

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



Plebis

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume I, Number 6

September, 2010



Photo: Patricia Hubbard

THE ROAD NO LONGER TRAVELED

On Monday, August 16th, the Sandisfield Selectman relieved Highway Superintendent Chris Rines of his duties. *The Times* was unable to obtain a clear understanding of the rationale behind this decision. Chris was hired last August and therefore was in the position for one year. The Sandisfield Board of Selectman had no comment at press time. Chris Rines was not available for comment either. In addition, at present there is little information available about the Town's search for a replacement. Many people believe that the roads are in better shape than in previous years, so the question remains: *Why did he lose his job?*

The maintenance of the roads is a major portion of the Town budget and has long been a controversial subject in Sandisfield. We have 96 miles of roads, about half of which are dirt. Our town trucks are between five and ten years old and require a great deal of maintenance as well. Since snow may begin to fall by November, the town will have a short period

of time in which to hire a replacement and bring that person up to speed. *The Sandisfield Times* will continue to follow this story and we hope to be able to provide more insight and information on what is clearly a controversial subject in our next issue. ♣

A WORD TO THE WISE

We've had reports of someone who is stealing from properties in Sandisfield and New Marlborough. So far the only items taken have been agricultural gates. We'll keep you advised as we receive any updated information.

So How's BUSINESS?

By Rita Kasky

I really had a great time the week of August 9. Spurred on by a question from a friend with homes in Sandisfield and Williamstown who asked "How's business in Sandisfield", I nosey-bodied around town and spent some time with several of our local proprietors. Here's what I learned.

THE NEW BOSTON STORE

Friday, August 06, 2010: 1:00pm
- Stopped in to see Pete and Sue Murray at the New Boston Store.



All photos for this article by Rita Kasky

As I walked in, the familiar "ding dong" of the doorbell signaled to Pete and Sue Murray that I was there and ready to have a chat. The New Boston Store has been in the hands of the Murrays for nearly 38 years and it's the only game in town when you need a quart of milk, run out of gas or feel lucky enough to buy a lottery ticket. Matter of fact, if you have a winning ticket, so does Pete. If a winner cashes a ticket at the New Boston Store, Pete gets a 1% commission, up to \$15,000! In the past Pete had an online game winner for \$1,750,000 and a scratch ticket at \$20,000. Last year Pete might have wished he'd had a lot of winners - business was terrible. Rain and chilly weather kept people away. No one was in the least bit interested in stopping for sandwiches, beer, sodas or ice cream. It was a bust. To keep things manageable, Pete Cont'd on p.2

IT'S A BIRD! IT'S A PLANE! ... NO! IT'S A NOAA WEATHER BALLOON!



Credit: NOAA

This month Sandisfield Native **Charlie Pease** had an unusual discovery in a hay field on Route 57. **Molly Hubbard**, a Middlebury College sophomore, did a little research to help us understand the significance of Charlie's find.

Charlie Pease's family came to Sandisfield in the 1800s, and Charlie himself has hayed fields since he "was born". All his life he has logged woods and built buildings. Charlie has seen it all and he has a lot of wonderful stories to tell. But now he has a new story to add to his repertoire.

On Sunday, August 8th, Charlie mowed the Powell's field in New Boston. On August 11th, Charlie returned to the field to retrieve some tools he left behind, but he found something he did not expect to see. A balloon had settled in the middle of the same field he had left just a few short days ago. According to Charlie, it looked like a kid's balloon, with a long string attached. But it seemed so odd and out of place in the middle of that field, that he went to check it out.

Charlie discovered that there was a box attached to the balloon. And as he looked even closer he saw that this was a NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) weather balloon. Information in the box indicated that it had been launched from Albany on July 13th. And one month later it appeared in the Powell's hay field in Sandisfield.

According to the NOAA website, every day NOAA launches weather balloons from 102 sites throughout the United States, the Caribbean and the Pacific to help with weather forecasting. Cont'd on p.2



The First Weather Balloon Flown
Credit: NOAA

WEATHER BALLOON

Cont'd from p.1

Inside the box that Charlie found was a piece of weather equipment called a radiosonde, a battery-powered instrument that is suspended below the hydrogen or helium-filled balloon. As the balloon travels through the atmosphere the radiosonde sensors measure and transmit profiles of air pressure, temperature and relative humidity from the Earth's surface to about 20 miles up in the sky. *Less than 20 percent of the approximately 75,000 radiosondes released each year are found and returned for reconditioning, saving the cost of a new instrument.* Being the good Samaritan he is, Charlie dutifully filled out the paperwork in the box and returned the balloon with all the data, to a NOAA office in Missouri.

The question we have is this: does Charlie now have enough pull with NOAA to ask them to work on making it snow a little less in Sandisfield? Time will tell. ❄️



HOW'S BUSINESS?

Cont'd from p.1

tightened up a bit on inventory and bit the bullet. He says that "if we weren't located where we are, at this intersection, we probably wouldn't make it. A lot of our business is from people just passing by. Plenty of second home owners in the summer, then the kids go back to school and folks go back to the city". Of course many local folks stop at Pete's but he needs the customer diversity to keep things going.

The gas pump is profitable and, while his per gallon price is a few cents higher than in the larger towns, it's simply because his tank only holds 1000 gallons, not enough to earn a big discount from the supplier. On cigarettes he charges what the state requires and although he could sell them for more, he doesn't.

"This year's been good so far" he says with a smile. And that's good for all of us.

THE NEW BOSTON INN



Saturday, August 7, 10am. Visited with Barbara Colorio, proprietor of The New Boston Inn.

While I occasionally eat at the New Boston Inn, I'd really only met Trudy, the hostess/waitress, who always greets us warmly. So, when I had the chance to

interview Barbara, the inn's owner, chef, and woman of all trades - my eyes opened wide as she laid out what it takes to run a restaurant and Bed and Breakfast (B&B). Barbara moved to Sandisfield six years ago with her a strong desire to own her own business (a

change from her job as a chef cooking for CEO's in the Boston area). She had responded to an on-line ad selling the New Boston Inn, drove out, pulled into the driveway and "knew it was mine".

While the inn had been a going business for many, many years, Barbara quickly faced the same issues that previous owners wrestled with - how to get local Sandisfield residents to dine there. She's got a restaurant with good food, a wide array of dishes on the menu, it's in an historic building (built in 1737) and right at an important intersection with lots of parking spaces. Diners come from Otis, Becket and the surrounding towns but very few from Sandisfield. Barbara has advertised the inn and the restaurant in magazines and newspapers, lowered menu prices in the off season, offered discount coupons and put up a number of signs to catch our attention. Yet for some reason locals are rarely to be found inside.

Looking back, Barbara says her best years were 2006-2007, just before the recession. The guest rooms were filled every weekend with folks from all over. People were coming in droves. Barbara's eyes shine as she remembers, "Those were times when I would just go out in the back yard and listen to the hum of the place. When the inn is full and the restaurant is booming, I just go outside and listen to the hum and say to myself, 'this is the way life should be'". Business is up a bit from last year when there was a lot of belt-tightening and Barbara hopes to see the year close on the positive side of the ledger. She'd love to be able to hire a cook so she can get out of the kitchen and into the dining room and pub to meet and greet customers. Do drop in and have a burger and a beer or one of her special dinners. Food's good!

TUCKERS



Tuesday, August 10, 2pm. Met with Deb and Scott Stone at Tuckers.

I hadn't been to Tucker's in a while, maybe not since Deb and Scott and Deb's parents, Steve (who makes the pizza and does the books) and

Dale McCuin bought the place in 2007. Committed to making the business work ("come hell or high water" according to Scott), the Stones, along with help from their 17 year-old son, do practically all the work themselves.

Looking back at their debut year, it was absolutely the worst. The economy had tanked and the cost of doing business rose dramatically. Flour prices quadrupled and, since pizza is the best selling item on the menu, their expenses rose significantly. Gas prices were up to around \$4.00 a gallon and people weren't driving around as much. Business was very slow. Regular customers - most from either Sandisfield or Colebrook, were coming in but not as often, they were spending less and bikers weren't out in the rain.

