

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



Tribunus

Plebis

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume II, Number 3

June 2011

BUDGET IMPASSE OVER SOARING SCHOOL COSTS

By Simon Winchester

Our town currently faces a serious financial crisis following the voters' overwhelming rejection on May 16th of a proposed tax increase that town officials insist is vital to fund the FY2012 budget. Unless a new budget can be agreed upon in the coming weeks, the town will, in theory, be unable to operate as of July 1st, the beginning of the new fiscal year.

"We are having to schedule meetings with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue," said Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko, who was clearly dismayed by the election result that saw the defeat of Proposition 2½ which sought an extra \$200,000 plus in tax hikes to fund town operations. "We are not entirely sure what to do next."

"There will presumably," she said, "now have to be special town meetings and new emergency elections to solve what appears to be in the immediate aftermath of the May 16th polls, a fairly intractable situation."

The 146-79 trouncing of Prop. 2½ came two days after an ill-tempered Town Meeting, which went on for an unprecedented five hours and saw the defeat of the warrant item that is central to the budget crisis: a planned line item increase of \$152,000 for the Farmington River Regional School District, which Sandisfield shares with neighboring Otis.

Although sentiment in Otis was also running high over rapidly rising costs, voters there on May 17th did eventually accept their share of the school budget increase – which Sandisfield taxpayers were being asked to part-fund this coming year to the tune of \$1,330,559. (This represents 37 percent of the school's total cost, reflecting the fact that our students make up 37 percent of the total school enrollment; Otis pays the remaining 63 percent.)

Here in Sandisfield, though, a similarly impassioned and at times fairly testy debate over the rising costs – which were vigorously defended by

Cont'd p. 2



BRIDGE WATCH

Beginning in this issue of the Sandisfield Times we will publish a monthly update on the status of the Route 57-Route 8 bridge. We will note if there is no progress for the month.

The Town of Sandisfield received the 75% complete engineering plans from the state several months ago. Sandisfield, under the leadership of Selectman Jeff Gray, who is an engineer by training, submitted detailed comments and proposed changes to the state at that time.

The state is expected to put the project out for bids during the month of June, 2011. Presumably once a contractor is selected, Sandisfield will receive the final engineering plans from the state and a timetable for when work will commence. The entire project is anticipated to take approximately two years from the time work begins. During that time we expect there to be a one-lane road, with a traffic light signaling the direction which cars can travel.

Cracking Down on The Dam Busters

By Staff Reporter



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

Citing "grave safety concerns" for Sandisfield's network of massive flood-control dams, state environmental officers are to make a major effort this summer to enforce new laws restricting the use of the growing numbers of noisy and damaging all-terrain vehicles. Rangers and environmental police claim that the unauthorized use of ATVs on their slopes is causing potentially serious harm to the dams' structure.

Of particular concern is the South Silverbrook Dam on Fox Road, where ATV users have recently breached new barriers near the water spillways and have created what one local official calls "a recreation area, with loops and figure-eight trails and jumps" in a part of the dam that has been carefully and specifically designed for water flow.

"To degrade vital parts of the structure like this is a matter for grave concern," said Ranger Arlen Cellana of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) South Berkshire District, "and we will be exceptionally vigilant this year, to ensure that ATV users comply with the law."

Strict new regulations were passed by the Massachusetts Legislature last August to deal with what is estimated to be a 300 percent increase in the *Cont'd p. 2*

BUDGET IMPASSE OVER SOARING SCHOOL COSTS

Cont'd from p. 1



Photo: Larry Dwyer

school officials – led to a final showdown ballot that, by a margin of 49 to 37, struck the controversial budget item from the warrant. The implications for the now divided vote over the jointly-funded school – Otis in favor of the funding increase, Sandisfield against – add a further layer of complexity to our town's fiscal problems.

This was the only one of 69 items on the Town Warrant to go down to defeat – even though many at the hundred-strong Town Hall gathering angrily demanded cuts and level-funding plans in other areas of town expenditure. The demands were all intended to impose constraints on the proposed FY2012 budget total of \$2,743,611 - \$202,000 more than last year. But in the end none of the suggested cuts from the floor found favor with the majority. The only notable savings, \$40,000 slashed from the cost of buying a new six-wheel truck for the Highway Department, came about at the initiative of the Department itself, rather than from a threatened taxpayer revolt.

Despite the liverish mood of the meeting there were two somewhat brighter notes - two decisions that may have implications for the social long term, rather than the merely financial short term.

By a handsome majority of 54 to 5, the Town agreed first to sign on to the high speed fiber optic internet initiative put forward by the local cooperative, Wired West. Under the complicated legislative provisions for this scheme, there now has to be a second vote on the matter within sixty days. If the measure then passes, as seems likely, Sandisfield will hold a position in the front row of new plans to bring multi-gigabyte connectivity to the Berkshires by 2015.

The second agreement among the townspeople was to a non-binding resolution stating that Sandisfield residents “have the right to produce, process, sell, purchase and consume local foods, thus promoting self-reliance, the preservation of family farms and local food traditions.” Since the resolution, put forward

by the one-cow farmer and raw-milk advocate Brigitte Ruthman, placed no obligations on anyone, there was a near-unanimous vote in favor of it; but a few realized that this was

simply a watered-down and politically acceptable version of the Right-to-Farm by-law that many in town want to see on the ballot at some later date. The bylaw was removed from this year's warrant on the advice of lawyers; this non-binding statement was a substitute, an establishment of a set of proposals to the effect that we all think eating local is a Good Thing.

After the excitement of the best-attended and longest-lasting town meeting for years, the election held two days later was a poor thing indeed. For a start, fewer than half of Sandisfield's registered voters turned out – 244 of the 585. This compares to 222 of the 572 voters in town in May last year – a three percent increase this year, but still only a humbling 41 percent of the total population.

There were few surprises in the polls. The incumbent Selectman Jeffrey Gray beat the conservative Kathy Jacobs in a tightly-fought race (129 to 109), and will sit in Town Hall for the next three years; Kathleen Burrows easily won a year's term on the Board of Assessors while Theresa DellaGiustina won three, unopposed; Douglas Segrin now joins his wife Kathleen on the Board of Health, along with the re-elected Victor Hryckvich; and Mrs. Segrin also won a five-year position on the Planning Board (the chair of which, Chris Rines, unexpectedly resigned earlier in the month, which has thrown that vital board into some disarray).

Nazario Sanchez, our town Constable, will now be joined by retired Highway Department trouser Joe Zeller; Susan van Sickle will perform one year's duties in the current hot seat on the School Committee, while Nicholas DellaGiustina, even more bravely, will preside over it for three. John Skrip remains Town moderator; Laurie Foulke-Green takes over as Library Trustee; and most importantly of all, Clare English, returned as Town Treasurer, will join the re-elected Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko, to deal with our impending fiscal crisis.

What awaits us may not be akin to the collapse of Lehman Brothers or the rescue of JP Morgan, but our town has an uncertain future, indeed. One trusts that those whom forty percent of us elected into power and authority this past month will be wise, prudent and decisive enough to be up to the task of dealing with it. ♣

Cracking Down on The Dam Busters

Cont'd from p. 2

number of ATVs over the last decade. They make it illegal to operate ATVs – a term which for the purposes of this law includes both four-wheel vehicles weighing less than 1000 lb. and off-highway motorcycles – on any public roads, on any public structure (such as a dam or bridge), within 150 feet of any dwelling, on any public land that is not designated by the state as offering rights-of-way for ATVs, and on any private land except with the express written permission of the landowner.

According to Ranger Cellana, these restrictions mean that in Sandisfield specifically – where no public land has been set aside for ATV use – there is virtually nowhere ATVs can legally operate. “It may be that some private landowners allow their operation here,” he said, “but otherwise, if you see these vehicles on any road or in any woodland or on any dam, they are almost certainly there illegally, and should be reported.”

The new rules range far beyond the simple matter of where such vehicles are and are not allowed. Environmental Police Sergeant Bill Chmura, speaking from Springfield, explained that the legislation – technically a series of amendments to Chapter 90B of the state's General Laws, relating to boats and recreational vehicles – places new age limits on operators (no one under 14 shall operate any ATV, those under 16 shall be limited to 90cc engine capacity, and all youngsters must be accompanied and supervised by an adult 18 and over), demands operators take lessons on safe use of the vehicles, and requires all ATVs to be registered and have their registration numbers visible so they can be reported. In addition there are specific provisions in the law relating to ATV operators who trespass, cause damage and create a public nuisance.

“Basically, if you operate an ATV on a public road – paved or dirt, it makes no difference – you should know this is an arrestable offense,” said Sergeant Chmura. “You can be fined up to \$250 for the first offense. Furthermore, if you cause damage you can be fined up to \$500.” He said that there are now 80 environmental police officers state-wide, “and we intend to see that owners and operators of ATVs comply with these new laws – for reasons of safety and for the protection of the environment.”

Statewide, said Sergeant Chmura, violations can be reported to the Environmental Police at 800-632-8075. Here in Sandisfield one can contact either the EPOs, Massachusetts State Troopers at 413-243-0600 or Mike Morrison of the local police department. Any ongoing problems should be reported to DCR communications at 800-831-0569: you should report your location and ask the dispatcher to contact Ranger Cellana.

