

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



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Plebis

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Volume II, Number 4

July 2011

BUDGET WOES: GRAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR TOWN'S FUTURE

By Simon Winchester

Although Sandisfield's budget crisis may be temporarily settled by voters at a special Town Meeting scheduled for press time, our town's underlying fiscal problems are proving stubbornly intractable and have grave implications for our community's future. Indeed, small towns all over western Massachusetts are facing a similar dilemma: too low a tax revenue, too little help from an increasingly parsimonious State, and expenses that are continuing, inexorably, to rise.

Debate on the emergency fix was scheduled for June 30th, to deal with Sandisfield's immediate problem – the overwhelming rejection last May 16th of the budget for the Farmington River Regional School District, and the consequent repudiation two days later of the proposed tax rise needed to pay the extra \$200,000 in the town's budget.

Town officials and school budget committee members juggled figures at crisis meetings last month, and came up with a two-part plan to head off the immediate emergency – the very real possibility the town would run out of the wherewithal to pay its bills and meet its obligations.

The plan involved, in essence, a \$50,000 cut in the school budget (to \$1,277,805), a cut that was only agreed to with great reluctance; and a simultaneous pair of subventions from town savings – one of \$75,000 from the town's Free Cash bank account, and a similar sum from what is known as the Surplus Revenue account.

The twofold effect of this robbing-Peter-to-pay-Paul plan would be, first, to lower the overall budget shortfall to \$150,000, and then, second, to pay for it from these two emergency- *Cont'd p.2*



Photo: Tina Sotis

Sandisfield Resident Leads World in Spotting Supernova

Our "Weather and Stars" columnist, Randy Siddell, made a remarkable discovery one very clear night early in June. Below he reports on what he found.

On the night of May 31, 2011 an amateur astronomer in France snapped a picture of what is commonly called the "Whirlpool Galaxy". Later that night he noticed a very dim star in the photograph and realized it was likely a supernova, an explosion of a star, signalling its death. He reported his findings to professional astronomers who were able to confirm his suspicion. Several other people, including myself, also reported the supernova in the following days.

Two nights later, not realizing the discovery of the previously mentioned french astronomer, I was looking at the Whirlpool Galaxy and I noticed a star that I had never seen before. I didn't report it at the time because I thought it was a "foreground star" - a star in our own galaxy. Besides, I was dazzled by the extreme detail made possible by the unusually clear sky. The next night I aimed my telescope in same direction and I was able to see the previous evening's unknown star in more detail and knew what I was seeing was a supernova. Had I realized and reported this night before I would have been one of the first 5 or 6 people in the world to have reported a new supernova. I ended up being one of the first couple of dozen or so people in the world to have reported it - still a significant accomplishment!

As stated before, a supernova is essentially an explosion of a very large star, typically larger than 8 or 10 of our suns, at the end of its life. The energy released is enormous, more than 10 billion times the total energy released by our sun over its entire lifetime of several billion years. *Cont'd p.2*



FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BULLETIN *Tara Beardsley*

As we begin the 2011 summer break we'd like to bid a fond farewell and best wishes to the

Class of 2011:

Zoe Bean, Janey Beardsley, Mario Castro, Jr., Jack Cosmos, Jeffrey Crandall, Nick Gray, Skyla Joy, Charles Kuzmech, Jimmy Margraf, Matt McCuin, Isabelle Morley, Alex O'Brien, Hannah O'Brien, Nicole Orsi, Lyssa Richard, Delanie Rybacki and Maddy Venne.



They will all be moving on either to Monument, Lee or Mount Everett, and will be missed!

Congratulations to the following students for ending this year on the honor roll:

4th Grade:

Haley Couch
Micheal Diskin
Amanda Gadaire
Kyle Hawley**
Ali Hiller
Mitchell Monterosso**
Hana Pigott
Emily Venne *Cont'd p.3*


TEEN WORLD MUSIC ENSEMBLE TAKES SANDISFIELD BY STORM

By Liana Toscanini



On Sunday, July 24th, twenty-four mostly barefoot teenagers from Village Harmony will knock the socks off the audience at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Singing with powerful voices, deep conviction and infectious joyous stage presence, these touring teens will take the stage at 4PM. Tickets are \$10, \$5 for children under 14. For reservations call (413) 258-4100.