To save money and make the business more profitable, the Stones cook their own french fries and chicken wings from scratch rather than buying the frozen pre-seasoned ones. It's a lot more work but they find big

cost savings and the food is fresher and tastes better. This year, with the weather more accommodating, people are dropping in and the bikers are back, even if they only stop for 45 minutes, have a beer and get out on the road. Income is up about 10% over last year although they project they need to be up by 30-40%.

This brave couple, who had never been in the restaurant business before, feel they're still on a learning curve. Steve's learned to cook (so you'll only find him in the kitchen), Deb's running around greeting and seating guests, doing dishes and cleaning up. Although they're open Wednesday through Sunday, late afternoon through dinner, they really work 7 days a week, keeping Tucker's in shape. Keep up the good work, Deb and Scott.



A & M AUTO

Tuesday, August 10, afternoon. Met with Ralph Morrison at A&M Auto.

Good news from Ralph. This, his 36th year in the business, has been good. He can keep his inventory on the low side because parts are

quickly available from nearby suppliers and he's got a team that works well together. Ralph figures that about 60% of his business comes from repairs and inspections and 40% from towing. Best years ever? Probably 2005-6.

Stop in sometime and ask Ralph to tell you how he and a pal attacked an old chicken coop and manually pushed it back up from its leaning position, thus creating the framework for what would become A & M. He loves to tell the story.

TERMAR TRIANGLE FARM



Wednesday, August 11, 11:30am - Met with Marcia Ignace at TerMar Triangle Farm.

I thought it was time to head over to the south side of town and see what's doing there. Had a lovely chat with Marcia at her

fruit and veggie stand. Marcia and Terry have been living on the corner of Rte 183 and South Sandisfield Road since 1997 and have been open for business since 2000. Marcia reports that business has been exceptional this year. How good to hear that! She has no complaints at all, saying that "Our customers are good and honest people" and she can run the stand on the honor system. Regular customers come from Winsted and Colebrook and the weekenders come from New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. When you have such fresh produce (try the peaches - they're outstanding), people will go out of their way to find it.

Not too many locals, though. Bill and I are glad for that - means more for us. Especially the peaches.

Cont'd on p.5



Photo: Molly Hubbard

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Musings from Quill Hill

Patricia Hubbard

The shoes of Simon Winchester are not easy ones to fill. Simon, in conjunction with his talented wife Setsuko, had a clear vision when they began editing this newspaper. They set a tone and a standard of excellence that we intend to maintain while he is off introducing the world to his latest book. We are pleased that Setsuko will continue to be a part of the newspaper when she is not traveling with Simon.

For the next four months Simon's editorial shoes are mine to wear. I will share the responsibility with Tina Sotis, who continues to design the paper and will now increase her workload by serving as co-editor. We will all do our best to continue to provide readers with a newspaper that stimulates, informs and entertains. And I hope that new writers will join us as we delve into issues that are important to all of the residents of Sandisfield.

I am truly a newcomer, having moved to Sandisfield

less than three years ago. I moved here from Litchfield County, CT, and although we had lived on an old dairy farm and were used to beautiful surroundings, Sandisfield definitely has more trees, fewer people, and life is different.

So, what's going on? What is it that's important to you who have lived in Sandisfield for generations and have raised families here, or are currently raising families? What is important to readers who live up toward Otis? What is important to readers who live almost on the Colebrook line? What do you want to know more about, and what do you want to share with your neighbors? We invite new writers to share their experiences and thoughts with us.

In this issue we are taking a look at some of the businesses that exist in Sandisfield, and the people who work hard at running them. I ran a small business for many years in Connecticut. I know how hard it is to keep your employees happy and to make payroll. My husband used to stay awake at night worrying about "The Cash Flow Blues". Sound familiar? I hope that the article in this issue by Rita Kasky will provide some insight into some segments of our local economy. I once made a New Years' resolution that I would try as much as possible to support individual and local merchants. Sometimes it might cost a bit more but it is important to support our neighbors and their businesses.

Our schools are a major portion of the town budget. Yet increasingly, local families are determining that they prefer to home-school their children. Each family has a different reason for this decision. My children are now in college, but I did think long and hard about the notion of home-schooling. I determined that I was working too many hours for it to have been practical for me. But I have great admiration for the families who are able to devote the time and have the patience to educate

their children at home.

We are also introducing something new this month. "History's Mysteries". This month check out the photo that Ron Bernard has unearthed as he continues his meticulous research into Sandisfield's history. Can you identify where the photo was taken? Let us know.

We have so many wonderful monthly columnists. Margaret O'Clair enchants us with her bird stories, Randy Siddell takes us on a voyage through the stars, Adam Manacher tantalizes our taste buds with his timely recipes, Mick Burns captures a special part of Sandisfield life with his Country Diary, and Dassy Herman motivates us to take another look at our gardens. Each month Tina Sotis enhances our cultural awareness with her interviews and interpretations of local artists and their current shows. This month Tina interviews Sandisfield's own Susie Crofut whose show opens at the Lenox Library gallery on September 3rd. And starting this month we have a new writer, Tara Beardsley, who will keep us informed about the goings on at the Farmington River School and other events which impact our children. And Judy Goldsmith has now taken on the very important task of putting together the Calendar of Events.

So, here we are. The sun is shining today, as it has for most of this glorious summer, and yet before you know it another season will be upon us. Next month we are going to write about the Ghosts of Sandisfield. Do you have any lurking around your attic, your barn, or your bedroom closet? We would love to hear about them. Do you have something that you are passionate about, or find interesting? We are always looking for new columns. (and they don't have to be written every month).

Stay in touch... Patricia 

BRAIN ENHANCEMENT OR WHY I LEARNED TO PLAY THE CELLO AT AGE 70

By Judy Goldsmith

As I approached my 70th birthday, I began to worry about my diminishing brain cells. How could I pump up my brain? Alas, I had no interest in learning to play bridge or in doing crossword puzzles. Since I love music and have a discerning ear, I thought it might be fun to learn to play the cello and what's more I could do it sitting down! Little did I know that I would be embarking on a journey that would test my brain to its limit.

First of all I am left-handed, small handed and arthritic handed! Also, my eyes see like a 70-year-old and I'm beginning not to hear as well as I used to. Add to the mix my Russian cello teacher, who has a very thick accent and has retired after a long distinguished career. However he really knows his stuff and he plays like an angel - a good role-model. Being a brusque Russian task-master, he answers no questions and expects correctness, but thankfully, not perfection.

I am learning to hold the bow in its correct position with my wimpy right hand, which is painful for me, and to stroke the strings lightly. With my stronger left hand, I am attempting to hold my fingers firmly and precisely on each string to make the right note. And if that were not enough, my teacher expects me to read music, practice scales with correct intonation, and then PLAY music on the darned instrument. Let me tell you, this is not "instant gratification".

My first piece was the old favorite "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." I would play the melody on my cello while he played harmony on his cello. After one year I am proud to say that I finally "nailed it."

And, best of all, I AM NOW PRODUCING GOOD SOUND. I mean, it

actually sounds pretty good when I concentrate very, very hard.

This year I have begun to understand what my teacher is saying. We have worked out a way to distinguish between the D and the G sounds. I found that he has a bit of a sense of humor. I actually like him. He tells me that he can teach an old bear how to dance. Does he mean me?

And I am developing a repertoire. I now know several charming songs, my latest being "Jingle Bells". It has a nice ring.

My only goal is to learn to play correctly with good intonation. I love practicing scales. I enjoy holding the instrument. I know that playing will help my arthritis and will enhance my brain. What more can I want?

So, don't move over yet, Yo Yo Ma! 



Photo: Ted Goldsmith



Country Diary

Mick Burns

NOT YOUR AUNT BEE'S PICKLES

In the garden:

- The buckwheat has bloomed and for several days the air was full of the sound of bees and the scent of clusters of small white blooms. The first red grains are starting to form.
- The blueberries are nearly gone, but the blackberries are coming on strong.
- I have a plastic-sheeted, open-ended greenhouse which houses tomatoes, peppers, eggplant and cucumbers. During a rainy summer like last year it was indispensable. This year the garden outside the greenhouse is nearly as dry as inside the greenhouse.

