doesn't preclude the necessity to function adequately in today's technological world. And that translates to access to high speed Internet.

High speed access is fundamental to the operation of businesses, government, health care providers, education, public safety and entertainment, and it is only going to become more important. Our town government is required to file all of their forms over the internet. Our students are at a disadvantage compared to their urban and suburban counterparts, since homework assignments often require internet access and the ability to download large amounts of data. College applications, financial aid forms, all require on-line applications, and again, require the ability to download data.

And the list goes on and on. Anyone who runs a home office knows that they are particularly vulnerable to the vagaries of erratic internet

service. Reliability is just not there. And Sandisfield is not alone. There are close to 50 towns in western Massachusetts without access to high-speed internet service. In Sandisfield Verizon ran banners across the road, proudly announcing the arrival of DSL. Except that they forgot to mention that DSL was only available in half the town. The other half of the town still has to depend on dial-up service, or wireless, or satellite: services, which are slow, unreliable, expensive, and cumbersome at best. Even the DSL service that is provided is behind the times in terms of speed and reliability. The answer seems to lie in the development of a fiber optic network. Fiber is technically superior because it is the only infrastructure that has the capacity to handle the increasing requirements of modern technology. It can handle high quality internet, telephone and television services as well as interactive video, telemedicine and more.

cont'd p. 13



Photo Richard Migot

MAY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 4 MA Dept of Transportation Hearing, 7PM
Subject: Route 8 Bridge Replacement
Old Town Hall, Silverbrook Rd

May 8 Family Cabaret, 7PM
Sandisfield Arts Center
\$10 adults/\$5 children under 14

May 8 Sandisfield Historical Society Meeting, 11AM
Sandy Brook Turnpike (Rt. 183)

May 8 Revolutionary War Encampment
Crafts, games, demonstrations
9am-5pm FREE/ALL WELCOME
Farmington River Elementary School

May 9 Revolutionary War Encampment 9am-Noon
Farmington River Elementary School

May 15 Annual Town Meeting 10AM
Town Hall (Silverbrook Rd)

May 16 Peter and The Wolf 1:30PM & 4PM – FREE!
New Marlborough Meeting House

May 17 Town Election, 10AM-8PM
Town Hall (Silverbrook Rd)

May 20 250th Birthday Committee Mtg 7PM
Town Hall Annex

May 22 Bulky Waste Collection
Transfer Station

May 22 New Boston Church Supper, 5-7PM
Firehouse #2
Adults \$10, Children under 12 \$5
Ham & Scalloped Potatoes, Takeouts available

May 22 Pam Johnson, Quilts, Artist's Reception 3-5PM
Sandisfield Arts Center

May 24 Electronics Collection
Town Hall Annex during regular hours
Call 258-4711 for details

May 29 National Register Plaque Unveiling 7:30PM
Sandisfield Arts Center

May 29 Val at 80, 8PM \$15
Val Coleman with Ben Luxon
Sandisfield Arts Center



Val Coleman ruminates on how it feels to live 80 years.

Photo Richard Migot

May 29 Otis Cultural Council Tag Sale 9AM-3PM
Otis Ridge, Rt. 23 (Rain date, May 30)

May 30 Memorial Day Parade, 10AM
Town Hall (Silverbrook Road)
All welcome to participate
Call 258-4615 for more info

Note: The Town Hall Annex is on Route 57 just north of the Post Office. Town Hall refers to the old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road where large town meetings and elections take place. The Sandisfield Arts Center is on Hammertown Road off Rt. 57. The Farmington River Elementary School is on Route 8 in Otis, North of Rt. 23. Firehouse No. 2 is on Rt. 57 in the center of Sandisfield.

FIBER cont'd from p.11

WiredWest is a recently formed grassroots organization made up of citizen representatives from the almost 50 towns in western Massachusetts who have been involved in discussions around bringing state of the art high speed internet to unserved and underserved areas of western Massachusetts, and they have concluded that building a fiber optic network is the best option. The towns include: Ashfield, Becket, Blandford, Buckland, Charlemont, Chester, Colrain, Conway,

"We need fiber optic - it's up to us to vote for it."

Cummington, Eggen Heath, Hinsdale, Leverett, Leyden, Middlefield, Monterey, Mt. Washington, New Marlborough, New Rowe, Savoy, Sheffield, Shelburne, Tyringham, Warwick, Washington, Wendell, West Stockbridge - and Sandisfield. They plan to work closely with the Massachusetts Broadband Institute to leverage their resources, reduce overall costs and ensure cooperative development.