“This state is not against the use of ATVs, in specifically-designated places,” Cellana said. “There are designated trails in certain state forests – Beartown, October Mountain, Pittsfield and Tolland most notably, nearby – where operators are welcome to use ATVs, subject to the usual rules. But they may not operate elsewhere, except on private land with permission. And most certainly not on our dams.”

The network of control dams in Sandisfield was established on the tributaries of the Farmington River after the devastating Connecticut floods of August and October 1955 – which killed more than a hundred people, left thousands homeless and caused President Eisenhower to declare the state, with half a billion dollars in damage, a Federal disaster area. More than sixty years later engineers from the Massachusetts dam inspectorate still make regular visits to our large earth dams and have determined all are safe and well-designed. But they have recently warned local officials that the use of ATVs on their slopes does serious damage.

Ranger Cellana said he understood that ATV drivers like the challenge of steep slopes, which are evidently like catnip to some enthusiasts. “But to damage these dams – as with the erosion these vehicles cause – can have very serious consequences. People must watch out, and if you see any ATV users on the dams, please call. Night or day. It is vitally important that we protect these structures.” ♣

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

By Debbie Harris

BEFORE I BEGIN THE EDITOR'S USUAL letter I'd like to let readers know that in this issue we have instituted several new features: we started a monthly "Bridge Watch" to keep you all up-to-date on what is happening with the Route 57/Route 8 bridge rebuild by the state; we will now have a monthly police blotter; Larry Dwyer will be writing a column called "Take a Hike" that will highlight hiking and snowshoeing trails in and around Sandisfield; and we now have a column entitled "6 Word Memoirs" that we hope you, our readers, will enjoy and contribute to over the coming months. So, look for these new items and Happy Reading!

Now, on to my musings for the month ...

An Act of Kindness

Benjamin Franklin wrote that "Nothing in this world is certain except death and taxes." There is, however, one other certainty in this world – change. Change may be large or small, noteworthy or barely noticed, but it is always there.

On May 1, 2011 a midsize change occurred – the death of Osama bin Laden. This change, while noteworthy, is far from earth shattering. It certainly ranks right up there with the deaths of other tyrants such as Adolph Hitler and Saddam Hussein, but it hardly

changes the way we think, or our daily lives. Some may celebrate this change with dancing in the streets, and others may reflect on the unfortunate necessity of getting rid of a very bad person by having to take his life; it is a highly symbolic change, but ultimately does not make a whole lot of difference in how we think or live our lives.

A few times in every generation, for better or worse, a more cataclysmic change occurs. This type of change is one where you just know, at a visceral level, that the world will never be the same again. In my parents' generation I can think of two such changes – Lindbergh's crossing of the Atlantic and the dropping of the A-bomb on Hiroshima. In my generation the two most cataclysmic-type changes were the death of John F. Kennedy and Neil Armstrong's moon walk. In the current generation the September 11, 2001 attack on the United States is such a world changing event. After living through each of these events you just knew that the world would be a different place when you woke up the next morning than it was when you woke up this morning.

I recently attended a cousin's Bar Mitzvah and was asked to take part in the ceremony by reading a passage from the *Diary of Anne Frank*. Anne, as most of you probably know, was a Dutch girl who spent much of World War II in hiding and was eventually captured by the Nazis and sent to the Bergen-Belsen death camp where she died shortly before the camp was liberated. While in hiding she kept a diary that was found by the people who hid her. After the war, when her father (the only surviving Frank family member) returned from the concentration camp he was given the diary and had it published. His daugh-

ter, in her own small way, and quite without knowing it, changed the world with her compelling musings about coming of age under the extremely difficult conditions of her life.

The passage I read, which reflects on change, is as follows:

"...People will always follow a good example; be the one to set a good example, then it won't be long before the others follow.

How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment, we can start now,

start slowly changing the world!


How lovely that everyone,

great and small,

can make their contribution

toward introducing justice straightaway...

And you can always, always give something, even if it is only kindness!..."

Many years ago, when I was a Brownie, I remember that I was supposed to do at least one good deed a day. It's not a bad code to live by. Every small, insignificant change still has an impact on the world. Since change is inevitable and especially evident in the turbulent world in which we find ourselves, each of us should take an active role in changing our world for the better. We can all, in our own small way, help to make the world a better place every day, even if it is simply by an act of kindness. 

6-Word Memoirs

This month marks the start of a fun, new column for the Sandisfield Times – 6-Word Memoirs. Each entry into this column will be a 6-word (no more, no less) comment on life. Readers are strongly encouraged to submit their own entries for this column.

Examples for such entries, which are taken from a book entitled *Not Quite What I Was Planning, Six Word Memoirs by Writers Famous and Obscure* are:

Torrential tryst. Terrible twins. Tied tubes.

– M. Brenner

Bought American Dream. More like nightmare.

–Harry McCoy

Carbohydrates call my name every day.

– Mary Petersdorf


Danced in Fields of Infinite Possibilities.

–Deepak Chopra

Soul'd out so I could Prophet. –

–Gotham Chopra (son of Deepak)

My own personal entry is:

Retired. Moved to Paradise. In Love. 

Batter Up!


The Cal Ripken League rookie baseball team with participants from Sandisfield, Otis, Monterey, and surrounding South Berkshire County towns, has started its 2011 season. This year's 5-7 year old rookie team plays weekly games Wednesdays at 4 PM at beautiful Greene Park in Monterey center. The games continue through June 15. 

Photo by Steve Graves



The Gardener's Almanac

By Sue Tarasuk



Berry, Berry Good



Fruits and berries in your own garden sounds like a dream. Imagine walking out to your patch of blueberry bushes to pick a bowl for cereal

in the morning. It is not difficult to accomplish this garden of your own blueberries, raspberries, strawberries and even apples, peaches and plums.

Probably the easiest and most manageable place to start is with small fruits – raspberries. They bloom late so no late frost is likely to kill the fruit, insects and diseases are easy to control, they need little care and are easy to pick. By the third year, you can expect a pint of berries per foot of row. Plant your raspberries two feet apart and place your rows 8-12 feet apart so you can get between them to pick. If you plant bare root plants, cut them back to 2" above ground – potted raspberries need no pruning. Water with a weak liquid fertilizer and keep your plants well watered. Then add mulch, which is very important as raspberries are shallow rooted and weeds in the raspberry patch compete for nutrients. Keep your row to 18" wide to allow air to circulate in and amongst the canes. Raspberries bear fruit on the second year's growth. After harvesting, in mid to late summer, cut down all the canes that had berries on them. These canes will die by next spring. Your next year's crop will come from the canes that are young and green. Fall bearing raspberries will produce berries in the summer and again in the fall. You could treat them as you do the above red raspberries or, in the spring, cut them all to the ground and you will get a heavy fall crop only. The down side of this is that sometimes we get an early frost and all the berries will die.



Blueberries are another easy fruit to grow in our area. The highbush blueberry is the most common blueberry we grow. The blueberry is very fussy about the soil. It does best at a soil pH of 4.5 to 5, which means it likes it "sour". The soil here in Sandisfield is generally of low pH, but if you are going to invest in blueberry bushes, you should have your soil tested. Mulching your bushes with pine needles, oak leaves or shavings from oak, pine or hemlock after planting will help maintain the soil's acidity.

Blueberries need cross pollination, so plant at least two different cultivars. You can plant potted blueberry bushes almost any time of the year. Plant them 5 feet apart and space the rows 7 to 9 feet apart. Water them in with a weak fertilizer solution. Continue to water every other day and add the liquid fertilizer once a week for the next three or four weeks. This will help the plants get through the transplant shock. Fertilize each year with a bit of 5-10-10 and keep the plants mulched.

Blueberries need annual pruning. The first few years prune your shrubs minimally, just to get them into a good, upright shape. Prune your blueberries in late winter or early spring. After your bushes start to produce a good crop of berries, cut out all wood that shows signs of age, and thin out any of the branches that are crowding each other. This allows sun to penetrate the bush and ripen the berries. It also allows for easier picking.

The most common blueberry cultivars are, Bluecrop, Blueray, Earliblue and Jersey.

The strawberry is one of the few fruits that originated in the United States. Planting a patch of strawberries is a bit more difficult - no, not really difficult, but more time consuming than the other fruits I already mentioned. You must prepare your site with care. Strawberries are shallow-rooted and only get nutrients from the top few inches of soil. The soil should be slightly acidic (pH of 5 to 6) and rich in humus (manure and compost). Generally a good garden soil that you grow vegetables in will also grow good strawberries. The best time to plant strawberries is in the spring. Here is where you must decide if you want to plant your strawberries in the "Matted Row" style or the "Hill System".

The matted row has you planting your plants in a row 18 inches apart with the rows three feet apart. The plants then grow and produce runners that fill in the row (with your help). You will have a "matted" row of tiny plantlets. In this system the plants are treated as biennials. You will make a new bed each spring which will be harvested the following summer, and then plowed under.

In the hill system you set the plants 12-15 inches apart in a bed consisting of three rows, each of which is also 12 to 15 inches apart. The hill system takes more plants initially and requires more attention, but you will not be replanting each year. In this system, you treat the strawberry plants as perennial (which they are). But, unlike the matted row system, you do not allow runners to form. You cut off the runners and force the plants into producing a bigger plant and larger berries. The catch is that you have to keep after the weeds. Some growers place black plastic down, cut slits in it and plant the strawberries in them, then cover with a mulch. An alternative to the horrid black plastic is to keep a good, thick layer of mulch on your bed at all times. Shredded bark, cocoa hulls, salt hay or some other weed-free material works well. Your berry plants will continue to produce for six years or more.