- The cucumbers and squashes are suffering from white powdery mildew - severe enough that a trip to Wards resulted in buying some organic fungicide whose active ingredient is a .074% QST 713 strain of *Bacillus subtilis*. Sprayed on the leaves, it initially made a noticeable difference. But by the time the seven days instructed to wait until re-applying had passed, the mildew was back.
- The basil has thrived this year. It has been a wonderful summer for almost all vegetables.
- I started the first of the year's crock of pickles the second week in August.

Interesting, then, that in my quest for pickles I should enlist the aid of yet another bacteria. Well, .074% bacteria, that is. Fermenting, or pickling vegetables is a simple, healthy way to preserve them. It not only changes the flavor and texture of foods, but arguably makes for more available nutrients as well. Salt and bacteria are key. The appropriate strength brine allows the bacteria (in this case we're promoting *Lactobacillus*) to grow and transform foods. The book, *Wild Fermentation* by Sandor Katz (Chelsea Green, 2003), is an informative and valuable read. Lately recommended by a friend, it touches on all types of ferments and includes an account of the history of fermentation. Using his

methods I have made very successful sauerkraut and pickles.

Start with a crock or large glass jar fitted with a lid (or plate) which fits just inside the jar. Clean, then sanitize the crock and lid with scalding hot water. Start by putting several washed grape leaves at the bottom, followed by garlic (one or several heads), peppercorns and dill. Then load nearly full with cukes. (Use cukes that are less mature, before they turn yellow.) Cover these with a brine of 3/4 cup of canning salt (not iodized or sea salt) dissolved in one gallon of water. Place the lid and weigh it down with another jar filled with water so that the brine covers the cukes and lid. Cover everything with a few layers of cheesecloth.

Starting about the second day, foam, bubbles and slime will form on the surface of the brine. Skim off this slime everyday, and rinse the lid and weight. Depending on the temperature, the ferment will have penetrated fully in about three weeks. You can then start eating them right away, and taste the transformation over time. You can also add more cucumbers as they come along. I find that the basement is usually a good place for them. If they get too warm they will go soft and spoil. I also like to add a few hot peppers to mine, and just about any vegetables can be fermented this way. ♡

HOME IS WHERE THE BRAINS ARE

By Nick Dyja

In my imagination, no elementary school child was luckier than a homeschooled child. He would wake up at 9:30, watch Spongebob Squarepants until lunch, do a few math problems and then head over to the park. I knew absolutely nothing about anything related to homeschooling, except that I despised it. It seemed so relaxed, so very different from the rigid structure of my own elementary school.

But other than this, I had not even an inkling of what the homeschooling system was like. Except that there was, especially in this corner of the world, a lot of it. And I decided to find out what it is - and why people around here seem to like it.

I started by calling Ms. Eileen Folmer, a Sandisfield resident. Ms. Folmer has two daughters, both of whom are homeschooled. I was ready to ask questions, but Ms. Folmer began by explaining to me that I could ask her any question about homeschooling, but she could vouch for her method of teaching only. I started with the only question I could think of: What is the schedule like?

Ms. Folmer explained that she tries to begin each day by nine. The structure is more formal for three days of the week, meaning that conventional textbooks and worksheets are used. Because she does not need to give her children time between classes to grab books or eat a formal lunch, the school day is generally over by the early afternoon.

For Ms. Folmer this means she can, "...get an incredible amount done in a small time". In that same time (9 am - 1 pm) I, in my conventional school, would have sat through three classes and a short homeroom. I would be eating lunch, dreading the two afternoon classes left on the docket.

Frankly, the formal days in the Folmer household interest me less. My jaw goes slack when Ms. Folmer reveals she tries to spend more time, "Going places and doing things" rather than keeping her daughters' heads buried in texts. She would prefer seeing the new volcano exhibit at a local museum to a geology text, or a quick visit to MassMoca instead of a brief PowerPoint presentation on modern art. She describes her educational ethos as "Active Learning".

Throughout my conversation with Ms. Folmer, I couldn't help but wonder what homeschooling is like from the student's perspective. It would be impossible for me to imagine myself not attending prom in the spring or a Friday night basketball game in the winter, thus I assumed homeschooled children rue every moment they are not out participating in their romanticized high school events.

Ms. Folmer's eldest daughter, Maura, enlightened me, revealing that my suspicions were generally unfounded. Though homeschoolers may not have high school pillars such as prom, they too lead an active, regular social life, going to movies with friends or grabbing a bit of ice cream every now and again. But, as seems to be the norm for anything homeschool related, Maura could speak solely on her behalf.

Being a traditional student I was intrigued to know exactly why anyone would give up the opportunity to go to school. One Sandisfield resident and homeschooler, Ms. Tina DeManbey, was apprehensive about the restricting nature of traditional school. As she put it, "I like the thought of my children growing up to be individuals."

Ms. Folmer's motivation seemed to embody her style as a whole. She explained that some children, like her own, simply did not like school as a whole. She reminded me of something I, as a high school junior, often forget, "Education is not something we get from a book." If only my chemistry teacher agreed. ♡



INTERNS NEEDED!

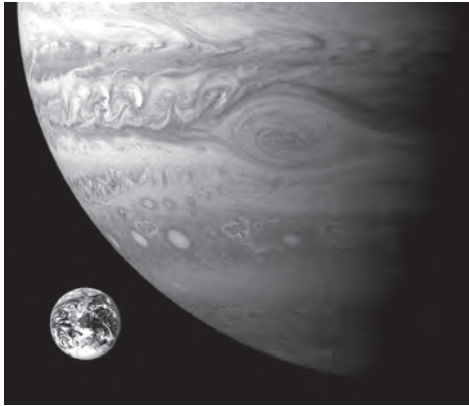
We welcome young interns at any time of the year who might have their long-term sights on a career in journalism or communications. Having one's own transport would be useful, but is not essential if parents are able to help. Duties would be light, varied, sporadic, unremunerated and generally fun. Please apply to the editor.



Weather & Stars

Randy Siddell

JUPITER, KING OF PLANETS, REIGNS OVER THE SEPTEMBER SKY



The Earth compared with Jupiter. The Great Red Spot is clearly seen in this photo.

Jupiter, a giant gas planet, makes it's closest approach in nearly 50 years. The planet rises early in the East and is visible throughout the night. Seen from Earth, Jupiter is the third brightest object in our night sky, after the moon and Venus.

A pair of binoculars should reveal four of Jupiter's moons: *Io, Callisto, Europa, and Ganymede*, discovered by Galileo in 1610. The famous Great Red Spot is an enormous hurricane on Jupiter's surface - this 300-year-old storm is twice as large as our planet Earth. It was first identified by Giovanni Cassini, who mentioned it back in 1665. A century ago, the Great Red Spot measured almost 29,000 miles across, but it's shrinking - it's currently half that size.

How's BUSINESS?

Cont'd from page 2

ANNECHARICO CONSTRUCTION

Wednesday, August 11, 3pm - Met with Jeff Gray, Annecharico Construction

Jeff and his partner, Alan Annecharico, have been doing sitework, stonewalls, foundations and some infrastructure work for about 14 years.

Most of those years they were pretty busy, even in the winter when they are available for plowing. But, and it's a big BUT - between 2007-09 there were



very few new building projects, people weren't renovating or putting on additions and business was at a standstill. Using good old-fashioned ingenuity, Jeff and Alan hired on for work they ordinarily didn't do: roofing, demolition,

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT JUPITER BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

Because of its gravitational pull, Jupiter acts as a huge vacuum cleaner, attracting and absorbing comets and meteors. Some estimates say that without Jupiter's gravitational influence the number of massive projectiles hitting Earth would be 10,000 times greater.

Jupiter has no solid surface - there is nothing to walk on. Under its atmosphere is a large liquid ocean of hydrogen and water. Nothing lies in between that ocean and the atmosphere. The atmosphere slowly gets thicker and thicker until it becomes part of the ocean. Jupiter's ocean has no surface on which you could float - in other words, the sky slowly becomes the ocean.

Because of its gravitational pull, if you weigh 150 pounds on the Earth, on Jupiter you would weigh 354 pounds.

It only takes 10 hours to go from night to day on Jupiter. And because it's spinning so rapidly, the planet has flattened out a little and is bulging at its equator. This rapid rotation also helps generate Jupiter's powerful magnetic fields, and contributes to the dangerous radiation surrounding it.