The young singers will experience a week-long, intensive rehearsal in a summer camp in rural northwestern Massachusetts led by Suzannah Park, an expert in Appalachian music, Carl Linich, a Georgian-Caucasian specialist, and Will Thomas Rowan, an award-winning composer who studied singing in Bulgaria. Through these dynamic teachers, emphasis is placed on authenticity in the spirit of each musical genre and heartfelt art of the highest order.

The group performs in a different venue nearly every night, with the host community providing meals and overnight housing. The Sandisfield Arts Center program will feature American & British traditional harmony singing, music from Georgia, Croscica & Quebec, and Appalachian clogging. If you have teens and are interested in housing one or two singers from Village Harmony, please call Liana at (413) 441-9542. 



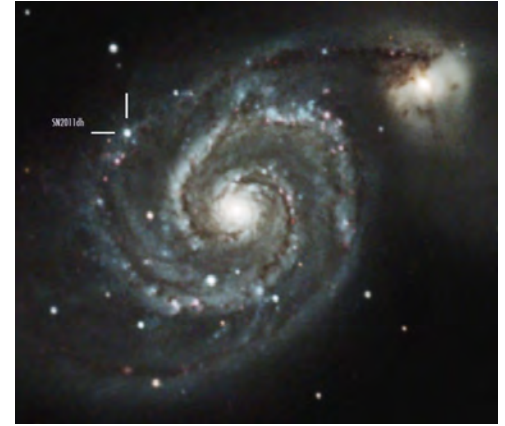
Supernova *Cont'd. from p.1*

The name of this supernova is SN2011dh. The name is formed by the year of discovery, immediately followed by a one- or two-letter designation. The first 26 supernovae of the year get an upper case letter from A to Z. Afterward, pairs of lower-case letters are used, starting with aa, ab, and so on.

The Whirlpool Galaxy is somewhere between 25 and 30 million light years away. Light travels approximately 6 trillion miles in a year – 6,000,000,000,000 miles. Multiply that by 25 or 30 million you get, well – many more zeroes! It's really an incomprehensible distance. And think of it this way: The supernova I saw on the night of June 2nd happened 25 to 30 million years ago.

With an amateur telescope of 8" in diameter or larger one can still easily see the results of the supernova (well past the middle of June as I write this). It actually got brighter each day for about two weeks and will likely start dimming soon and eventually disappear.

Amateur astronomers can provide desperately needed information to the professionals. There are several organizations that put professionals and amateurs in touch for various research projects such as gathering data that would be too expensive to do with the few large professional telescopes in the world. Amateurs are also needed for some tasks for which data is very much needed but doesn't require the large profession-



al instruments. Amateurs gather data using their own equipment and participate with the professionals in publishing the results in various scientific journals. In fact there are several scientific projects that don't require any equipment at all, only an interested person who wishes to contribute to science. For more information visit some of these websites:

www.citizenstry.org - Citizen Scientists

www.aavso.org - The Amateur Association of Variable Star Observers

www.socastrosci.org/symposium.html - The Society for Astronomical Sciences

www.galaxyzoo.org - Galaxy Zoo  photo: NASA

BUDGET WOES: *Cont'd. from p.1*

only funds – meaning that for now, there will be no need to ask the public for a tax hike.

“But this is only putting off the inevitable,” said Dolores Harasyko, the Town Clerk at the center of the fiscal maelstrom. “If we squeak by this year, the same problem will confront us next year – only then we'll have less in our reserves to attempt to deal with it.”

This, of course, presupposes that the June 30th Special Town Meeting actually resulted in a vote backing the proposed solution – which was by no means a certainty. “There is a hard core of voters in town who won't agree to a tax raise,” said one town official. “And who can blame them? If you live on a fixed income, and pay \$4 a gallon for gas – how can you afford to pay more taxes?”

The consequences of a second No vote are dire – and in theory, even more expensive. If that happened, the state would then come and determine what it believes the school-running costs for the coming fiscal year to be, and would then formally assess Sandisfield for its share – a sum that would probably be greater than the sum that was recommended by local officials (and rejected by town voters) last May. “The state then wouldn't care where we got the funds from,” said a person familiar with the procedure. “It would simply say: pay it, however you can.”