At this point there is no financial obligation on the part of the town. It is simply in the planning stage.




A Warrant will be presented at the May 15th Town Meeting. It will state:

To see if the Town will vote to enter into immediate discussions with other western Massachusetts municipalities with the intent of entering an inter-municipal agreement, by and through the Select Board, pursuant to Chapter 40, Section 4A of the Massachusetts General Laws, for the purpose of establishing a universal, open access, financially self-sustaining communication system for the provision of broadband service, including high-speed internet access, telephone and cable television to the residents, businesses and institutions of these municipalities; or act in relation thereto.

Once all the town meetings are over, the towns that approved the article will begin discussions.

The Sandisfield Times will cover the progress of the WiredWest initiative as it develops. We will do our best to make it clear to all of us what is involved in building and establishing this fiber optic network. But without approval of the above Warrant, Sandisfield will not be a part of this process.

It is one more reason for everyone to come to the town meeting on May 15th.

One resident said, "We need fiber optics - it's up to us to vote for it." 




FIRST THE HOUSES, NOW THE BRIDGE

By Times Reporter

For years townsfolk have been discussing what to do about Sandisfield's notorious Route-8 dog-leg, the half-century old iron bridge that takes the busy highway and Route 57 across the Farmington River in New Boston. Now, what is described as a "shovel-ready" plan to smooth out the dangerously sharp curve and make the bridge safer and possibly even prettier, has been developed by the Massachusetts Department of Highways, and the wraps will be taken off the proposal at a Town Hall meeting scheduled for 7pm on May 4th.

Route 8, a road originally intended to connect I-95 to the MassPike through western Connecticut, nowadays provides a convenient pathway for heavily laden Canada-bound trucks wanting to get around the weight-restrictions of the New York Thruway system. But when two eighteen-wheelers meet at the Sandisfield bridge, chaos results: there are traffic jams, angry scenes, complaints – though according to fire chief Ralph Morrison, who lives close by, surprisingly few bad accidents.

Recently increased traffic density has clearly affected the structural integrity of the bridge – townsfolk fishing in the stream below complain that rust showers down on them whenever a heavy truck passes overhead. Last year a design consulting firm, AECOM, was commissioned to provide a structural report for the state, to see what repairs might allow the bridge's continued survival. After studying this still-confidential report, the Highway Department's Lee-based District 1 Bridge Engineering Office – together with what is called the Department's so-called Accelerated Bridge Section – has come up with a formal plan for action.


Although drafts of the plan have been only by a few, it is believed that the roadway will be somewhat realigned and the bridge itself – which is in very poor shape – will be repaired. Hopes for a brand-new bridge appear to have fallen foul of the economic downturn. The hope is that Sandisfield residents will approve the proposal, although the state - apparently eager to begin work - has promised only to consider "to the maximum extent possible" the views of residents. 

PETER AND THE WOLF

The Southern Berkshire Regional School District and the New Marlborough Village Association will present a staged version of Sergei Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf at the New Marlborough Meeting House on Sunday, May 16th at 1:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. The performances, which are free and

open to the public, last under one hour, and will be followed by a reception in the Meeting House Gallery. Written and first performed in 1936, Peter and the Wolf is a beloved children's story told by a narrator, accompanied by an orchestra. The tale follows a young boy named Peter in his attempt to capture the wolf. As forewarned by Peter's grandfather, the wolf emerges from the woods, enters the meadow, and swallows the duck. With the help of his animal friends, Peter successfully captures the wolf.

Peter then prevents the hunters (who have been tracking the dangerous animal) from shooting the wolf and instead leads a victory parade, taking the wolf to the zoo. The May 16 production, directed and narrated by Ralph Petillo, will feature SBRSD students acting out the various characters of the drama – Peter, a bird, duck, cat, grandfather, hunters, and, of course, the wolf. The music will be performed by the Burrirt Chamber Players, under the direction of Ben Harms, in a reduced version for woodwind quintet and percussion.

Major funding for this event has been provided by the New Marlborough Cultural Council, with assistance from the Cultural Councils of Monterey, Sheffield, Sandisfield, Alford, Egremont, Otis, and Great Barrington. For more information please call 413-229-2785. 





Kinderland and we had lunch at Villa Mia, where I picked up a couple of copies of The Sandisfield Times. What a great little paper you've put out! The lead article solved a long standing mystery for me, as you must have suspected it would; and the rest of the issue was newsy, intelligent, professional, and a real pleasure to read in every way. Please accept my contribution with best wishes for continued success. Great job!