Jupiter has at least 63 moons.

Ganymede is not only Jupiter's largest moon, but the largest moon in the solar system. It's so big, it's actually larger than Mercury in diameter (but not in mass.) It is also the only moon with a magnetosphere of its own, though largely overshadowed by Jupiter's huge magnetic fields. The atmosphere consists of atomic and molecular oxygen, perhaps traces of ozone and hydrogen as well.

Europa is theorized to have the only other source of liquid water in our Solar System, aside from Earth.

Io is the only volcanically active moon in the Solar System. The volcanos erupt liquid sulfur onto the surface of the moon. 🍷

carpentry. Jeff says now the business is about 4 times better than it was over the last three years, but not nearly as good as in the early 2000's when they had great years.

Spring and fall are generally good times for their business and Jeff feels they'll have a better idea soon about the rest of this year and spring of 2011.

BRIEF CHATS

I had a quick conversation with Sue Tarasuk who reports that Snow Farm is having a very good year. And the advice from Karen at the Post Office is to keep your postal business local. We know that small post offices are being absorbed by larger ones all around the country. If we want to continue to be near our mail source we have to support it.

So, what did I learn in my travels the week of August 9? I learned what a resilient group of local business people we have in town. They were honest and straightforward in our interviews and they were warm and welcoming. To the best of your ability, let them know how grateful you are that they are here. Go local! 🍷

OUR TOWN

It's what it isn't, that is....

We've got no sidewalks, taxicabs.
We've got no crime or steeple clocks.
We're short on Mayors and long on trees
And some folks have no front door locks.

(We've got some bees!
And we've got some kids on Halloween
Who decorate the trees.)

So lift a glass to Sandisfield,
It's got a cosmic font...
Which means that you can set your type...
Print anything you want!

- Val Coleman

C.W. NELSON

Looking Glass Gardens

A Full Service Nursery and Design Center
Trees, Shrubs, Perennials, Mulch, Water Plants, Stone & More

- Waterscaping
- Site Development
- Stone Work
- Landscaping
- Large Ponds

Over 50 years Experience

"Ideas Are The Heart Of Design"

Monday thru Saturday 8am to 4pm
Rt57 to Sandisfield follow signs to Dodd Rd
Contact us At:
www.cwnelson.com/chuckwnelson@earthlink.net
www.lookingglassgardens.com



THE SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER

5 HAMMERTOWN RD., SANDISFIELD, MA
413-258-4100
WWW.SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11TH 3-5PM FREE



GALLERY: ARTIST'S RECEPTION: LARRY ZINGALE PAINTER
A self-taught modern primitive.

Exhibiting through October 10th.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11TH 8PM FREE

Poetry with the Church Hill Poets

The members of the Church Hill Poets are **Colin Harrington, Wil Hastings, Patty Kimura, Mary Koncel, Antonia Lake, Nerissa Neilds, Stephen Philbrick and Dennis Pollock**, some of whom will be with us tonight. They bring their poems as gifts to our audience. (Donations to the Arts Center welcome.)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH 7:30PM \$5

• • • • • For **twelve Friday evenings**, three distinguished local movie enthusiasts will host some of their favorite films.

FILM FRIDAYS:
A MOVIE, A GLASS OF WINE AND TALK

Sept. 24: SIMON WINCHESTER hosts the films of actor Charles Laughton: **Ruggles of Red Gap**. Directed by Leo McCarey (1935). Coming Oct. 1: *Hobson's Choice*.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH 8PM \$20



Joel Brown, Guitar
Frank Brown, Clarinet
We welcome their return to the Arts Center, capturing the sweet sounds of the swing era. Benny Goodman lives! Don't miss them!

Although you see him weekly (on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays), you may not know that **Forrest Hull** is a voracious reader, a writer and a thinker. Forrest is going to make us all smarter about the ways of recycling.

WHAT IS & WHAT ISN'T?

By *Forrest Hull*



This summer I came to an important realization. It became quite clear to me that most people do not fully understand what can be recycled, and what cannot. So here is a short primer, to make us all smarter and to make our Recycling Center more efficient.

For example, did you think that plastic bags, Styrofoam, ceramics, dishes and paper egg cartons could be recycled? The answer is "Not"! Plastic bags are made from 100% recycled materials and therefore are no longer able to be recycled. That is mostly true about Styrofoam as well. Although compressed Styrofoam (used in packaging foods) is an exception to that rule. And ceramics and dishes? Nope. Not recyclable. They go into the Bulky Waste.

The Can & Bottle Container is for what? You guessed it. It is for cans, bottles, jars, and paper cartons. But, please, please, please, rinse them out first. A little known fact is that if the containers are not rinsed out, the State of Massachusetts considers them not recyclable, (so please just take that one additional step and rinse them out prior to tossing them in the Can & Bottle Container). There are many other benefits as well, they won't smell in your house, and will cut down on any uninvited visitors. But the most important reason is it will prevent the multi-million dollar machinery from becoming jammed which happens when there is food build-up from dirty containers on the conveyor belt at the recycling plant. (And our tax dollars pay for the conveyer, and thus the repairs. So help us all out by rinsing).

I think that the most confusing part of recycling is being able to read the recycle emblem on the package. There should be a number inside the emblem. If there is not a number inside the emblem it means that the product is made from recycled material but it is not recyclable. In the state of Massachusetts products with the numbers one (1) through seven (7) can be

recycled. The only exception is number four (4), products made from plastic such as plastic bags and plastic air bubble packaging.

Paper egg cartons are made from 100% recycled paper and are no longer recyclable. If you would prefer not to throw them away, give them to me (I save them for local farmers).

Paper recycling is relatively simple; all boxes must be broken down. It helps to conserve space so that we can accommodate a large amount of cardboard. Did you know that hard cover and paperback books are recyclable? Just remove the front and back covers before you bring them in. And if you are sentimental about your books, then leave them with me. I will either add them to my library (I promise to take good care of them!) or, if I have already read the book, I will remove the covers for you.

If you have shredded and loose paper they need to be emptied out of those plastic bags, but they are perfectly recyclable. Any and all cardboard or paper that is waxed or soiled with food isn't recyclable. Again food and grease slow the process down and can damage the machinery at the Recycling Center.

If you would like to know more about recycling I encourage you to go to www.cetonline.org. It is a non-profit organization that "engages in work that demonstrates and promotes practical, affordable solutions to the environmental challenges encountered in our daily activities."

Do you feel overwhelmed about all of this information? Just save this article and use it the next time you sort your recycled items. I know that there are a lot of rules and regulations but if we work together, we can make a good program work much more smoothly.

Lastly, here's a question for our readers: I've been talking to a few Sandisfield residents about the installation of a "Trading Post" - a place where people can bring things that still work but that they no longer want or need, and can also pick up someone else's drop-off's. Other Transfer Stations have such programs in place, to great success. We are going to go before the Selectmen at a Board meeting in couple of months and propose this and would like to have some feedback from our readers. Would you like to see an enclosed place dedicated to swapping items at the dump?

If you have doubts about your materials, just introduce yourself, and ask me. I am happy to help you. Just remember me, next time you have a good book to discard. ♡

History's Mysteries



ph. An Abandoned Farm, New Boston, Mass.

Can you identify the house in this early 1900s photo? All we know is that it was part of "an abandoned farm" somewhere in the New Boston section of town. It was called "The Haunted House" by some. If you can identify this place, contact Ron Bernard at info@SandisfieldThenAndNow.org or call 413-269-0012.

(Credit: Sandisfield Historical Society collection)

THE NEW BOSTON STORE: AN HISTORICAL PEEK

By Ron Bernard

This New Boston icon at the foot of Route 57 and the junction of Route 8 is the Village's sentry. Built in two stages, the larger west side section was probably erected by 1850 while the east wing went up about 20 years later. It is likely that there had been an earlier store building (and early post office) on this spot. (Below, 2010).



Photo: Ron Bernard

The New Boston Store has been vital to the development and everyday life of the Village and vicinity. More than a country store, it has served as a post office, a meeting center, a drug store, a bar and surely much more. It is the last survivor among Sandisfield's several cherished community general stores.