Town officials, while accepting the demographic realities – and trends – in small rural communities like ours, lay much of the blame for our current dilemma on the state of Massachusetts which has, as one officer put it, “been cutting back on its obligation, and breaking its promises to us, year after year.”


Citing one example: the State now owns lands in Sandisfield which would in theory produce \$3

million in annual tax revenue – but has so far, as the same officer put it, “not paid one red cent’.

But there is also acknowledgment that the town has become, in terms of asking for funds from state coffers, its own worst enemy. “When towns around here apply for grant monies,” one knowledgeable financial source explained, “some towns tick all the boxes, and we in Sandisfield don't.”

“Look at the state of our roads – Route 183, for example. In New Marlborough, it is well-paved and new. The moment you get into Sandisfield, it's like the surface of the moon. And why? Because they get grants, and we don't. And why don't we? Because we don't have affordable housing. Because we don't have a Master Plan for our land use. The State likes towns to have a plan for our future. But some people here – some very vocal people here – won't countenance such a thing. They see it as interference from on high and we don't get the money we need. It is as simple as that. We're shooting ourselves in the foot.”

Perhaps the only solution, in the long term, is draconian in the extreme: the amalgamation of some of the more critical and expensive town functions with those of our neighbors – a move towards what might be called ‘regionalism’, and which would inevitably dilute Sandisfield's unique identity.

It is not entirely without precedent. The school is already shared with Otis; there are now formal suggestions that our town Health Committee may be reordered within a Regional structure. It may well be that before too much longer we start to wonder if some of our other more costly departments – Fire Protection, Police, Highways – might also be shared with Otis, Lee, Tolland, Monterey or New Marlborough. For now, such talk is no more than heresy; in the medium term, it may come to be seen as inevitable. 

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

By Tina Sotis

This has been an exceptional year for me. I finally began to make real a decades-long dream: to work alongside marine scientists and do something to save our oceans and the creatures that live within them.

It began in January, when I went to Mexico and lived and worked for 10 weeks at a camp south of Tulum on the Yucatan Peninsula. I, along with 24 like-minded volunteers learned all we could about the Meso-American Barrier Reef and the threats to it. We got our diving certificates and were taught how to monitor coral or fish, depending on our assignments. Most days we made two dives and added our data to the an ever-expanding world-wide database. Among other sources this information enables scientists to make their arguments to convince the powers that be that our seas are in great trouble.

From the work of reef monitoring and from diving itself I've come to more than a few realizations about myself in relation to the world around me. Sometimes my small volunteer efforts seem ineffective against Big Oil, Big Coal and all the other power-

ful, short-sighted corporations whose only concern is their financial bottom line. But then I remember that I have become part of an increasing force for good, a great growing wave of people who not only believe the natural world is worth fighting for, but that our very lives depend upon it. My small "gift to the sea" isn't so insignificant after all.

When diving, one of the most important things to remember is to always, always dive with a buddy. Anything can happen underwater - your equipment might fail, you might get caught on something, a jellyfish or something equally poisonous may sting you. You must have someone with you whom you can depend on in case something goes wrong. And you, in turn are there to help if your buddy gets in a jam.

I've experienced first hand that individual contributions, when joined with others can make great things happen. And having someone to depend on in a pinch can literally save your life.

The Sandisfield Times is just such an entity that depends on you, our readers, to stay alive. Although we are an all-volunteer organization, we still have printing costs. It costs roughly \$840 per month to typeset, print and mail one thousand 16-page newspapers (with an average of 85 subscribers). More money is going out than coming in and we need your help to stay afloat and continue to be the paper we

have all come to rely upon for our local news.

With the help of our wonderful contributors, every month we provide information about how our town government is run, and profiles of different businesses and individuals who make this town the unique and wonderful place that it is. We supply a forum for local citizens, budding writers all, giving voice to what interests them (and us) - walking trails, swimming holes, bird life and beekeeping, astronomy, gardening, cooking, logging, hunting, farming and fishing, and the secrets behind some of the old Sandisfield properties - to name a few. You've come to depend on us - and, like a diving buddy, we depend on you to survive.