The last word on strawberry growing is that you must pick off the blossoms the first year of planting, regardless of which method you use to plant. If you do not, you will have very weak plants that will produce very poorly the following year. This is always the hardest part for me.

Due to space constraints, I cannot go into all the fruits and berries that grow here in the Berkshires. You could easily grow grapes, currants, goosberries, jostaberries, elderberries, kiwi, and, for fruit trees, apples, plum, pears, peaches and nectarines, sour cherries and even nuts. Make yourself a good plan and my advice is to start small. Get a good book on the subject and read everything you can about growing fruits and berries. It is such a joy to have your very own orchard in your back yard.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (413) 258-4929, stop by the greenhouse at Snow Farm on Beech Plain Road, or email me at susantarasuk@gmail.com. *Photos: Wikimedia Commons*

May

I have wasted half a dozen Springs

Not noticing

The yellow raft of flowers,

The elbows of new trees

And the doors opening

In the village.

All those Springs I missed

Came running out of winter,

Dressing the set again,

Interfering with the end of things.

Oh what a lovely time

To stand in the doorway of the world

And watch a butterfly unfold its wing.

Ever endearing, ever mortal...Spring.

Val Coleman

May 9, 2011



AVIAN NOTES

By Margaret O'Clair

MY FRIENDS FLICKERS *Woodpeckers Part II*

Question, when is a woodpecker not a woodpecker? Answer, when it is a flicker. The plumage of the flicker is quite unlike the black and white patterning of the familiar woodpeckers that come to our feeders in winter. The flicker is quite a large bird with a grey head, a soft buff face, and a black bib on its chest. The white under-parts are spotted black, and the brown back and wings have black bars across them. A white rump is exposed in flight. Typical of a woodpecker, both male and female have a flash of red on their heads, and the male sports a manly black mustache on either side of his beak. Unlike its black and white cousins whose diet is found in or on trees in the form of insects or sap, the flicker is a ground feeder often seen hopping about on lawns and open spaces looking for its favorite food – ants. Although it will eat any insect it finds, even coming to a suet feeder occasionally, it primarily eats ants; flickers consume more ants than any other bird in North America. Not only do flickers eat ants, they preen their feathers with the bodies of crushed ants. The ant bodies produce formic acid, which is toxic to the bacteria and parasites on the flicker's skin and feathers. Needless to say, because of its diet the flicker is our only migratory woodpecker.

In spite of all the things that make the flicker a very different woodpecker, there is plenty about this bird to put it firmly in the woodpecker family. From the zygodactyl feet (two toes pointing forward, to two toes pointing backward) to the incredible retractable tongue, to the reinforced skull and neck, it is clearly a mem-

ber of the PICIDAE family. Like all woodpeckers, flickers nest in tree cavities, sometimes cleaning out and reusing old ones. If a pair decide to excavate a new nest site they select a dead tree; they are not fussy about the type of wood, even utility poles have been used, and it takes them about two weeks to carve out the new nest. The nest has a 2–4 inch opening hole with a cavity over a foot deep. Unfortunately, starlings fight aggressively for cavity nests, and in some parts of the country the flicker is getting scarce.

What is in a name? With the flicker, apparently a lot. Anglo Saxon “Flicerian” meaning “fluttering” has been suggested as the origin of the name, but the modern era has produced hundreds of local folk names such as gaffer woodpecker, wake-up, walk up or wick up, all derived from its hiccup call.

For a while all flickers were Common Flickers, then the American Ornithologists' Union changed the name to Northern Flicker. Now there are two sub-species, the Yellow Shafted and Red Shafted, which are named for the color under their wings. We are supposed to have the Yellow Shafted here on the East coast, with the Red Shafted more prevalent in the West. However, nobody told the flickers about this, and whenever the two sub-species meet interbreeding and hybridization occurs. The bird-boffins find it all mightily confusing; the rest of us just throw up our hands and say “Whatever, they're all flickers to me.”



Photo Wikimedia Commons

TAKE A HIKE

West Lake Trail

By Larry Dwyer

People go hiking for many reasons, but offhand I can think of three: to exercise, to seek adventure and to commune with nature. These days I hike mostly for exercise, but the other two reasons also come into play.

Hiking can be a very enjoyable pastime, but the amount of enjoyment you have depends on two major factors.

First is the trail itself. It's best when the trail is clear and marked well. You should never leave the trail because the surrounding forests are large and easy to get lost in. So, be safe and stay on the trail.

Second is your physical condition. If you're a novice, don't over exert yourself, take your time, walk at a leisurely pace and drink plenty of water.

Most of the hiking I do is on the Appalachian Trail, and these hikes can be pretty grueling because of the rough terrain and length of the trails. The average section on the Appalachian Trail is 12 miles and each section takes about 8 hours to complete. However, when I don't have time for an extended hike, I usually hike right here in Sandisfield, which has magnificent forests, is a great place for hiking and has several wonderful trails.

One of my favorite trails is right outside my door and

I refer to it as the West Lake Trail. The trail is just over 3 miles from start to finish. It is a well worn trail that is used for forest maintenance, logging, snowmobiling, mountain-biking and hiking. It is very scenic, with wonderful views overlooking West Lake and Abbey Lake. And as you walk past the small brooks that run along Lower West Street, you'll find the surrounding atmosphere very serene.

The trail is maintained and graded well, and, although there are no markers along the trail, it is wide and easy to follow so the chances of getting lost are fairly low. If you are in good physical condition I consider the difficulty level as moderate, but for novices the steep grades can be strenuous.

Here is some basic information about the West Lake Trail:

- Distance: 3.2 miles.
- Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous, depending on your physical condition.
- Average time to walk the trail: Approximately 1 ½ hours.
- Terrain: It is well graded, the path is usually clear of obstructions, but has steep, strenuous grades.
- Scenery: Lakes, streams and wooded areas.

The trail starts at the parking lot at the West Lake entrance. Walk towards the West Lake dam, and continue straight into the forest along the main trail. When you get into the forest, you will walk uphill and then down a steep grade, (recently improved with 1 inch stones) towards Abbey Lake. Walk across the Abbey Lake Dam and up a short incline into the woods. You

will see an orange diamond trail marker with a black arrow in the center at the entrance to the woods. As you re-enter the woods you will come to a short, muddy, wet section, but after this the trail through the woods is easy walking and mostly downhill. Stay on the trail and you will come out onto Lower West Street. This is where it gets a little strenuous. Make a right turn on Lower West Street and walk uphill towards West Street. Finally, make a right turn onto West Street, then climb uphill to the parking lot. Be careful of traffic.

If you are not in good physical condition, have someone drop you off at the parking lot at West Lake and then have a car pick you up at the exit at Lower West Street. This precaution cuts the hiking distance in half, and you will see the most scenic part of the trail. Don't be a hero. This should be an enjoyable experience.

The entrance on Lower West Street is about 1,200 feet east of a large clearing on the north side of the street. There is a stone border marker painted blue at the entrance to the trail off Lower West Street.

I usually walk in the opposite direction, because I enjoy the hiking in the woods where it is cooler and then take advantage of the cool breeze coming over the lake; it is very refreshing, especially after you've worked up a sweat.

For the West Lake Trail, I recommend the following basic equipment.

A good pair of water resistant hiking shoes. (But your feet will probably get wet anyway on the grassy sections.)

Cont'd p.10

THE SWIFT-ATWATER CLUB HOUSE

By Ron Bernard

Have you wondered about the cute little building which sits at the top of 'Sandisfield hill' at the Center? It is just so....well, *different*, isn't it? And there is a good reason. According to notes left by neighbor Katherine Swift Doty in 1961, "it was built as a clubhouse for the many Charles Swift grandchildren." Swift was a prominent attorney and mayor of Poughkeepsie, NY and major benefactor of Vassar College. The family summered at Sandisfield Center for many years. (Photo below, 1961. Courtesy Sandisfield Historical Society). This building, in fact, originally functioned



from the early 1820s to the 1860s as the old Burt & Sons Tannery mill in West New Boston. The mill re-opened in 1873 as the "E. P. Hood Bedstead Shop" (and Sawmill) under furniture makers Edward & William Hood, brothers from Oxford, Maine. Edward died in 1888. The mill appears to be dormant



in this 1893 image from "Picturesque Berkshires." (left) One of the last things produced here was the extract

of witch hazel plant made from its bark and leaves. It has many uses including aftershave and other lotions for treating bruises and insect bites. According to legend, operations may have ended because of a fire blamed on an inattentive night-time employee.

Legendary blacksmith Levi King (1826-1905) had his shop near this mill (directly across from the Silverbrook Café). Around 1960 his daughter, Mrs. Strickland, reminisced about the little industries in West New Boston when she was a girl. Her handwritten note was found in the files of the Historical Society. It tells of the last years of this building as a mill.