The storekeeper's residence has always been upstairs, over the store. The somewhat later east wing's ground floor provided additional storage and inventory space for a growing business while the upper level was apparently designed as a public meeting room. It features a wood paneled ceiling and could accommodate a substantial group. Unfortunately, there is no accounting for what purposes the room was built. One corner was reserved for ice storage. Otherwise, all we know is legend. At one point the occupants used it to raise cats and for years thereafter it was known as the "cat room." This once prominent space had certainly been demoted.

In the 1850s it was operated by J. H. Norton. By the mid-1870s it was the "Deming & Northway Store" (owner, Orlo Northway) under partners Lincoln E. Deming and Orlo's nephew Alfred Northway. Later, Orlo's young grandson Edward O. learned the ropes there. Edward would become a leading merchant in his own right and postmaster here in 1889.



(Above, c. 1906)

The post office was located in the store from 1853 to 1895. It returned in 1927 under postmaster Helen Chapman. In 1940, store owner Steve Campetti was appointed postmaster, serving until his retirement

in 1977. The next and current owner, Peter Murray, then assumed the responsibility. Its role as a post office ended in 1980 when the US Postal Service building opened.

At the turn-of-the-century the store was operated by A. L. Strickland Steve Campetti, brother of Angelo ("Jappi") Campetti, bought the place from Max Nager. He was storekeeper there from the 1930s until 1972 when Peter Murray and wife Susan Campetti arrived.



(Angelo (left) and Maurice "Tuffy" Campetti (far right) with "Tom" & "Bell" (Above, 1939)

Through all the years, in hard times and good times, the venerable New Boston Store has been a dependable provider of essential products as well as a friendly meeting place and rendezvous point. It has defined the character of the Village.

What would the town be like without this old friend? 


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THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Last Sunday while I was at the dump, a man I had never seen before observed that both tires on the passenger side of my car were almost flat. He offered to get a pump from his house and inflate the tires for me. I couldn't believe a perfect stranger would go out of his way to help me so generously. He lived all the way up Beech Plain Road and it took him at least 10 minutes each way to retrieve the pump. When he returned he measured the pressure in my tires which was so low I couldn't believe I hadn't even noticed it while driving. Not only did he inflate those two tires, but he took readings from the other two, found they were low and inflated them as well. The whole thing must have taken at least an hour: 20-25 minutes in his car and the rest of the time waiting for my tires to inflate - he had one of those little pumps you plug into your cigarette lighter.

I kept thanking him profusely, and he kept minimizing his good deed, claiming that anyone would do the same.

So, how do you like that? This letter is to thank you, Greg Moore from Philadelphia, for your friendliness and willingness to help a stranger in need. I hope you read this and know your kindness and generosity did not go unnoticed!

Has anyone ever done you a good deed out of the goodness of their heart? Please write and tell us - we'll put it in this column. Doesn't it feel nice to read good news for a change? 

- Tina Sotis

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Arts and Culture Review:

SUSIE CROFUT AT THE WELLES GALLERY IN THE LENOX LIBRARY

Tina Sotis

Normally, I like to review an artist's work in a gallery setting. In this way I can see the entire body of work against the pristine background of freshly painted walls, with each piece lit to its full advantage. Susie's show, however, will not be on display until September 3rd, so I needed to go to her studio to view her watercolors. There is, however, an advantage to this unorthodox way of working: I got to see all of the pieces individually as Susie graciously attached each one to a wall so that I could photograph them. I also got to examine each more deeply and talk with her about her work in more detail than I would have at what will certainly be a very crowded Artist's Reception on Sunday, September 5th.

Susie's work is, in a word, exquisite. Her complete control over what I think is a very difficult medium is evident in every single painting. The powerful simplicity of her compositions, her sensitive handling of light and color, her love of the subject matter and her uncanny ability to capture an animal's "life behind its eyes" creates a stillness and peace that pervades every painting.

This body of work is made up of two motifs: farm animals and still lifes with flowers, subjects in which Susie is immersed in her everyday life. Susie and her husband, Ben Luxon, are passionate gardeners, totally in love with their country life and surroundings. And these paintings are smaller than the very large size (approximately 3' x 4') Susie is used to. She has always "found comfort" working large, but she decided that she wanted the challenge of creating smaller pieces. Most of the work in this collection roughly averages 18" x 24".



"Two Goats" 2010 Susan Crofut

"Two Goats" is a painting that I fell in love with. Susie moved in close to these odd, loveable creatures to create an intimate portrait. If you can see the color version, either at the show itself or online on our website, please do. She rendered the heads of both animals in tones of deep lavender, and she used less intense browns for the bodies - this technique brought the goats' faces right up to the viewing plane, intensifying the experience of their personality. The backdrop is made up of soft, blurred greens and blues, further creating the intimacy of this piece. "Two Goats" is an apt title - it's just about you in communion with these animals without distraction.

"Piglets" is a marvelously composed piece. If you follow the line of the piglets' eyes and ears you can see how they form an arch. And the tension between this arch and the green/yellow diagonals, formed by the spaces between the deeper-hued fence boards, grabs our attention. Her rendering of the triangles of their ears, painted in deep red-browns is a counterpoint to their rounded forms.

But the power of the composition, while masterfully



"Piglets" 2010 Susan Crofut

done, is an adjunct to the skill with which Susie has painted the piglets themselves - when I look at them I can feel their movement and their mood. The personalities of these animals come through in their huddled pose against the fence.



"Peonies in Blue Vase" 2010 Susan Crofut

I love the simplicity of the composition of "Peonies in Blue Vase". The strength and weight of the vase draws you deeply into this painting. Everything, everything in this piece is placed and colored deliberately to lend even more focus to that vase: The spray of the brilliantly painted red peonies with their yellow "eyes", the table with its patterned red tablecloth forming a powerful diagonal against the verticals of the chair backs. All is brought into even sharper focus by the device of the soft blur of color in the back drop. The composition is made even tighter, contained if you will, by the strong vertical of the window frame on the right and then repeated behind the vase. But it is the delicacy of the light, the objects outlined in white, the soft shadows cast by the chair backs and the vase itself, that heightens the power of the objects it illuminates.



"Sunflowers in Lemon Vase" 2010 Susan Crofut

"Sun Flowers in Lemon Vase" is almost narrative - we wonder, "What is that vase of flowers doing in that unlikely spot, and who was just sitting in that chair in the background?" With the exception of "Adrienne's

Bowls", this is the only painting in this series that, at least to me, alludes to a human presence: someone had to have placed that vase of flowers there deliberately. This painting also does not share another device used in many of Susie's other still lifes: it does not feature a view of an exterior from an interior. She does move us back through the composition, however by using the diagonal moulding on the door to point our eye to the vase on the chair. The empty chair in the background pulls us through to the back of the space. Susie's amazing sensitivity to color is evident in the pallet in this painting: yellows and browns vary in intensity to move your eye. The yellow used in the flowers is brighter than the ochery-yellow wall behind them. The back wall on the right is a brown, made cooler with a light wash of blue. It is a painting of mystery and calm - I love this piece.

This exhibit is at the Welles Gallery at the Lenox Library, 413-637-0197. Susie is showing her paintings along side the beautiful ceramic work of her friend Adrienne Miesmer. The show can be viewed between September 3rd through September 23rd. All are welcome to the Artists' Reception on Sunday, September 5th from 4:30 to 7.

Please visit www.sandisfieldtimes.org/crofut.pdf for more information about Susie Crofut and to see these wonderful paintings in color. 📷

Photos of paintings by Tina Sotis

This issue of The Sandisfield Times was made possible by a grant from the Sandisfield Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.



Massachusetts Cultural Council

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE SANDISFIELD CULTURAL COUNCIL:

The Sandisfield Cultural Council has over \$4000 to distribute! We grant directly to non-profit cultural organizations, schools, communities, and individual artists through funding programs that use arts, science and the humanities to build strong, diverse and livable communities.

The deadline for the next round of Sandisfield Cultural Council grants is October 15th.