How can you help? Here are some ways:

- Donate
- Advertise
- Volunteer to write articles, copy-edit, etc.
- Other suggestions? Please write to us at editor@sandisfieldtimes.org.

Thanks to you, we can continue to be your source of local news. We are grateful for any amount you can give. And remember - every bit helps!

Tina Sotis

Editor, July and August issues



Sandisfield Police Blotter

May 14 – Well-being check on Sandisfield Road

May 15 – Dog complaint on Sandisfield Rd.

May 16 – Alarm on Silverbrook Road

May 17 – Alarm on Silverbrook Road

May 18 – Alarm on Silverbrook Road

May 20 – Abandoned bicycle on New Hartford Road

May 21 – Theft of items from a motor vehicle on North Main Street

May 22 – Noise complaint on Rood Hill Road

May 22 – Motor vehicle accident on Silverbrook Road

May 22 – Well-being check on Sandisfield Road

May 22 – 911 hang up on Rood Hill Road

May 24 – Animal complaint on Sandisfield Road

May 24 – Restraining order served on Sandisfield Road

May 26 – Assist out of state law enforcement agency with serving restraining order

May 29 – ATV complaint on Hammertown Road

May 30 – Wires down on North Main Street

May 30 – Alarm on Sandisfield Road

May 31 – Alarm in Otis woodlands

June 1 – Wires down on Sandisfield Road

June 1 – Lightning strike on Sandisfield Road

June 5 – Animal hit by motor vehicle on South Main Street

June 10 – Alarm on Beech Plain Road

June 14 – Tree in the road on Sandisfield Road

June 15 – Assist at medical call on Sandisfield Road

June 15 – Tree on wires on North Main Street

June 16 – Alarm on South Beech Plain Road

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



FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BULLETIN

Cont'd. from p.1

Made Honor roll cont'd:

5th Grade:

Allyssa Annecharico **

John Field

Will Green

Ava Guidette

Ariana Saporito **

Richard Stanmeyer **

6th Grade:

Zoe Bean

Janey Beardsley **

Mario Castro **

Jack Cosmos

Nick Gray

Isabelle Morley **

Lyssa Richard **

Delanie Rybacki

** Made Honor Roll for the whole year

We'd like to take this time to thank the Farmington River PTO for all their efforts throughout this past school year. We are most grateful for the generous donation of a Bose sound system for the music department, and an interactive whiteboard for the computer lab. Both items were recently cut from the school budget, so the staff is most appreciative!

Don't forget to encourage your child to participate in the Great FRRSD Summer Reading Challenge. Students brought home summer reading packets and extra calendars and forms are available on our website.

Oh, and since I'm sure you all are dying to know..... mark your calendars:

August 31st First Day of School Year 2011-2012

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

TAKE A HIKE

Bob's Way

Article and Photos by Larry Dwyer

Nearby, there is a beautiful local trail that starts in Monterey and runs through the north part of Sandisfield called Bob's Way. The trail was named for Bob Thieriot (1946-1998) who was one of the great conservationists in the history of Berkshire County. Bob's Way is a loop trail and is maintained by the



Berkshire Natural Resources Council, who does an excellent job of maintaining and marking the trail. The trail is well worn and marked by red blazes along the path. There are several paths on the trail, and signs are posted at intersections that clearly guide you on your way.

The longest section of the trail runs past wetlands and a large beaver hut is visible from the shore. The wetlands serve as a heron rookery and are home to several beavers. Don't be surprised if you hear a loud splash as you pass the marsh. The noise is from beavers warning intruders to stay away. Watching the beavers for a short time is okay, but be safe and don't disturb any wildlife.

On another section of the trail is the Cathcart Crossing, which is a moderate climb to Dave's Bench, the highest point of the trail. The crossing and bench are named after Dave Cathcart (1940-2003) whose contributions made the trail possible. The bench is a manmade arrangement of stones, where you can rest and take in the view of the hills beyond and enjoy a scenic view of the valley below.

Another path, called the Truman Dowd Crossing, is named for a 19th century farmer who once worked the land.