"There was in West New Boston from 1898 to 1901 a birch mill where oil of birch from black birch and fernica for sweet fern was made. The fernica was used entirely for burns. The black birch and sweet fern were brought from Tolland and Granville in great loads, like loads of hay, which were weighed on platform scales outside the mill. After unloading, the wagons were weighed and then that amount subtracted from the total weight. Both the black birch and sweet fern were chopped up in lengths about one foot (as I remember) then put in different vats and boiled; the steam being distilled into oil of birch and fernica. The mill ran until about 1901 when the supplies of birch and sweet fern gave out."


The building was hauled on logs across the Clam River, then up the steep hill, by four teams of oxen and horses. What a sight that must have been!

The building was placed in the side yard of the Atwater property next door. We presume that Mr. Swift arranged for this in 1902 at the same time he bought and moved the former c.1852 Congregational Parsonage to its current location across the green at the Center.

The building, labeled as "Clubhouse", appears for the first time on the 1904 map. (Top right, 1999. Photo



Richard B. Migot) In 1924, the title to the building and 3½ acres were transferred to Lucy Atwater Hill from her mother Caroline Swift Atwater. Mrs. Hill converted it to her summer home consisting of four comfortable rooms and a large attic.

Stanley Linkovich, a long-time friend and neighbor, and Harry McKenney built a garage for the Hills. In 1948, he received the property from Mrs. Hill. In 1968, it was bought by Bernard Bihari, M.D. of New York City, a noted medical research scientist. Dr. Bihari is credited with advancing important pharmacological therapies for certain very serious diseases. He died last year and his obituary appeared in the July, 2010 issue of the *Sandisfield Times*. At this writing the future of the property is uncertain. 

To place an AD in
THE SANDISFIELD
TIMES...
Please email
advertising@sandisfieldtimes.org
for info and a copy of our
Ad Rate Sheet!

wm.
BROCKMAN
berkshiresforsale.com real estate

413.528.4859
Offices in Monterey
& Great Barrington

We earn the trust of our
clients and customers;

We value and contribute
to life in the Berkshires;

We give honest advice
honed by our over 35
years of experience.



Chaplin Fish - Broker/Managing Partner, Bill Brockman, Kristen LaBarge-Fredsaal, Timothy Donnelly

Country Homes,
Estates & Land
info@wmbrockman.com

Buying or Selling:

Personal,
Professional,
Outstanding
Service.

"Be true to your word and your work and your friend"

Henry David Thoreau



TOWN BUSINESS

Rhee Kasky &
Debbie Harris

Board of Selectmen Meetings

March 14 – Selectmen attending: Richard Campetti, Patrick Barrett, Jeff Gray. Also attending: Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant; Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent

George Riley presented a draft of the “Right to Farm” Bylaw. Since the item was not posted in the agenda the Selectmen could only listen to the concerns, but not act on them.

Our dirt roads are in bad shape due to the snow melt, rain and frost all coming at the same time; there is only one truck that is light enough to bring gravel onto the dirt roads.

There are major problems with the New Hartford Road culvert. Steve contacted Tryon Construction, who will come back with a quote so that we can move forward with Chapter 90 funds. Kathy Stevens at Mass DOT does not consider this an emergency since it has been a recurring issue for the past several years. There was discussion about targeting one road per year to fix properly and budget separately.

Steve recommended awarding the mowing job to Bogart Muller – he is approximately half the price of the other bids.

Steve met with the Board of Assessors and they approved the transfer of \$55,000 from the Tax Surplus Overlay Account to purchase a new one-ton dump truck.

Bridgette Ruthman presented “A Food Sovereignty Ordinance”. She asked the Selectmen to consider including the ordinance on the Annual Town Meeting warrant. Chris Rines, chair of the Planning Board, explained that the Planning Board is charged with writing and reviewing bylaws. The Planning Board will review the ordinance and work on it for possible inclusion on next year’s warrant. In the meantime, we will include Section Three of the ordinance in this year’s warrant as a non-binding referendum.

Kim Spring was re-appointed as Inspector of Animals.



March 21 – Selectmen attending: Richard Campetti, Patrick Barrett, Jeff Gray. Also attending: Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant; Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent

syko, Administrative Assistant; Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent

Jason Myers from Berkshire Trail Riders presented a \$750 check to the Sandisfield Fire Department.

Brian Domina and John Burrows reviewed the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Brian handed out maps showing critical town areas. The Select Board will review the plans and make recommendations.

Steve reported on fixing areas where the road has collapsed from heavy rains, frost heaves and snow melt-offs. The men were not able to plow dirt roads during the latest snow event as the roads were too soft; the trucks are heavy and sink in the dirt.

Kathy Stevens at Mass DOT now informs us that we can use Chapter 90 money to sub-contract the culvert work on New Hartford Road and Route 183, but since the bid is incomplete, she will not accept it as is. The time line for work to be done was discussed.

A three-year equipment bid awarded to Tryon Construction was discussed. The project was bid for one year with the option of extending it for two more years at the same rate. The Selectmen voted to extend the contract.

Kathy Jacobs discussed using the Surplus Tax Overlay Account to purchase a new pickup truck for the Highway Department. She said the account is for emergency purposes only, but if the truck is considered to be an emergency purchase then the Finance Committee approves the expenditure. All agreed that the expenditure is appropriate.

Kathy also said that she would like to see more transparency in the school budget. The school district is expanding its Pre-K program to 5 full days and that is part of the reason for the increase in their budget. Kathy wanted the Selectmen to discuss this budget item with the school district but Patrick responded that, because the school district is regional they are their own entity; the state set up regional schools in such a way that Select Boards and Finance Committees cannot dictate the school needs. Richard noted that some of the increase is due to cuts in state aid and increases in health insurance for school personnel.

Jeff asked about monthly bills incurred by the Planning Board and the Board of Health. They have not been submitting monthly bills in time for payments to be made. Salaries, however, are up to date.



March 28 – Attending: Richard Campetti, Patrick Barrett, Jeff Gray. Also attending: Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent; Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant

Finance Committee members came in to review the FY 2012 budget. We are over Prop 2½ by approximately \$192,000. Kathy Jacobs reported that the Finance Committee voted to delay the first of 10 repayments of \$25,000 to the Stabilization Fund for

the purchase of a new truck until 2013. Patrick disagreed because he believes the economy is not going to recover quickly enough to benefit from doing this. The School Committee is asking for funds for capital improvements and the increased Pre-K program. The Finance Committee feels the School Committee should make a good faith effort to cut parts of that budget. Rhee Kasky requested that the School Committee annually provide the Finance Committee with a copy of their audited financial statement. John Skrip will request this from the school and ask for an explanation of how the School Choice income is spent. The Finance Committee voted not to support the school budget this year.

Kathy also discussed the new line item for compensating Fire Department and EMT volunteers, stating that if we don’t fund this article we will lose the volunteers to other towns that pay for the services. In line with tightening the budget, Dolores removed her request for a fireproof file cabinet. The Finance Committee also recommended removing the \$5,000 line item to cover a grant writer, leaving \$1.00 in order to keep the account on the books for a later time. Discussion ensued regarding what happens if the town doesn’t pass the budget and the costs involved in a special election if Prop 2½ doesn’t pass.

If the proposed budget passes, the average tax bill will increase by about \$300 in FY2012.

Steve Harasyko presented a Chapter 90 request for gravel and approval was granted. The contract with Tonlino for that project was extended for two years at the same price as last year. Steve asked if we had a policy regarding culverts in driveways; he doesn’t want to set a precedent by replacing culverts on private property. Jeff Gray prefers that homeowners take care of it since it is on their property. There will be a follow up with Town Council. The Highway Department is doing gravel work and looking at a maintenance program. They are also looking at the increased beaver activity on Roberts Road.

The Selectmen reviewed licenses and special permits for Francis Deming and the Hoekstras. The 20-day appeal period has passed. Richard Campetti invoked the Rule of Necessity and the permits were signed.



April 4 – Selectmen attending: Richard Campetti, Patrick Barrett, Jeff Gray. Also attending: Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent; Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant.

The Selectmen entered into Executive Session for the express purpose of discussing the union contract negotiation. The regular Selectmen’s meeting then reconvened.

Patrick introduced Alice Boyd, a municipal grant writer and nonprofit consultant. Alice discussed her experience with municipal grants, indicating that government money is available when towns position

Cont’d p.10

FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BULLETIN



Tara Beardsley

A few months back, the students of FFERS were asked to write a poem based on the subject of science. The poems were written and the class favorites were submitted to the 23rd Massachusetts Science Poetry Contest. This contest was founded by Boston College Professor George Ladd. He thought it would be a great opportunity for young children to showcase their writing and illustrating talents by publishing the winners' poems.


There are different individual and group categories for the contest. Individuals winning 1st place receive a \$50 gift certificate from Charlesbridge Publishing. Those placing 2nd, 3rd, and honorable mention receive a science poetry book from Charlesbridge. First place groups of 2 receive (2) \$50 gift certificates, while groups of 3 or more receive \$100 for the group.

All 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners receive special certificates, and all winning poems will be published and available to be purchased by families, teachers and schools.

Over the past 23 years, there have been thousands of entries to the contest. This year our little school placed in 9 different categories! Congratulations to Christopher Bilotta, Kyle Hawley, Jessica Kopiec, Liam Pigott and Mrs. Bertoli's Kindergarten class for their incredible achievements!