Sincerely, Alice Schechter,
Brooklyn, NY



Thank you for the Inaugural issue of the Sandisfield Times. It was such a wonderful surprise to receive it today. We appreciate all the work that went into it and look forward to receiving it in the future. Sandisfield is very important to us!! Sincerely,

James and Mary Costigan
& Family, Town Hill Road



Congratulations to all you intrepid reporters on The Sandisfield Times. Howard and I had such a good time reading every article. You do realize, though, that you've exploded the local myth that Sandisfield is in the boonies and of no particular appeal – now everyone will know that fascinating, knowledgeable and witty people live there, and that it's a grand place to live. Keep up with this good effort!

Affectionately,
Howard & Valerie Smith,
Great Barrington



Congratulations on the look and content of your inaugural issue! My wife and I particularly related to the article, "Why All The Sand In Sandisfield?", which, in passing, made reference to concerns about salt infiltration of wells, something we can certainly attest to!

We purchased our home 14 years ago. The previous occupants owned it for 8 years. Thus, for at least 22 years the well water has been unfit for drinking due to road salt contamination. The Town acknowledged this years ago, in the form of a small tax abatement. At a subsequent meeting with the Board of Health (or Conservation Committee?), attended by a representative of the state DEP, I presented a water analysis of my well which led the DEP agent to note the salt content was greater than seawater!

I know I have neighbors with shallow wells who are experiencing the same difficulty but the Town, to my knowledge, has not shown any real interest in helping to ameliorate the problem.

We're tired of hauling bottled water, bathing in saltwater and living in fear that our appliances and plumbing will rust away at any moment!

HELP!

Richard Friedman
Ruth Dec-Friedman
133 Sandisfield Road



Dear Sandisfield Times,

I just received the inaugural issue of the Sandisfield Times and wanted to thank you all for your efforts and hard work. It was a great issue with many interesting news items.

My mother, Helen Meisl, lives in Sandisfield and does not drive. Is there a way that she can have the Sandisfield Times delivered to her? She would be willing to pay for postage and any other costs. Please let me know.

Again, thank you for a terrific first issue! I look forward to many more!

Sincerely,

Nancy Sullivan



Good Afternoon,

I just read your April issues of The Sandisfield Times..... congratulations! It is nice to have a place to read about the local happenings.

I am attaching a word document that clarifies a lot of the information in the article about Carr Metal Products. I would like to submit it as a letter to the editor:

Mystery Solved

Carr Metal Products was founded in 1972 by my father, James A. Carr. With a pioneering spirit he left a management job with American Standard and opened shop in Sandisfield with one machine. The shop building was still part of a working farm then; I can still remember cows being tethered to that one lone machine. While my father worked the machine, my mother "worked" the cows, filling buckets of fresh milk for their 12 children.

My father's drive to succeed coupled with his innovative approaches and shrewd business sense laid the groundwork for what was to become one of the most valued small companies to serve Hamilton Sundstrand.

In the early years my brother James M. Carr joined my father in this endeavor. Jim had a genius for engineering and a creative manufacturing mind that helped my father develop a prized niche in the aerospace industry. In 1992 he took over ownership of the company.

Carr specialized in nozzle and orifice assemblies that regulated fuel flow in jet engines. We maintained the control standards necessary to produce product that met internationally accepted contamination critical requirements. In-flight failure of our product could cause downed aircraft. Our "home grown" employees knew the importance of their work and consistently rose to the challenges that faced them. They were a group to admire and respect.

We encourage letters from our readers that are thoughtful, concise and signed.

To the Editor:

Warmest congratulations, from an outsider, on the inaugural issue of the Sandisfield Times. It is well written, informative, and even further enlivened by interesting photos. At long last, Sandisfield is beginning to assume an identity.

I am very impressed that Ron Bernard is attempting a history of Sandisfield. I hope that Annie Hoffman will be used as a resource. Her book, "Sandisfield: Biography of a Town" is one of the best accounts of a town history that I have read. As they say in vaudeville, a tough act to follow.

In the meantime, *vivat tribunus plebis sandisfieldis. Perscriptio meus in manibus tabellariorum est.*

Maggie Howard
Tyringham



Since 1981 I have been a Director of Camp Kinderland in Tolland, MA, and therefore have spent many summers and other periods of time in the Sandisfield area. I was up at camp yesterday visiting our full time staff at Camp

At one point Carr Metal employed 14 people and had yearly gross sales in excess of two million.

In 2001 James M. Carr died, followed by James A. Carr in 2002. In 2002 the business incorporated and stayed in the Carr family until 2006. In 2006 the corporation transferred out of the Carr family; the business closed three years later.