Here is some basic information about Bob's Way:

- Distance: 1.75 miles to 2.4 miles.
- Altitude gain: 300 feet.
- Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous depending on your physical condition.
- Average time to walk the trail is approximately 1 hour to 2 hours.
- Terrain: The trail is well worn, marked excellently, and normally clear of obstructions
- Scenery: Wetlands, beavers, herons, dense woods, and a hilltop view.

Trail Directions: The trail starts at the parking lot off Route 23 in Monterey just past Mt. Hunger Road and just before the Otis/Monterey town border. A large sign by the roadside marks the parking lot for Bob's Way. At the trail entrance, there is a large stone with the words Bob's Way carved into it. About 100 yards

into the trail, past a wooden foot bridge, there is a large information board where copies of the trail map are available. Please take a map, you will need it. There are several directions you can head off to, and signs at the trail intersections point to the various paths along the trail.

Hiking can be a very enjoyable pastime, but the amount of enjoyment a person will have will depend on several 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 forests in the Berkshires are large, and you could easily get lost. 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.

For the Bob's Way Trail, the following basic equipment is recommended.

- A good pair of water resistant hiking shoes.
- 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.

There is a map of the Bob's Way Trail with pictures and instructions at the following web link.

www.sandisfieldtimes.org/hiking/bobs-way.htm 



Adam Manacher

Polenta? Cook it *al Denta*.

Polenta, cooked yellow cornmeal, is one of the most important food staples in the Northern regions of Italy. For the last 400 years this cornmeal "mush" has fed the rich and the poor; sustaining families through bitter cold winter nights and through times of famine. The slow stream of cornmeal poured into a boiling pot of water and the careful stirring of the thickening, golden porridge allows the cook to watch the magic transformation of a humble grain into a delicious, rich and satisfying meal. It is the true meaning of "comfort food."

Polenta can be prepared in a variety of ways. It can be served alone as a bowl of creamy, soft porridge mixed with butter and creamy Italian cheese. In a different mode it can be served as a side dish alongside meats or any poultry. In particular it highlights a meal of wild game. Polenta, once cooked, can also be cooled and hardened. It can then be prepared by frying, baking or grilling and used in a variety of dishes. During the summer months this twice-cooked preparation is my favorite way to serve polenta. It is a simple way to make an average meal into something special for family or friends.

In the supermarkets polenta flour is sold in two basic types. One is fine-grained and the other is a coarse grain. I always prefer the coarser grain as it has more texture and flavor. You will find it in any baking section of the grocery store. The most common brand is Quaker Yellow Cornmeal. No need for anything fancy or special. Plain, unseasoned cornmeal has a very mild taste. Our preparation will bring it alive and truly make it delicious. Today's column will focus on the preparation of oven roasted polenta.

Preparing for 4 to 6 people, standard cooking requires 6 ½ cups of liquid to 1 ½ cups of cornmeal and 1 tablespoon of salt. These proportions can successfully be cut in half. I will often substitute half the water with chicken stock for a little more flavor. I also add a small clove of crushed, chopped garlic and a few turns of ground pepper into the boiling water. Bring the liquid to a boil, reduce to a simmer and add the cornmeal in a thin, steady stream, stirring constantly with a whisk. Once all the polenta is added, stir with a firm wooden spoon. Keep stirring for 20 to 30 minutes. The cornmeal will thicken as you stir. If you need to stop stirring, be sure to not ignore it more than a minute or two. The cornmeal will quickly stick to the bottom and can burn. Also, as it thickens, be sure not to have the heat too high: the cornmeal can bubble up, splatter and burn you. Ouch!

After 30 minutes, the polenta will be thick and soft looking and will pull away from the sides of the pot. Remove from the heat. *Cont'd on p. 5*



AVIAN NOTES

By Margaret O'Clair

Old Baldy: American Bad Boy



Our national holiday falls this month and it seems appropriate that the Avian Notes column be about our national bird. This thought occurred to me at the beginning of April when I was washing dishes and looked out my kitchen window to see a huge Bald Eagle leisurely flying up the Clam River. That was only the third or fourth one I have seen here in town. I have seen them more often along the Farmington River in Pleasant Valley, CT. What is remarkable, however, is that there are any here at all. During the 1950's and 60's wide spread use of agricultural pesticides leached into our rivers and lakes and concentrated in the fish, the eagles' main source of food, nearly exterminating them. With the exception of Florida and Alaska there were few Bald Eagle populations reproducing successfully. This embarrassing situation helped build public support for the Endangered Species Act and the Environmental Protection Agency. Since then the number of eagles has grown considerably and they are now found all over the U.S., usually located near large bodies of water.