*Application guidelines are available at:
[www.massculturalcouncil.org/
applications/lcapp.html](http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/applications/lcapp.html)*

*For more information, write
Courtney at cbmaum@gmail.com*

AVIAN NOTES

Margaret O'Clair



FUN WITH A SHARPIE

I have always had difficulty identifying birds of prey. They are either too high up, too far away or flying too fast. So imagine my delight when I came home in the spring of last year to find a fair-sized hawk perched in the tree behind my house. I grabbed the binoculars and got quite a long look at it before it flew away.

Leafing through my trusty "Birds of New England" I found what I thought was my hawk - a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Unfortunately on the opposite page was an identical looking bird - a Cooper's Hawk. The maps indicated both birds are found in this area and each listed the other under "similar species." The Cooper's is the larger of the two but since I had never seen either before how was I to judge? The only obvious difference was in the tail. The Sharp-shinned has a straight edged tail and the Cooper's a rounded tail. Wouldn't you know I had not made a mental note of the shape of the tail on my hawk so I could not be certain of my identification.



At this point I am sure there are readers thinking to themselves "So what! What's the big deal?" If that is the case they know absolutely nothing about the hobby of birding.

Birding is a collector's hobby. In a sense you are collecting the birds that you see but in a list. Most birders keep at least one list, often with notes about the sighting - the location, the date, the companions of the day and so on. It is a fun thing to do and thus absolutely pointless to list birds you haven't seen. It would be like a coin collector marking a coin Greco-Roman when, in fact it was a U.S. quarter minted in 1966.

Most birders are also bird watchers. They enjoy observing these amazing animals going about their business doing their "bird thing." There are some unfortunate birders for whom the list is more important than the birds. These people are known as "big listers" in polite company and "twitchers" otherwise. Trust me, they are really, really boring.

Back to my hawk. All summer it played tag with me. I saw it briefly swooping over the garage and again over the barn. Steve Kopiek saw it grab a Blue Jay from behind the house. It swooshed over my head when I was weeding near the bird feeder. I saw it for a split second on the ground and it took off leaving a sad little fluff of grey feathers. As the summer wore on I noticed my flock of Bantam chickens was slowly diminishing and sure enough Charlie Pease saw it in the barn. It always seemed it was too high up, too far away or too fast to get a good look at that tail.

Finally, one day as I was walking to the barn, there it was. Sitting by the barn looking directly at me, not twenty feet away in bright sunlight and with a tail as straight as a ruler - a Sharpie for sure. "Gotcha" I shouted and it flew away. 🐅

THE SANDISFIELD LIBRARY NEWS



Tara Beardsley, Library Trustee

A while back, a survey was mailed to our residents asking for input about our town Library, along with recommendations for improvements. A mere 29 people responded. We thank those who took the time to fill out the forms and we're reviewing all comments and suggestions.

We would like to give you all another chance to voice your opinions and/or suggestions in order to improve library attendance and book circulation.

We want to concentrate on getting our children to use the library more often and are currently working on developing some children's programs. Any ideas are greatly welcomed.

As a reminder to all, our library offers a computer station for our patrons to use. We also offer inter-library loan services, so if there is any specific subject, title or author you are looking for, we can certainly get it for you.

In addition, starting September 13th there will be slight changes in the library operation hours.

The new hours will be:

- Monday & Tuesday - 9am-12:30pm
- Wednesday - 6:30pm-8:30pm
- Thursday - 2:30pm-5:30pm
- Saturday - 9am-12pm

We will also be posting monthly Library News in this paper. It will include all the new material the library has received as well as any programs scheduled to take place.

Please send any comments or suggestions to Tara Beardsley at dtbear@ymail.com.

Thank you! 🐅

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EDIBLE SANDISFIELD

Adam Manacher

INSPIRED COOKING WITH SPAGHETTI SQUASH

Guests coming to dinner and you are preparing something with which you are not familiar? Usually this is not a great idea. Unfortunately we sometimes find ourselves in this predicament, and need a combination of basic information and the willingness to improvise. I was in such a situation last week when my son brought home some ripe spaghetti squash as a gift from When Pigs Fly Farm. Dinner with our six guests was to be pan-seared oven roasted chicken breast and thighs, potatoes, salad and the squash. Although I'd cooked it before, it had been a good ten years since I'd last made this squash. I was a little unsure as to how best to prepare it.

My first step was to ask Sandy at Pigs Fly Farm how they like to prepare it. With a little guidance from her I was off and running. Hard squashes such as acorn, butternut, and spaghetti do well with roasting in the oven either whole


or peeled and cut into small pieces. I roasted it whole. I prepared a flat sheet pan (or cookie sheet) with a thin layer of olive oil and two cloves of crushed, chopped garlic. I sliced the squash in half, lengthwise, and placed the halves face down on the baking sheet with the flesh well covered in oil and garlic. I cooked them in a 400 degree oven for 45 minutes until the squash was easily pierced with a small knife.

Spaghetti squash is well known for having a very mild, if not bland, flavor. To enhance the "body" of our vegetable dish I added some roasted portabello mushrooms. These are large "meaty" mushrooms which, when roasted, become dark and flavorful. They are easily found today in the grocery store. Preparing them is just as simple as the squash. I cut down the stems of two large mushrooms, coated the caps with olive oil, placed them in a cast iron skillet, sprinkled with a little kosher salt and roasted them in the oven alongside the squash at 400 degrees. They



cooked for about 1 hour. When I removed them from the oven I noticed in the center of the mushroom cap dark juice had pooled. I carefully tipped this juice into a small container and reserved it for later. When the mushrooms had cooled a bit I diced them into large pieces and set them aside in a bowl.

Meanwhile, the squash came out of the oven, and with a pair of tongs I turned them over. With a large spoon I scooped out and discarded all the seeds, easily visible in the center. Removing the soft, cooked flesh from a spaghetti squash is best done with a fork. Scraping out the strands of squash (it does look a bit like "spaghetti") I noticed a lot of extra liquid; liquid that I did not want. So I placed all the squash meat into a colander and let all the liquid drain off. While that drained I chopped fresh chives and thyme. As I was preparing to put all my ingredients together I realized I was still concerned about enhancing the mild flavor of this delicious vegetable. Just then I noticed a cast iron pan on the stove in which I had roasted some of our chicken.

Years of experience at the stove came alive at that moment! I removed the chicken thighs and poured off the chicken fat remaining in the pan. I added a little butter, lightly sautéed the chives and thyme, added the reserved mushroom liquid, a little water (1/4 cup), and simmered for a minute while scraping the pan to loosen any bits of flavorful chicken stuck to it. Then I tossed in my diced mushrooms and added the thoroughly drained squash. I gently stirred and let everything simmer for a few minutes to pick up all the flavors. I added salt to taste. I kept the squash in the pan and just before serving I re-heated it quickly using high heat on the stovetop; stirring to mix all the flavors. A delicious side vegetable dish that everyone enjoyed...even the children! 

CULINARY INTERN NEEDED AT THE NEW BOSTON INN

Each year for the past six years two students have been given an opportunity to learn the ins and outs of cooking in a working kitchen and running a bed & breakfast. Duties include food prep, interacting with customers, plating food, serving, and menu and party planning. School credit may be earned.

Please contact Barbara Colorio, Proprietor, The New Boston Inn 413-258-4477.

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TELL ME A STORY!

The Friends of the Sandisfield Library have some wonderful news to report: Beginning on Saturday, September 18th, and continuing once a month through December, the Sandisfield library will conduct a Storytelling Hour for children. The program, led by Laurie Greene will take place from Noon – 12:45 on Saturdays following the regular library hours. By offering the program after the library closes, Laurie can devote her full attention to the children. The program is designed for children from Pre-K to 4th Grade. The current dates for the program are: September 18th, October 16th, November 20th and December 18th. The success of the program will help determine whether it continues in the future.

The program is still in the developmental stage, but will incorporate stories and related activities for the children. According to Anina Carr, Chairperson of Friends of the Sandisfield Library, there is currently funding in place to cover the program. They will be applying for a grant from the Cultural Council, and are hoping to get support from the residents of Sandisfield.

The Friends of the Sandisfield Library is asking for a donation of at least \$10 per household. There is a special fund set up with Claire English at Town Hall. Checks can be made out to Library Gift Fund, and sent to Friends of the Sandisfield Library, c/o of Claire English, Town Hall, POB 612, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

If you can afford \$10, think of what a great gift this is for the children of our town. 