Get your calendars out and mark these important dates:

June 1	6:30pm - Monument Valley Parent info. Night
June 2	6th Grade Monument Valley Shadow Day
June 3	6th Grade Lee MS Shadow Day
June 9	5-7:30 - Theatrix Potluck and Performance of Willy Wonka
June 10	1:30 - Theatrix school wide performance of Willy Wonka
June 16	Spring Concert Grade K-6
June 17	6th Grade Boston Trip and 5th Grade Trip
June 20	Field Day * *Rain date: June 21**
June 22	5:30pm - 6th Grade Recognition
June 23	Last Day of School ½ Day- Dismissal at 11:45

You may find additional school information at farmingtonriverelementary.com, or by calling the school directly at 269-4466. 

23RD MASSACHUSETTS SCIENCE POETRY WRITING CONTEST

JESSICA KOPIEC, GRADE 2

Grades K – 2: Grand Prize
Long Poem Honorable Mention
Grade 2: 2nd Place Long Poem

HORSES

Big, Fast
Running, Eating, Playing
Hooves, Mane, Tail, Legs
Jumping, Racing, Galloping
White, Black
Foals
Little, Cute
Training, Helping, Caring
Fun, Nice, Relaxing, Curious
Small, Wonderful
Wild Horses
Walking, Talking
Sleeping, Chasing, Waiting
Eyes, Warm fur, Big hooves, Bodies
Trotting, Getting, Working
Sharp eyes, Fast legs
Ponies
Brown, Golden
Cleaning, Grooming, Mucking
Stripe, Snip, Sock, Blaze
Markings, Pulling, Staying
Gray, Light brown
Ponies of the past
Love company, Special friends
Spotting, Riding, Thinking
Dock, Crest, Poll, Chest
Stocking, Learning, Giving
Bright eyes, Shiny coat
Pony fun
Bay Brown, Jumping, A lot of Practice
Using, Dismounting, Mounting
Hock, Thigh, Knee, Forearm
Lying, Bedding, Wood shavings
Shredded papers, Straw
Horse Shows
Some work, Some don't
Working, Colorings, Feelings
Flank, Heel, Cannon, Elbow
Vaulting, Spending, Going
Ride through woods, Fields
Horses

LIAM PIGOTT, GRADE 1

Grades K – 2: Grand Prize
3rd Place Expressive Poem
Grade 1: 1st Place Expressive Poem

SPRING

The sun shines yellow
Lots of green leaves grow from trees
Sun shines on the grass

CHRISTOPHER BILOTTA, GRADE 1

Grades K – 2: Grand Prize
Honorable Mention Expressive Poem
Grade 1: 2nd Place Expressive Poem

SPRING

The spring is brilliant
The sunshine is radiant
Flowers grow so tall

MRS. BERTOLI'S KINDERGARTEN CLASS

Grades K – 2:
Grand Prize 1st Place Winner Cooperative Poem
Kindergarten: 1st Place Cooperative Poem

PANDA BEARS

Pink babies
A panda bear is born blind
Not a bear, but related to bears
Drinks mother's milk
A panda bear is born super tiny

Bamboo is their food
Endangered
A baby fits in the palm of your hand
Rolls like a beach ball
Sharp claws

KYLE HAWLEY, GRADE 4

Grades 4: 3rd Place Long Poem

UNTITLED

Solar –systems keep our planets balanced
Chemistry is what forms our food
Imagination where it all starts
Environments are where we live
Nucleuses make up life
Constellations are the beauty of space
Eco-systems sustain all animals' lives

Illusions like mirages trick our eyes
Seasons keep with fresh views

Solids are our hardest matter
Plants make our oxygen
Earthquakes shape our continents
Comets are a wonderful sight
Ice chills at the touch
Animal tracks help us find our furry friends
Lava burns through any obstacle

MONTVILLE VILLAGE

By Ron Bernard

With contribution from Charlotte Westhead

The village of Montville is situated virtually only along Sandisfield Road starting approximately at Nos. 102 & 133 and running about two miles west to Lower West Street. Its irregular shape is thanks to the hills on either side of the Buck River that frame it.

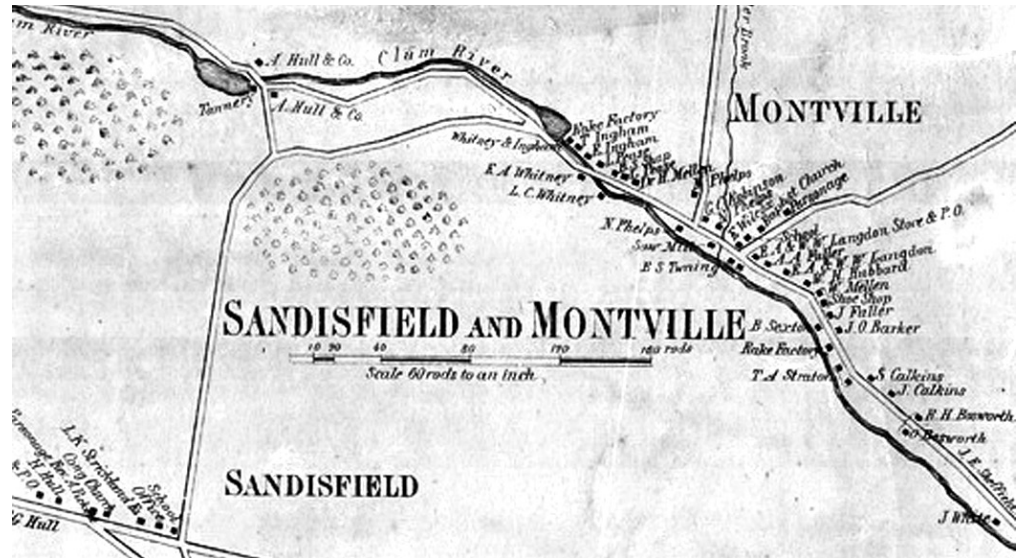
Montville emerged because of two major factors: the original "town road," which connected New Boston with Sandisfield Center and New Marlborough, and the Buck River with its abundant water power for saw mills, grist mills and tanneries. In fact, the area was dubbed "Slab City" owing to the large quantity of slabs produced in the saw mills. (Slabs are the outer section of logs. Many older homes here still have original slabs beneath the clapboards and in attics and staircase walls.) (Above right, 1858 Walling Atlas).



The Manelys of Wethersfield, Conn. appear to be the first settlers on a farm that extended northeasterly from the intersection of Town Hill and Sandisfield Roads. Their original cabin, probably built about 1765, is one of the earliest surviving structures in town. Today it is part of the rear ell on Sylvia German's classic Federal style house (c.1785) at 2 Town Hill Road.

By the 1820s small woodworking shops and mills dotted the Buck's banks. Next to come were blacksmiths, metal works, wagon makers and repair shops. They served prosperous farms in the Town Hill section, and some near the Center a mile away. That's when the name changed to "Mechanicsville." Starting in the late 1830s the second generation of Fullers, Whitneys, Claffins, Merrills, Bosworths and Barkers bought home lots, mostly on the flatter north side of the road. In the 1840s, Sandisfield's golden age, they built their graceful "Greek Revival" style homes.

In 1842, a consolidated Baptist congregation erected a grand new meeting house in the Village (current home of The Sandisfield Arts Center). About 10 years later, nearby Sandisfield Center, once so vibrant, began to decline. Economic activity shifted down the road to the busy little village with yet another new



name -- "Montville" (origin unknown). In 1853 the Langdon brothers from Tyringham built the first general store with its own post office (seen below left, early 1900s, now 122 Sandisfield Road). James Merrill, who was proprietor and postmaster there from 1875, moved both his business and the post office in the early 1880s to his residence directly across the street (No. 147).

In the mid-1850s the Whitney brothers established a rake factory near Lower West Street. It operated for over 30 years as "Whitney & Ingham" as well as other names, and was described as "the most extensive business in this village." Others were attracted to the industry including "Barker & Sons," which also made "keelers" (wooden tubs) and toy hoops. Several tanneries had sizeable employment. About 1864, Merrill opened a ready-made clothing shop near the center. Montville became a community of tradesmen and artisans.



Now defunct Tannery. Courtesy www.DeMarsImages.com.

Historian Elizur Smith wrote of them, "They were a little better off financially, perhaps, than some of the yeomen but the two (segments) of Society, village life and farm life, stood side by side."

Montville weathered the Depression of the 1870s and subsequent years of economic malaise rather better than did the farmers. In 1893, Rev. Aaron Field observed, "(there are) about 25 dwellings, all of which are occupied." Yet, it wasn't long before the situation turned dire. By 1900 all the factories had closed. Long time residents were passing on and their chil-

dren moved away. Houses often sat empty for a long time and many were lost to neglect. Another observer, writing in the *Winsted Evening Citizen* in late 1905, said "It is pitiful and pathetic now to see (the village), over half the homes empty and deserted and the store which is the last of three is about to close..." The Baptist church closed its doors as well. In 1913 the two-story school had only 16 pupils. (Bottom right c.1910. Water wheel from Whitney Rake factory. Courtesy www.DeMarsImages.com.)

Late 19th century Sandisfield was no stranger to European immigration. The Irish arrived first followed by Finns, Russians, Germans and Italians. But they tended to settle on old farms in South Sandisfield and New Boston, not so much in Montville. One group eventually did settle in Montville – Jews from Poland and Russia. By 1904 there was already a "colony", primarily in the northwest part of town, trying its hand at farming, not always with success. Word got around that Sandisfield was a good place for families to escape from summer in the New York ghetto; they pooled resources or helped one another to buy empty houses and land, especially in and near Montville. By the 1920s the village was vibrant once again. The old Baptist church was converted to a Synagogue. The Town turned the former Merrill Store into a public library. School enrollment stabilized. The Montville Store was rejuvenated and there were several popular dance halls.