I have been curious about the Bald Eagles' name

because it is clearly not bald; at least its head is not featherless like a vulture. With the help of my friend Chester I. Minnows, I have learned that in Middle English the word "bald" meant "shining white". It has the same etymology as the word for "ball," and the phrase, "bald eagle" was first seen in print in 1694. This explains the seemingly contradictory name.

Late last winter friends alerted me to the Raptor Resource Project, website of the Decorah Eagles in Iowa. A camera operating 24/7 recorded the comings and goings, nest building and the laying and hatching of eggs of a pair of 7-year-old Bald Eagles. Even though this pair have been together for four years, eagles do not necessarily bond for life. The female returns to the nest each year, does a little housecleaning and remodeling and then the male comes and performs a series of aerial acrobatics. If the show is good she lets him stay. The Decorah fellow, therefore, must be putting on a good display.

Eagles usually lay two eggs with the first hatchling often tossing the later one out of the nest. Fratricide is common in raptors. Twice now the Decorah eagles have hatched and successfully raised three chicks. My friends who told me about this website are vegetarians and were taken aback and somewhat appalled at the sight of the parents ripping up fish and tearing squirrel meat off the bone to feed the chicks. They even got a deer leg to the nest. As Tennyson observed "nature red in tooth and claw."

Everyone knows Benjamin Franklin disapproved of naming the Bald Eagle our national symbol, calling it a bird of "bad moral character" and he did have a point. The bird is a dreadful thief, preferring to steal prey from that master fisherman, the Osprey, than go out and work for its food. It is a dumpster diver, a roadkill eater and all too often waits to take advantage of the less fortunate. On the Skagit Flats in Washington State I have seen dozens of Bald Eagles standing around huge flocks of feeding Snow and Ross Geese waiting for something bad to happen - a broken wing, a crash landing, perhaps a mishap on takeoff.

In spite of its bad habits the sight of a Bald Eagle soaring overhead, the sunlight glinting off the white head and tail is truly something to see. In those moments, Ben Franklin's warning fades before the glory of this great bird, our national symbol. ♡

Polenta, al Denta *Cont'd from p. 4*

On a cookie sheet or sheet pan, coat the bottom with olive oil and rub a crushed clove of garlic on the pan. Pour out the polenta onto the pan, and, using an oiled spatula to keep your utensil from sticking, spread it in an even layer about ¼ to ½ inch thick. Experiment with this. You may prefer something thicker. Cool the polenta: get it to a moderately cool temperature on the counter then pop the pan in the refrigerator to chill completely. Once chilled, use a knife or firm spatula to cut the now solid polenta into pieces about 4 inches square or any shape you desire. At this point the polenta can be kept covered in the refrigerator several days until you are ready to prepare your meal.

Now you can bake, grill or even deep-fry your polenta. I prefer to bake it. I lightly coat the pieces on both sides with olive oil. If I'm using a fresh sheet pan, I rub it with crushed garlic. Into a preheated 425° oven, I bake the polenta for about 30 minutes, turning the pieces once or twice. As they cook they will slightly dry out and become crispy around the edges. The thickness you made your polenta when you first poured it onto the sheet pan will effect how much time it will take to get crispy. Thicker pieces will give you a creamy polenta center with crispy edges. Thinner pieces will give you an all around crunchier result.