THE SANDISFIELD WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

By Patricia Hubbard

*Full Disclosure: I am a book group addict. I love to read and I love book groups. When my husband found land in Sandisfield on which he hoped to build our home, the first thing that he did was bring home **The Sandisfield Newsletter** and highlight in yellow the information about the Sandisfield Women's Book Club. He hoped that this would help persuade me to move to a town that I knew nothing about.*

*Fast forward. Five years later I was lucky enough to talk to **Charlene Peet** who enlightened me on what is an impressive group of women, many of whom have been reading together for sixteen years.*

Sixteen years is a long time for a book group to stay together. As is true of many book groups and particularly true in a community like Sandisfield which has so many second homeowners, the group accords in size, depending on the season. They can have three people attending or more than twelve. These women are a group of devoted readers who meet at the Sandisfield Library on the **third Wednesday of the Month at 7 pm.** According to Charlene Peet, who has been a member for fifteen years, they represent "an eclectic" age group ranging from women in their forties to some "close to octogenarians".

What Charlene finds exciting is that the members come from different backgrounds, have had vastly different life experiences and their different perspectives result in lively and stimulating discussions.

Anyone who has been involved in a book group knows that a key to success is determining how to choose the books. It sounds simple, but it is amazing how different groups handle the issue. Some book groups end up with a free-for-all at the end of a meeting, scrambling to determine what they will read the following month. Some

book groups choose a theme and then select books that fit within that framework over a given period of time. Other book groups have their members take turns recommending the book for the next meeting and leading the discussion. You might think...Good Books... Good Discussions. But Charlene was quick to point out that "sometimes the book you like least stimulates the best discussion". And a good discussion is what a successful book group strives to achieve.

I am impressed with the way this Book Club handles their selection process. They choose their books for a six-month period, and their list includes not only fiction, but biographies and non-fiction as well. They have supplemented their book experiences in a variety of creative ways. After reading Geraldine Brook's amazing novel, *People of the Book*, which focused on the preservation and protection of the ancient Sarajevo Haggadah, the group met and shared a Passover Seder together.

But the best and classic Sandisfield story revolves around snow. One winter the snow was very deep, and the roads were not really passable. Rather than forego their monthly meeting (as many other book groups might have done), this group was creative. They set up a conference call, and conducted their discussion group from the safety and warmth of their own homes. As they say, "The show must go on".... or maybe we should say, "where there is a will, there is a way". Rather than indulge in any more clichés, I think that what I want to say is, "I'm impressed".

Upcoming book selections for the Sandisfield Book Club:

September: *The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein

October: *The Guardian* by Nicholas Sparks

November: *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, by Mary Ann Schaffer and Annie Barrows

From Left to Right: Roberta Myers, Nilda Torresola, Eileen Folmer, Anita Carr, Charlene Peet, Ellen Croibier, Beverly Parrette



Photo: Patricia Hubbard

The Gardeners' Almanac

Dassy Herman



September is the grand finale to summer. The Burning Bushes light up the garden with their carmine and burgundy leaves. The Virginia Sweet Spires have begun to turn the red color they keep into December. The Winterberries (female) produce the incredibly vibrant red berries that will last most of the winter. Ornamental grasses provide graceful movement and soft color in the landscape.

There are several schools of thought about how to handle fall clean up in the perennial garden. Some believe you should cut everything down, while others leave the foliage till spring. A middle ground is probably best - cut down anything that will go to seed, cause a problem, or look unsightly, and keep those perennials that will feed the birds or add beauty to the landscape.

In the vegetable garden, plants that have gone by need to be pulled, except for peas, which should be cut to the ground with the root left to enrich the soil. Cold weather crops like kale, swiss chard, lettuce, etc. should be kept going as long as possible.

September to do:

- ✦ After cleaning out the vegetable beds, add 2 inches of aged manure (some gardeners recommend green manure, which means planting a cover crop of, in our area, rye grass and tilling it in, in the spring. I've found this method too labor intensive).
- ✦ Plant or move trees or shrubs now, but be sure they get enough water.
- ✦ Scratch the soil and spread grass seed in bald areas. Again, keep well watered.
- ✦ Cut back peony foliage, which is prone to disease, and dispose of appropriately.
- ✦ Cut back phlox and anemone before the seeds spread.
- ✦ Clean up the flower stalks of day lilies which are dry and brown by giving them a good swift tug.
- ✦ Enjoy the beautiful colors and the brisk air of fall!



The Steak Roast!



Photos in this row by Richard B. Migot



Photos by Patricia Hubbard unless noted differently.



“SUPPORT LOCAL FARMS”

Of course we all support local farms: it's right up there with motherhood and apple pie, right? But do we really? – meaning, even if it's a bit inconvenient? A few months ago, I read an article in the Eagle about farm-fresh eggs, and noticed a source listed here in Sandisfield called Joshua's Farm. I called the number and spoke to a young woman named Brigitte Ruthman, who invited me to stop by. In addition to a very free-range flock of chickens of a variety of breeds that produce eggs in a wide assortment of colors and sizes, there were some piglets, a lovely milking shorthorn cow named Daisy, and three calves. It all seemed like a nice little hobby farm out back of the house – that is, until I talked to Brigitte and heard her total devoted passion for Daisy and for producing the absolute safest and best milk possible. I realized that she knew that dairy farming was her vocation, her calling, and that her job as a writer for the *Waterbury Republican* newspaper was a way to pay the bills so she that could do what she loved and was born to do.

She gave me a bottle of fresh milk, and although my wife and I don't normally drink milk, I was so impressed with her dedication that I took it. Wow! The flavor is amazing – we have gone back nearly every week, sharing the milk and the experience with our various summer visitors. They have been enthralled by the delightful place and Brigitte's enthusiasm and energy.

End of nice “local farm” story, right? Not quite –there appears to be a villain in the person of the large commercial milk processing industry in Massachusetts which has been working for many decades to destroy all direct farm-to-consumer activity in this state. Even though only about 5% of milk is bought directly from the farmer, they want to stamp out this threat to their profits entirely. Last spring they went to our Commissioner of Agriculture, Scott Soares, and convinced him to ban milk “buying clubs”. It seems that the only way to buy raw milk in Massachusetts was to join with friends and take turns driving to the farm to pick up milk for the group. You'd think that this fuel-conserving activity would be encouraged by the state – but not so. The new rule banned the clubs and required individuals to purchase separately. Understandably, farmers and consumers were outraged. Brigitte testified at a hearing in Boston this past May, and it appears that this may have put her on the enemy's list of the Agriculture Department bullies. In August she was served with a cease-and-desist order to stop supplying milk.

They seem to want to nip this new one-cow enterprise in the bud, but they've misjudged her determination to fight. What she is doing is perfectly legal since each of her three customers owns a “share” of Daisy and agrees to pay for a portion of Daisy's upkeep. There are no laws in Massachusetts, or anywhere else, that prevent someone from drinking milk from their own animal.

I think that this is an attack on our freedom. What should you do? You could, of course, say, “This isn't my problem and didn't I hear a lot of dairy-industry propagandists that raw milk is dangerous since it is straight from the cow?” I don't want to wade into that complex issue here. But if you really want to know the truth, start at www.realmilk.com and find out for yourself.

What I want you to know is that we have a neighbor in Sandisfield who's trying, against all odds, to fulfill her mission to produce the healthiest farm products she can – and the state is trying to destroy her farm. If you really want to support local farms, here's your chance: First, you can head out to 45 Dodd Road and see this spirited enterprise for yourself. Then call or write to our reps Smitty Pignatelli, Ben Downing, and to Mr. Soares and tell them what you think about this illegal assault on our right to foster our own health.

George Riley
Sandisfield, MA

A LOVE LETTER TO SANDISFIELD

To the Editor,

My wife Judi and I (and our three grown children) love and treasure Sandisfield. We come here to restore our souls and rest...and get ready for the year ahead. And all year we can't wait until we come back in June of the next year.