Today Montville Village is home to a mix of full and part-time residents, albeit to few children. Houses have been nicely restored for the most part, and come on the market infrequently. ♡





Town News

Cont'd from p.7

themselves properly and are ready to apply for grants. There are requirements that need to be in place before applying for grants and Alice offered to help things along at no cost to the town. She suggested that boards develop wish lists of things they would like to have funded, and offered to work on a development plan for the town.

Steve Harasyko reviewed the FEMA paperwork for reimbursement of expenses related to the snowstorms of January 11, 12 and 13, 2011. He also discussed the dead trees along the parade route on Route 57.

Discussion ensued on the Annual Town Meeting warrant and the budget. Ralph Morrison asked about taking \$100,000 out of both Free Cash and the Stabilization Fund to offset the increases in the budget. Richard Campetti explained that this is not a good idea because doing so would just mean passing the debt onto next year's budget.

The Selectmen voted unanimously to allow the Prop 2½ override to appear on the May 16, 2011 ballot. They also voted unanimously to remain a Single Precinct Town.



April 11 – Selectmen attending: Richard Campetti, Patrick Barrett, Jeff Gray. Also attending: Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent; Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant.

Robert Fredsall submitted a resume for future jobs with the Highway Department.

Otis Selectman Donald Hawley discussed the school budget. He proposed that both Otis and Sandisfield pay for the capital expenses from Free Cash and that town crews from both towns split the plowing and mowing duties and costs. Richard Campetti responded that if Prop 2½ doesn't pass then we could look

into these options. Patrick suggested that surrounding towns get together every 6 months to brainstorm similar problems.

Anita Carr presented a letter to be sent to various state and federal officials regarding the condition of Silverbrook Road. She is aware that lack of funds makes it difficult to properly repair the road and, after extensive research, discovered that the Silverbrook Road dams were constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers, who then gave control to the state, and are, therefore, subject to mandatory inspection. The Selectmen agreed to give her full support for this effort and thanked her for doing the research.

Garry Bottums offered community service time to the town. He can help with odd jobs such as repairing and painting cemetery fences, the entrance to Town Hall Annex and the ramps at both town halls. The Selectmen thanked him for offering his service.

The Highway Department crew tried to use the Old Town Hall for a union meeting but they were unable to get into the hall because the Board of Health and the Planning Board placed a lock between the back door and the front room. Richard said they could put an eye hook type lock on the door so that it would be locked while they were working.



April 19 – Selectmen attending: Patrick Barrett, Jeff Gray. Unable to attend: Richard Campetti, Steve Harasyko, Dolores Harasyko.

The Household Hazardous Waste agreement for FY2012 was reviewed and accepted and the Town Warrant was reviewed and signed.

A letter from the Board of Assessors regarding the town's website was discussed. Patrick noted that the website is a work in progress and the letter will be followed up after the budget season.

A letter from Gene Anderson regarding his neighbor, Richard Lessor, was discussed. Both men will be invited to the next Selectmen's meeting.

A letter from Ann Wald regarding the culvert at the end of her driveway was reviewed.



April 25 – Selectmen attending: Patrick Barrett, Jeff Gray. Unable to attend: Richard Campetti and Steve Harasyko. Also attending: Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant

Gene and Karen Anderson and Richard Lessor, neighbors from West Hubbard Road, were present to discuss a letter the Andersons sent to the Selectmen regarding their concern that Mr. Lessor is operating a business from his residence. Patrick asked Mr. Lessor to clarify the use of a greenhouse and whether he has permits for it. Mr. Lessor responded that he does not have either a special permit or a building permit since he only uses the greenhouse for storage. He does operate Nature Works, a landscaping business, along with a four-acre farm. Mr. Anderson also expressed concerns that the noise, machinery, messiness and the greenhouse would devalue his property. Jeff Gray noted that the Building Inspector needs to review structures, even if they are temporary. Additionally, Mr. Lessor has equipment and other assorted items that are primarily parked and stored in the greenhouse and are used for his home and business; his employees come to his house in the morning and evening to load and unload the equipment. Jeff asked Mr. Lessor to keep the equipment quiet, the traffic down and clean up the property. Patrick will follow up with Town Counsel.

The letter from Ann Wald regarding the culvert at the end of her driveway was discussed. She would like the town to replace it. The Selectmen will follow up with Town Council.

FEMA reimbursement submission for the January storms was reviewed. Dolores prepared the submission for \$24,000 and if FEMA approves the expenses the town will receive 75% of the total.

Great gardens begin here.



Don't take our word for it. Visit Snow Farm and choose from a variety of healthy, locally-grown annuals, perennials, herbs, and shrubs. Too busy to garden? Snow Farm's professional horticulturists will design, install, and maintain your gardens for you.

Snow Farm

Nursery & Greenhouse

16 Beech Plain Road, Sandisfield, MA

413-258-4929 - snow-farm.com

TAKE A HIKE

Cont'd from p.5


Hiking socks to prevent blisters.

A good hiking stick to maintain balance.

½ liter of water per person, for each hour of hiking.

Trail mix. Eat a handful of nuts and raisins every ½ hour to maintain your energy.

A map of the West Lake Trail with pictures and instructions can be accessed at www.sandisfieldtimes.org/hiking/west-lake-trail.htm

See you on the trail. 



It Sure Ain't Pretty

By Anita Carr



I have been a resident of Sandisfield for over 35 years. I have been on practically every road. Each spring, I love how the trees form a canopy of green over our streets. I love the shushing sound of the wind as it caresses each leaf. That is the sound that I wait for after a long, hard winter. I have traveled over the roads on foot, by bicycle, by quad and by car. And no matter how I travel, I enjoy what I see, feel, and hear. I have developed an interest in plant identification and try to practice my skills as I go along. Some of the plants are flowers such as the painted trillium. It's a thrill to find one of these! Others might have been used as food sources or medicines for the earlier Sandisfield residents in a time when grocery stores were nonexistent.

Sounds wonderful, doesn't it? Oh, but it isn't always. The serenity is often disrupted by a foreign object that has not earned the right to be there. Among the flowers and plants and trees is the occasional blight: a discarded blue and silver can of Bud Light, a broken bottle, a McDonald's bag. It's horrible to see. In addition, there are larger items that took a great deal of deliberate effort to discard: old engines, furniture, tires, old rusted culverts.

We've all seen them. And I'm pretty sure that our reactions are all about the same - disgust. My question

is, why do people do this? A campaign in the fifties to keep America clean coined the word "litter" as well as a word to describe the offender: "Litterbug." It apparently worked a little - but not enough.

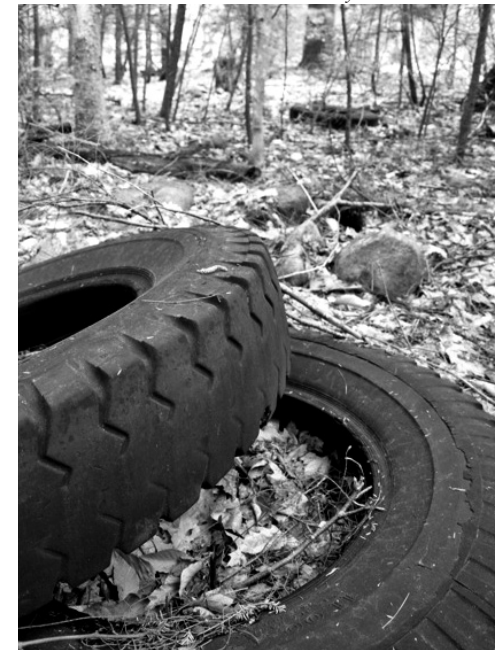
Recently, I went kayaking with friends up at West Lake. It was so beautiful. The water was calm. The kayaks slid effortlessly through the water. A beaver showed off his talents. Some geese were sentry to their nest in the reeds. Some ducks poked their heads out to monitor our location. And I actually saw the first goldfinches of the year flit from tree to tree. We talked, we laughed and we had a great time. And yet, there it was....in the water....the blight that also plagues the roads and woods. - trash! A large bottle of cognac, a coke bottle, a bag, bait containers. Ugh!

How about taking a moment to think about NOT throwing your garbage outside the car windows? Keep it in the car until you get home. Then throw it in the trash where it belongs! Keep trash off the roads and waterways. The beer cans are worth \$.05 per can. Save them and put the money into an account for your child's education!! It will add up quickly. I have picked up bags and bags of these beer cans. Some of my neighbors have done it as well. I'm just plain tired of it! Although we live in a beautiful part of the Commonwealth, one thing is certain about the trash and debris: It sure ain't pretty!

Photos top left and below: Anita Carr



Photos above and below taken along Silverbrook Road by Setsuko Winchester



WHETHER IT'S A NEW HOME, ADDITION OR COMPLETE REMODEL

TOLLAND MOUNTAIN BUILDERS INC

HIL #144855

MA LIC #38268

"When Quality and Professionalism Are a Must"

Nick DellaGiustina
413-258-2821

"We Handle All the Details"
Local references available.