Roasted polenta can be combined with an unlimited variety of accompaniments. Cut them into triangles

**Don't Miss Our
Historic House
& Garden Talks!**

**To benefit the Sandisfield
History Book Project**

**July 30 3-5PM
Tea & Talk \$15**

The Joseph Wolcott House
& former residence of
Madame Karinska!
(100 Silverbrook Road)
RSVP to Adam Manacher
(617) 868-5442

**Sept 4 4-6PM
Cocktails & Talk \$15**

The Nathaniel Dowd House.
Tour the glorious gardens and
beautifully restored barn and
exhibit of vintage images.
(153 New Hartford Road)
RSVP to JP & Eva Blachere
(413) 258-3340

Special \$25 per couple per event
www.sandisfieldthenandnow.org



and add them to any salad in place of crackers or bread. I prepare a wonderful meal of layered crispy polenta, roasted eggplant, mushrooms and thinly sliced grilled beef topped with a simple sauce of reduced red wine and a bit of added softened butter. Another option is to make a fancy sandwich. A bottom layer of polenta, garlic sautéed Swiss chard, sautéed mushrooms, crumbled goat cheese, diced tomatoes and chives, topped with a second layer of thin, crispy polenta. You can pick it up in your hands...but you might be disappointed if some of the tasty morsels hit the ground!

Once you have your roasted or grilled polenta, the variations are limitless. Enjoy! ♡

WHERE DID OUR DOWNTOWN GO?

By Ron Bernard

Center? What center? Everybody knows that Sandisfield is “a town without a center.”

While it may seem so nowadays, there was - and for a long time - a true Town Center. It was a busy, thriving place and the focus of the town's religious, economic, political and social life. In fact, before the Civil War, Sandisfielders rarely ventured away for their needs. They didn't have to: everything was available at The Center.

Plans for it trace as far back as the 1730s when Proprietors laid out “plantations” or “townships” in the Berkshires for settlement. In the case of our “Township No. 3” they reserved a section virtually in the middle for a “green,” or “common.” They planned for a church (“meeting house”) and minister's residence, an area for militia to drill, a tavern (inn), perhaps a farmers' exchange and, most importantly, passable roads. (Above, 1858. Walling Atlas)

Nathaniel Bosworth and Elizabeth Eddy of Middletown, Conn. arrived in 1754 with adult sons Jabez, John, Nathaniel Jr., Constant, and probably others from their clan of 13. Their mission was to establish a community, which they did, vigorously. Eventually 10 Bosworth families called Sandisfield Center and Montville home.

Construction of the meeting house (large barn-like building) began immediately. Completed in 1761, it was located literally on a rock. A second church

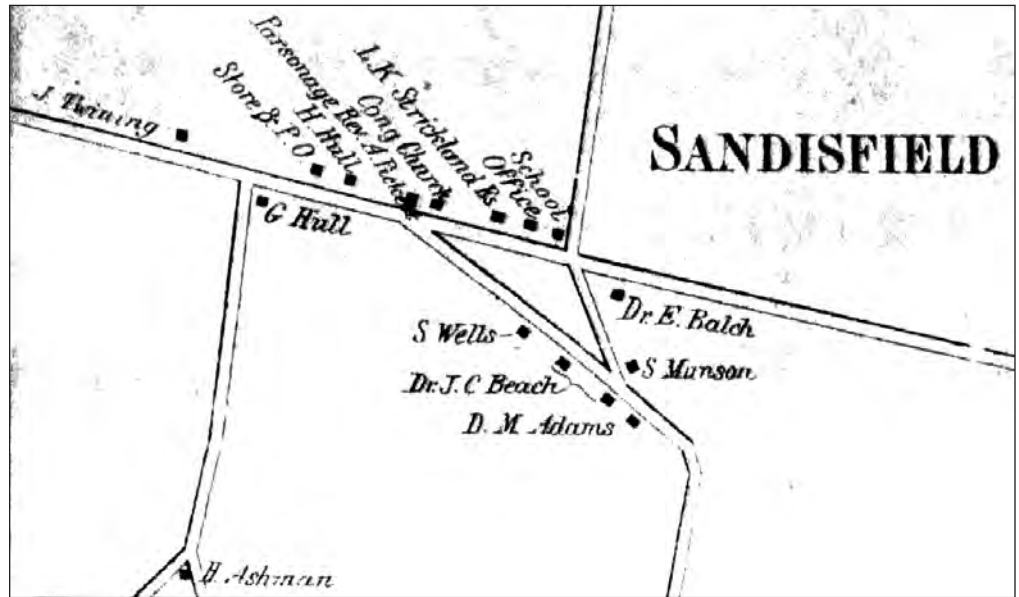


Photo: Sandisfield Historical Society

was built on the same spot in 1797. It was replaced in 1852. The 3rd Congregational church was a splendid, acclaimed edifice, set back on the green. It was struck by lightning and burned in 1908 and was not replaced. (Above, c.1900. Sandisfield Historical Society).