Thank you for the wonderful *Sandisfield Times* and through *The Times* I would like to say a gigantic thank you to those of you who live here all year and who work in the town. Thank you for sharing with Judi and me all the beauty, all the nature, all the quietude, all the history that is your town...our town.

Lou Friedman
14 Sullivan Road

MISSING: TOWN DIRECTORY

Good Morning, I just wanted to comment on the Town Directory not being in *The Sandisfield Times*. I would love to see the hours of the Town Hall and the Transfer Station/Dump - including numbers where they can be reached. *The Sandisfield Times* is a great place to find info on contacting our Town. Please put it back in.

Barbara Colorio
Proprietor, New Boston Inn

Note from Editor: We would love to include the Town Directory but we are presently limited to a 16-page paper, and we do not have the room at present. The Directory was last published in June and will be published again in the future, but not in every issue.

LETTER FROM THE SELECTMEN

The Wilber House has been deeded over to the Town of Sandisfield. Much gratitude is owed to the Wilber family for helping to make this happen. Many town officials have worked extremely hard to make this a reality. Special thanks to Sandisfield Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko for handling the bulk of the paperwork. Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard did a wonderful job moving this piece of the puzzle forward in a timely fashion. After a formal bid process, Tryon Construction Company of Monterey was awarded the job of tearing down and cleaning up the Wilber property. Our goal of having this project completed by Labor Day is looking more and more like a reality.

On another note, Sandisfield grant writer Terry Walker, Selectman Patrick Barrett and aides from Representative William Smitty Pignatelli and Senator Benjamin Downing's offices will be lobbying government officials in Boston on Wednesday August 25, in the hope of securing a \$500,000 STRAP Grant for fixing Route 183. This money would go a long way toward improving one of our main thoroughfares.

JUNIOR GIRL SCOUT LEADER NEEDED

By Tara Beardsley

For the previous two school years, Patricia Richard and I have acted as Co-leaders for Junior Girl Scout Troop 40011. This year, as her daughter moves up to Cadettes, Patricia will be starting a new troop for Cadette level Girl Scouts, along with Co-leader Kerry Bean.

I have decided to take on other community interests, as my daughter has completed the Junior level. It was a great experience, one which I will hold many fond memories of.

This unfortunately leaves our community with no one to lead the girls who would like to continue their Junior Girl Scout experience or those former Brownies who were looking forward to moving up to Juniors.

I am asking that you consider becoming a Junior Scout leader so that our community's girls will have the same opportunities that Patricia's and my daughter were able to experience. The initial training to become a leader is now available to do on-line for your convenience, and if needed, you may use a computer at our town library in order to complete your training.

If you are interested in becoming a leader you may contact me at 258-4958 or dtbear@ymail.com, or Patricia Richard at 269-7299.

If your daughter is entering 6th, 7th, or 8th grade and is interested in becoming a Cadette Girl Scout, you should contact Patricia at 269-7299.

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NOW HEAR THIS!

If you have an event that you would like to see listed here, please email Judy Goldsmith at Calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org. We reserve space for those events that involve Sandisfield residents or that take place in Sandisfield and neighboring communities.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Wednesday, September 1. Farmington River Elementary School begins. JoAnn Austin, Superintendent 269-4466.

Wednesday, September 1 - 11AM-2PM. Town Hall Annex, Council on Aging. September birthdays celebration, Pot luck lunch and Bingo.

Sunday, September 5, 4:30-7PM. "To Please the Palette" Artist's Reception, Exhibition of Paintings by Susie Crofut. Welles Library, Lenox. Exhibiting September 3rd through September 23. Library Hours and info call 637-0197.

Saturday, September 11, 11AM. Historical Society Meeting, Sandy Brook Turnpike. Historical Lighting- talk by Ed Klausmeyer of the New Marlborough Historical Society. Cook-book Recipes for 250th birthday. Call Norton Fletcher 358-4520.

Saturday, September 11, 3-5PM. Artist Reception: Paintings by Larry Zingale. Sandisfield Arts Center. Exhibiting thru October 10. www.sandisfieldartscenter.org or 258-4100.

Saturday, September 11, 8PM. Poetry with the Church Hill Poets. Sandisfield Arts Center. Free. Donations to the Sandisfield Arts Center welcome.

Monday, September 13-New Library Hours begin: Monday & Tuesday 9AM-12:30PM, Wednesday 6:30PM-8:30PM, Thursday 2:30PM-5:30PM, Saturday 9AM-12PM. Contact Clare English-eclair1979@gis.net.

Tuesday, September 14, 7AM to 8PM- State Primary, Old Town Hall- 3 Silverbrook Road. Absentee ballots available now. 258-4711 for more info.

Thursday, September 16, 7PM. 250th Birthday Committee Meeting. Town Hall Annex. Ron Bernard and Liana Toscanini, Co Chairs,

Friday, September 17, 7PM. American Legion Benefit Turkey Roll -Roll dice for food prizes. Maria D'Amato- 258-4578.

Saturday, September 18- 12-12:45 PM. Sandisfield Library- Story Hour for Children pre-school to 8. Subsequent story hours every 3rd Saturday. Laurie Greene at 258-4966.

Friday, September 24, 7:30PM. Film Fridays begin for 9 consecutive Friday nights. Simon Winchester hosts the films of actor Charles Laughton-"Ruggles of Red Gap". Sandisfield Art Center -\$5. 258-4100 or www.sandisfieldartscenter.org.

Saturday, September 25, 8PM. Joel Brown, guitar and Frank Brown, Clarinet. Sandisfield Art Center. \$20. www.sandisfieldartscenter.org or 258-4100.

ONGOING EVENTS

1st Monday, 7PM - Farmington River Regional School District meets.
3rd Monday, 7 PM - Policy Meeting meets
3rd Wednesday, 8:30AM - School Council meets
 JoAnn Austin, Superintendent 269-4466.

Each Tuesday, 9:30-11:30AM. Community Health Program Family Network Playgroup for kids 5 and under. Old Town Hall Building. Call 528-0721 for more info.

4th Wednesday, 11AM-2PM, Town Hall Annex, Council on Aging. Free blood pressure screening.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Otis Cultural Council is now accepting applications for grants for the 2010-2011 funding cycle. These grants are funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council to enable communities the opportunity to hire artists of all genre to submit proposals for performances and/or workshops which enhance the community. All Massachusetts artists and musicians are encouraged to apply.

Applications for grants, as well as for PASS (student field trip tickets), are available online at www.mass-culture.org/lcc_public.asp and at the Otis Town Hall, as well as on the Otis website, www.townofotisma.com/culturalcouncil, and must be mailed to the Otis Cultural Council, Otis Town Hall, Box 237, Otis, MA 01253, postmarked no later than Friday, October 15, 2010.

For further information, please call Arlene Tolopko, Chair, OCC (413 269-0220), or email: Otis-cc@hotmail.com.

The Berkshire Forum Sept. 14-16, 2010. Colonial Theatre, Pittsfield, MA

The Berkshire Forum is a three-day conference promising inspiring ideas and stimulating dialogue led by a remarkable network of business owners, economists, social innovators, technology visionaries, cultural enthusiasts, entrepreneurs and thought leaders—bound by a devotion to the Berkshires. The Forum's mission is to inspire participants to assume active roles in rejuvenating the local economy and shaping its cultural and economic future. The Berkshire Forum welcomes forward-thinking doers, thinkers and dreamers from all walks of life and areas of commerce. General admission: \$49.99. www.theberkshireforum.com. Tina Chase, 413.394.0275, tina@theberkshireforum.com or Mary Collins George, 413.626.7832, mary@theberkshireforum.com

Thursday October 28, 2010, 10:00 A.M., Topic: Changes in Medicare Part D Drug Plans. Otis Town Hall Conference Room. If you have had any changes in your prescription drugs, please let me know by phone or by mail. Please give me enough time to run a "Plan Comparison" for you in time for the meeting. Myrna Rosenberg, SHINE Counselor, (413) 269-6325, PO BOX 73 Otis, MA 01253

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are also available in Otis at Katie's Market, the Farmington Elementary School (during the school year) and Terranova's. Other locations include the Monterey General Store, the Southfield Store and Bizalion's French Cafe.

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We welcome submissions, comments and suggestions, including letters to the editor **BY THE 15TH 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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