Steve DellaGiustina
413-258-4996

KWIK^{Color} PRINT INCORPORATED

EXPERIENCE • SPEED • QUALITY

- Full Color Digital Printing
- Full Color Envelope Printing
- Large Format Printing
- High Speed Copying
- Laminating
- Inline Bookletmaking
- Perfect Binding
- Folding
- Perforating
- Mailing Services
- Graphic Design Services

35 Bridge Street
Great Barrington, MA 01230

Ph: 413.528.2885 Fx: 413.528.9220

typesetting@kwikprintinc.com
www.kwikprintinc.com

Letter From The Selectmen

By Patrick Barrett

The Sandisfield Board of Selectmen would like to thank all of our residents who participated in the Annual Town Meeting. This was a particularly spirited meeting with intense discussions taking place on numerous issues. It is this type of difficult conversation that ultimately helps move our community forward. We would like to extend our thanks to the many individuals who helped make for a successful event: the Sandisfield Highway Department for setting up the Old Town Hall for this annual rite of passage; Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko for her hard work during this meeting as well as her stewardship of our Annual May Election; Town Moderator John Skrip for his grace under pressure; Town Counsel Jeremia Polard for his guidance during these proceedings; our Finance Committee for their invaluable input; Town Treasurer Claire English for her wisdom and insight; and the Town Constables for their presence during these two important days. A special thank you goes out to all of the election workers whose dedication and attention to detail help make our elections run so smoothly.

We would like to thank all of the candidates who stepped forward to participate in this year's town election. Putting one's name forward to be judged

Sandisfield Police Blotter



We are pleased to add a new monthly column to our array of newsworthy items about Sandisfield. Mike Morrison, Sandisfield's Police Department Chief, will be providing a report on responses made by local police to calls relating to police matters.

March 21 Motor vehicle accident, North Main Street (2 calls)

March 27 Motor vehicle accident, South Main Street

April 3 Illegal burning, Cold Spring Road

April 5 Strange vehicle, New Hartford Road

April 7 Motor vehicle accident, Sandisfield Road

April 17 Strange vehicle, Sandisfield Road

April 18 Strange phone call, Rood Hill Road

April 19 Well-being check/possible threat to cause personal harm, Sandisfield Road

April 20 Trespassing notice, Sandisfield Road

April 21 Unwanted person, Town Hill Road

April 23 Vandalism complaint – Sandisfield Road


April 26 Trespassing/unwanted person, Mountain Home Lane

April 27 Tree blocking the road, Dodd Road

April 28 Tree blocking the road, Town Hill Road

April 29 Complaint about cattle destroying property, South Beech Plain Road

May 6 Well-being check for Bantam Court (CT)/person threatening personal harm, Sandisfield Road

For non-emergencies call 413-258-4742. For emergencies call 911. 


by our community at the polls isn't an easy thing to do. Our town can't run without its elected officials, so thanks go out to the winning candidates; we look forward to your dedicated service during the coming years. We would like to welcome back Jeff Gray to the Sandisfield Board of Selectmen. We will all benefit from Jeff's expertise, in particular his extensive construction background and intimate knowledge of Mass Highway during the Route 8 Bridge project.

Chairman of the Sandisfield Planning Board Chris Rines recently resigned from this important town board. We are looking to fill this position as soon as possible. Please contact Dolores if you are interested in filling this vacancy. We are also looking for a veteran to represent Sandisfield at the monthly district veterans' meetings in Great Barrington. Please let us know if you would be interested in serving our community in this capacity.

We have received several inquiries regarding the Sandisfield Town Website. I would like to clarify for the record that the information currently on the site is strictly a base package containing general information about our town. Sandisfield Town Boards are currently in the process of creating individual pages for the website. These specific departmental sites will contain the more detailed information one might hope to find on a typical town website. The website is a work in progress, so we ask for your patience and understanding as the site continues to evolve.

We would like to recognize the wonderful work John Field Tree Service has done this spring in removing numerous dead trees on Route 57. John and his staff

are called upon annually to help rid the town of dangerous trees along our roads when they cannot be safely handled by our town highway department. John's extremely competitive prices and excellent work have helped put the town's tree budget to good use.

The bulky waste container and tire collection boxes should be arriving at the Sandisfield Transfer Station in the next couple of weeks. We are again participating in the hazardous waste program this year. Please check the fliers posted at the transfer station for dates, times and places for the drop-offs. Please note that you need to pre-register before disposing of waste products through this program. 

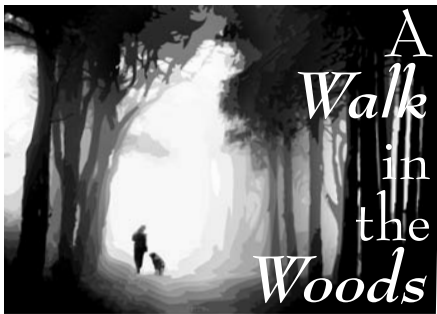
Beautiful homes
in the Berkshires

INTERIOR & EXTERIOR
PAINTING SERVICES

413-269-8948 Len Mandile

QUALITY PAINTING SERVICES

MASS. REG. #147903
FULLY INSURED



EMERALD ASH BORER

By Tom Ryan



In the recent past we have seen the demise of a number of our native tree species, including the once majestic American chestnut and elm trees that were common throughout our landscape and remain as a memory captured in dated street names like Elm Street and Chestnut Hill Road, etc. The root cause of this destruction is the spread of exotic invasive insects and diseases, largely a direct result of human activities and, more particularly the development of a global trade network. This trade network gave exotic pest organisms the opportunity to hitch a free ride and dine uninhibited in new environments devoid of predatory organisms that normally keep a population in check.

Seemingly trivial actions can have unforeseen and nearly catastrophic consequences, such as cutting up a downed limb from your backyard in the city and taking this “free” wood with you to burn the next time you go camping. How could you realize that this wood harbored an exotic insect that has the potential of destroying thousands, if not hundreds of



thousands, of trees? This seemingly innocent action is the reason behind the “don’t move firewood” campaign and a suspected cause of the rapid geographic spread of exotic pest organisms. The next invasion is literally knocking on Sandisfield’s backdoor.

I regret to report that one of these exotic insects was found last year in Saugerties NY, which is just on the western side of the Hudson River and less than 50 miles from Sandisfield, MA. We are now on the brink of losing another common tree species from our landscape, namely ash (*Fraxinus sp.*). The most common ash species found throughout Sandisfield and Berkshire County is white ash, occurring throughout our woodlands and along roadsides; green ash and black ash are also found in our area but are generally restricted to wet sites such as bottom land flood plains and wetlands.

The culprit charged with the destruction of ash trees is the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), and to date it has been found in 13 states and 2 Canadian provinces. It was first detected in 2002 in Michigan and over 99% of the ash trees have since been killed in that state. Multiple eradication efforts have been attempted but to date have not been successful. Presently there is no indication that this insect can be stopped. Authorities at both the federal and state level have adopted a damage control approach geared towards preparation and mitigation of communities not yet affected by EAB, including the use of quarantines for affected communities. These quarantines restrict the movement of host material, including all hardwood firewood, logs, nursery stock, chips, stumps etc.

You may notice purple traps located throughout the area which are designed for early detection of EAB. These traps are hung approximately 25 feet up in host trees. EAB adult beetles emerge from trees and are active from mid-June to mid-August. To my knowledge, EAB has not been confirmed in our state yet, but keep your eyes open and you can help detect this invasive destructive insect. If you have a suspect ash tree you can call the DCR Forest Health Office at 413-253-1798 x 204.

Tom Ryan DCR Forester; 413-784-1828 x 123; tom.ryan@state.ma.us

TEEN SINGERS NEED HOST HOMES IN SANDISFIELD

Looking for Sandisfield families with teenagers to house visiting teens from Village Harmony for one night (July 24). Village Harmony is a unique and lively teen music ensemble specializing in traditional harmony singing from throughout the world; they are performing at the Sandisfield Arts Center on July 24th at 4PM.

The 23 bold and talented teens from seven states have won a wide reputation for their powerful sound and energetic stage presence. Their heartfelt performances never fail to bring audiences to their feet.

A potluck supper will be provided by the Sandisfield Arts Center following the concert. Please call Liana if you are interested in participating in this special experience (413) 441-9542.



JUNE EVENTS

THE SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER

5 HAMMERTOWN RD, SANDISFIELD, MA
413-258-4100

WWW.SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG



SATURDAY, JUNE 4TH
10^{AM}

The Alexander Technique

A Free Workshop with Betsy Politan



SATURDAY, JUNE 11TH
8^{PM}
\$15

COMMON THREAD

John Sellev, Eric Martin and Jamie Vlcek



SATURDAY, JUNE 18TH
10:30^{AM}
\$10

VAL COLEMAN on AMERICA AND THE MATURING OF DEMOCRACY



SATURDAY, JUNE 25TH
8^{PM} \$15 Adults/\$10 under 14

STRINGS ATTACHED

Fiddling traditions of Ireland, Scotland and the American South.
Maggie Holtzberg and friends.



SUNDAY, JUNE 26TH
2-6^{PM}

A CELEBRATION OF FIBER ARTS


A Free Workshop and Exhibit organized by Carol Quigley. On Display June 18 through July 18.