The "big grey clapboard house" mentioned in Jerry Herman's article in the April 2010 issue of the Sandisfield Times was the homestead of James and Eloise Carr. I and my eleven siblings were raised there.

I worked at Carr for 25 years as the Quality Manager. When I drive by the building now I am struck by the same melancholy expressed in Jerry's article. I sometimes think I can still hear the hum of machinery, the insistent ringing of the phone and the friendly chatter of the employees. If I close my eyes and drift back to childhood I can still remember swinging out the hayloft doors, capturing barn swallows in the now empty windows, playing kick the can, red rover red rover, and the pick me up ball games that all the kids in the neighborhood would gather for.

Those times are over and we are now left with the question, "What is next for the big red barn?"

Thank you.

Mary Carr Cohutt
413-562-2260



Did you know
**Sandisfield has a
blog?**

**<http://sandisfield.blogspot.com>
to view articles
and photos, make
comments, and
links to local
businesses.**

CLARIFICATION & CORRECTIONS:

The Sandisfield Board of Selectmen would like to clarify some of the information put forward in The Times regarding the Route 8 Houses. Prior to publication the Board of Selectmen didn't have any contact with the owners regarding these properties and no agreement had been reached between the parties to avoid a potential legal fight. The Town received two estimates from contractors for the demolition of these properties and has included potential legal fees in order to come up with the \$45,000 figure that will be placed on the May warrant. If the voters of Sandisfield agree to allow the Selectmen to move forward with this project then Town Council will start the legal proceedings needed in order to tear these structures down. If approved, the money needed to begin this process won't be available until July 1.

A week before the Times came out, David Wilber, guardian of the house at 95 South Main Street contacted Sandisfield Town Council Jeremia Pollard and offered to give this property to the Town with the stipulation that the area be used as a park dedicated to his father Samuel Wilber a former selectman, police chief, and World War II hero. Under this scenario the Town would be responsible for destruction of the house.

Many people have been actively working behind the scenes in order to bring this issue before the voters in May. We would like to thank the Finance Committee, Town Treasurer Clare English, Town Council Jeremia Pollard, the Conservation Committee, the Sandisfield Board of Health, and Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko for the time and energy they have put forth in this project to date. The role of the Board of Selectmen is to provide factual information to town residents so that they can determine the fate of this issue once and for all.

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES NEEDS YOU!

Our newspaper depends on the support of our readers - and it is your generosity that will help to assure our future as a forum for all.

Please send your check to:

**The Sandisfield Times
P.O. Box 584
Sandisfield, MA 01255**



FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS!

☞ We have appointed an **Agony Aunt**, who will happily respond to your letters about any private personal trials and tribulations that may concern you. She may be reached at **agonyaunt@sandisfieldtimes.org**; everything published will be anonymous.

☞ **In Highway & Byways** we will explore, each month, the length and breadth of one of our more obscure or forgotten roads. Where is Viets Road, for example? Who lives on Shade Road? And what goes on down Sullivan Road?

☞ **Edible Sandisfield** will be a new feature written by Boston chef Adam Manacher, presenting a regular recipe using just fresh and seasonal foods that are readily available from the farms and fields of Sandisfield.

☞ **Hatched, Matched & Dispatched** will record all of the Births, Marriages and Deaths within our community.

We acknowledge with gratitude donations from the following kind people:



George & Anne Apostolatos

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The Sandisfield Times is an independent nonprofit organization staffed by volunteers from the Sandisfield community and funded by individual and business sponsors. Its mission is to connect the community through reliable, regular, and relevant information.

The Sandisfield Times does not yet have a designation of a 501(c)(3), therefore donations are NOT tax-deductible at this time. **Donations of all sizes are needed to ensure the continuation of this newspaper.** Please send checks to: *The Sandisfield Times*, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255. For more information visit our website www.sandisfieldtimes.org.

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the Silverbrook Café, Tuckers, and Villa Mia. Copies are also available in Otis at the Farmington Elementary School and Terranova's. Other locations include the Monterey General Store, the Southfield Store and Bizalion's French Cafe.

The Times can also be mailed to your home by paid subscription (see form below) and online as a PDF document at www.sandisfieldtimes.org.

We welcome submissions, comments and suggestions, including letters to the editor **BY THE 10TH OF THE MONTH PRIOR**. We may edit for space, style or clarity. We will try to publish Public Service Announcements when we have room, with priority given to Sandisfield organizations. No portion of the *The Sandisfield Times* may be reproduced without permission.



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