Comings and Goings



Simone Ryan Waiveris
April 28, 2011

Sandisfield residents Tom Ryan and Katherine Waiveris and their daughter Josephine are proud to announce the birth of a baby girl, Simone Ryan Waiveris, born April 28th, 2011 at Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington. 



SOME WORDS FROM OUR SPONSORS

BIZTECH ASSOCIATES

Your South County Computer Specialist
Networks ~ Data ~ Training ~ Troubleshooting
Jean Atwater-Williams, Owner
Call Toll-Free 877-857-2001

NEW BOSTON INN

Restaurant Tavern B & B
Corner of Routes 8 & 57
Open M - Th: 12 - 8; F, S, S: 12 - 9
413 258-4477 www.newbostoninn.com

PATHWAYS FARM PERENNIALS

484 New Boston Rd. (Rt. 57), Tolland MA
413-231-2708
Hours: Tu -Sat 9-6 • Sun Noon-5
Excellent selection of Tolland-hardy plants

WHEN PIGS FLY FARM

Andy & Sandra Snyder
222 Sandisfield Rd
100% organic plants, produce, flowers, herbs, berries,
eggs, meat and more.

WILD BIRDS COUNTRY STORE

783 Main Street, Great Barrington
www.wild-birdstore.com
413-644-9007
Unique bird and nature store.

PLEASE NOTE:
We are no longer
accepting entries for
this sponsorship page.

Those businesses who have already paid for their one-year listing will continue to be posted here until their one-year sponsorship expires.

We welcome advertising and offer an ad rate sheet which can be downloaded off of our website or please email advertising@sandisfieldtimes.org and we will be happy to send you one.

NOW HEAR THIS!

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

JUNE EVENTS

Wednesday, June 1, 6 PM, Otis/Sandisfield. Kiwanis Roadside Clearing Meet at the Otis Town Green. Long pants and bug spray suggested.

Wednesday, June 1, 7 PM, History Book Committee, Sandisfield Library, 269-0012.

Saturday, June 4, 9 AM - 2 PM, Alpaca Shearing, Red Barn Alpaca Farm, 24 Stump Road. Public Welcome, 258-4905 for more info.

Saturday, June 4, 10 AM, The Alexander Technique – Betsy Polatin Sandisfield Art Center

Saturday, June 4, 10 AM – Plant Swap, Otis Poultry Farm, held by the Otis Community Garden (sponsored by the Otis/Sandisfield Kiwanis Club) Bring your perennials and herbs and get different ones in return. No charge

Wednesday, June 8, 7 PM, 250th Birthday Committee Meeting, Sandisfield Library. All welcome 258-4535.

Saturday, June, 11 AM Historical Society meeting and pot luck - Historical Society Meeting House, Rte 183 (Sandy Brook Turnpike)

Saturday, June 11 8 PM, Common Thread, Sandisfield Arts Center. Local folk ensemble

Saturday, June 11, Otis Town Hall – Design your own Container Garden Workshop for preregistered participants

Monday June 13, 9:30 AM, Last Play Group of the season at Farmington River Regional Elementary School

Tuesday, June 14, 9:30 AM, last Play Group of the season at the old Sandisfield Town Hall

Tuesday, June 14, 7 PM Flag Day Retirement of Old Flags at the American Legion Pavilion. Flags may be dropped off at the Legion or given to any Legion member. For more information, call 258-4578

Wednesday, June 15, 7 PM, Women's Book Group, Sandisfield Library, *Sarah's Key* by Tatiana deRosnay

Wednesday, June 15 – last day to submit recipes/stories for Sandisfield Eats memoir/cookbook

Saturday, June 18, 10:30 AM America and the Maturing of Democracy – Val Coleman, Sandisfield Art Center

Saturday, June 18 to July 18 -Exhibit of Carol Quigley's Fiber Art, Sandisfield Art Center

Sunday, June 19, 9 AM Special Fathers' Day service New Boston Church

Thursday, June 23, End of school year

Saturday, June 25, 8 PM, Strings Attached –Fiddling Traditions of Ireland, Scotland and the American South, Sandisfield Art Center

Sunday, June 26, 2-6 PM, Reception and Workshop, A Celebration of Fiber Arts, with artist Carol Quigley, Sandisfield Art Center

Sunday, June 26, 12 Noon – 3 PM Luncheon and Live Jazz, 24 Norfolk Road, Sandisfield. At the home of Betsy Polatin, formerly the nationally acclaimed Charlesworth/Singer Rare Specimen and Rock Garden. Featuring jazz musicians Grace Kelly (18-year old Jazz Artist of the Year, *Boston Magazine*), Doug Johnson, Jason Palmer & friends. www.gracekellymusic.com. RSVP to Betsy at 413 258 2820 (weekends) or 617 277 2224 (Weekdays).



ONGOING EVENTS

Town Meetings (Info call 258-4711)

Selectmen, every Monday at 7 PM, Town Hall Annex

Board of Assessors, second Tuesday of the month, 5PM, Town Hall Annex.

Board of Health, first Wednesday of the month, 6PM Old Town Hall.

Boy Scouts, every Wednesday, 6:30 PM Otis Town Hall, Elizabeth Kuzmech Scoutmaster 258-4906 kuzmech5@verizon.net

Conservation Commission, third Tuesday of the month at 7 PM. Town Hall Annex

Council on Aging, every Wednesday, 11 AM Senior Center – Town Hall Annex. Pot Luck Lunch at noon, Bingo at 1 PM. Free blood pressure screening every fourth Wednesday.

Farmington River Regional School District, 1st Monday, 7 PM Farmington River Regional School Rte 8 JoAnn Austin, Superintendent. Public Welcome.

Otis/ Sandisfield Kiwanis, Wednesdays at 6:30 PM, Otis Town Hall.

New Boston Congregational Church 1, Sunday, 9 AM worship Service and communion

Planning Board, 2nd Monday of the month, 6 PM, Old Town Hall.

Cal Rifkin Baseball League every Wednesday at 4 PM Greene Park, Monterey through June 15.

Playgroup for kids 5 and under, Tuesdays at 9:30 - 11:00AM, Community Health Program Family Network. Toys, music, crafts! Parents must stay. All welcome. Old Town Hall. Laura Messina 258-4834.

Story Time Followed by a Craft, Every Monday, Farmington River Elementary School, 9:30-11AM. Led by Laura Messina, Sponsored by CHP.

Calling All Artists. The Otis Cultural Council is looking for artists and craftspeople for the Fourth Annual Otis Arts Festival to take place on July 23. The entry fee is \$20 for Otis residents and \$25 for non-Otis residents. Applications available online at www.townofotisma.com/culturalcouncil, or at the Otis Town Hall. For information email Otis-cc@hotmail.com.



Do You Have Civil Rights Era Memories?

All Berkshire residents and visitors are invited to join an open mic session on July 9 at the Sandisfield Arts Center to discuss, in about five minutes each, their personal experiences and observations about the civil rights movement. This walk through history will follow an original play, *The Outsiders*, about five people looking back at their memories. It is written by Val Coleman, who was active in the movement and is a playwright.

The play begins at 7 PM and the open mic goes on at 8 PM. All open mic participants will receive two free tickets for the evening.

To reserve your five minutes to relive your personal story, email Allan Luks at allan@allanluks.com.



Photo: Richard B. Migot

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

P.O. Box 584
Sandisfield, MA 01255
www.sandisfieldtimes.org

*We acknowledge with gratitude donations
from the following kind people:*

*Hal Holt
John & Geri Huber
Bill, Bobby and Amy Meier
John Slater & Susan Wells*

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 501(c)(3) designation, therefore donations are NOT tax-deductible at this time but **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.

Copies of *The Sandisfield Times* are available in Sandisfield at A&M Auto, the Dump, Post Office, Town Hall, Library, the New Boston Store, the New Boston Inn, the Silverbrook Café, Tuckers, and Villa Mia. Copies are also available in Otis at Katie's Market, Papa's Fuel, Southern Berkshire Realty, Otis Library, the Farmington Elementary School (during the school year) and Terranova's. Other

locations include the The Roadstore Cafe in Monterey, Monterey General Store (There is a box affixed to the front of the building containing *The Sandisfield Times*.) the Southfield Store and Wild Birds Country Store.

The Times can be mailed to your home by paid subscription (see form below) or you can read it (free) online as a PDF document at www.sandisfieldtimes.org.

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.

Editorial Staff for this issue:

Editor: Debbie Harris
Graphic Design: Tina Sotis
Contributors: Patrick Barrett, Ron Bernard, Anita Carr,
Val Coleman, Larry Dwyer, Rhee Kasky, Roberta Myers, Jos Strange,
Simon Winchester and our regular columnists.
Photos: Anita Carr, Larry Dwyer, Steve Graves,
Richard Migot, Setsuko Winchester

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

To have the *The Times* mailed to your home, please complete the information below and send a check for \$25 (annual subscription fee) made out to *The Sandisfield Times* to:

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES
PO BOX 584, SANDISFIELD, MA 01255

Name _____

Address to where *The Times* should be delivered:

City, State, Zip _____

How to Contact Us

Letters to the editor:letters@sandisfieldtimes.org

News, ideas, tips & photoseditor@sandisfieldtimes.org

Advertising questions:advertising@sandisfieldtimes.org

Entries for calendar of events:calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org