The first “common school” building was erected on the green in 1773 although grammar school instruction started in 1766. Three more schoolhouses were built at the Center. The last burned in 1937.

By the late 18th century there were shops and stores of every nature and even small manufacturers to support a fast-growing farming economy and resident population. Joel Sage's farm supply store became a Co-op.



About 1800 Eliakim Hull opened his general store. It became famous, drawing customers county-wide and even from New York State. The Hull Store, which stood on present day Walter Lincovich's property, offered all manner of merchandise for sale or trade but no product line moved better than locally made spirits, Sandisfield's specialty! The first library opened in the store in 1806 followed by the first post office (1808) and even a bank



Photo: www.DeMarsImagesCom

branch later. Eliakim's son, Lt. Governor George Hull, carried on until the business folded in 1862.

Meanwhile, no establishment was better known than the venerable Jabez Bosworth Tavern across from the green. A trip to or through Sandisfield was incomplete without a visit to the Bosworth Taproom. Because the

Center could be reached by the “10th Massachusetts Turnpike” (now Sandisfield Road/Rte. 57), Old Stage Coach Road (now Silverbrook Road) and New Hartford Road, it was a major stage line stop and connection. (Left c.1906. Probable first Bosworth dwelling (c.1754), and later Taproom.

By the late 19th century the Center had declined utterly. All establishments had closed. Nearby farms were abandoned and empty houses decayed. Old time family names disappeared. But starting about 1890 community life rejuvenated - at least during summertime. Charles Swift, the socially prominent former mayor of Poughkeepsie, NY, and his affluent extended family including Atwaters and Dotrys, eventually owned nearly every house on the Center's perimeter. They stabilized and improved the properties and their generations summered here for a hundred years. Respected by locals, they contributed to the betterment of the community and preserved so much precious historical fabric, a wonderful legacy for Sandisfield.

Today, as one contemplates our barren, rocky “green”—an almost surreal scene—only a handful of beautifully restored houses and ruts gouged in the rock by the passing of countless farmers' wagons and stage coaches, are witness to and a reminder of another, much different time.

Next month: New Boston Village. 🇺🇸

Constitution Day at the Sandisfield Arts Center

Please come celebrate **Constitution Day on Saturday, September 17th**, at the Sandisfield Arts Center. They will be hosting the Berkshire Premier of an original composition of the Bill of Rights. Neely Bruce, the composer, will be the conductor. What can you do?

- 1** Join the chorus. Rehearsals are 10:30 to 12:30, September 3, 10, & 17 at SAC.
- 2** Perform an instrumental part. These rehearsals have not been set up yet.
- 3** Read one of the Bill of Rights. We're looking for ten Sandisfield residents to each read one amendment.
- 4** Become a Supporter. Contributors of \$100 or more will be listed in the program as Supporters. Your contribution is tax deductible. Please make checks out to Sandisfield Arts Center.
- 5** Attend the performance! And join your neighbors after the performance for dinner and some additional singing.

To sing, play, or read during the performance, please contact Suzanne OConnell (soconnell@wesleyan.edu).

A recording of the premier performance can be heard at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvwckZ0fx2g

A DAY TO REMEMBER

By Liana Toscanini

Photos by Ron Bernard, Jean Atwater-Williams, Liana Toscanini

Sandisfield's Memorial Day Parade took place on Sunday, May 29 at 10 am. Sadly, there were few onlookers along the parade route. Parade participants were plentiful, however, with marchers wearing red, white and blue, floats honoring our Veterans, gymnasts, ponies, shiny red ATVs, fire engines and emergency vehicles from several towns with men in handsome blue uniforms, and of course, the Lee High School Marching Band with its full repertoire of patriotic music. Along the route, wreaths were laid at the granite war memorial in front of Old Town Hall, at the cemetery in West New Boston, and at the American Legion. A special tribute was paid to the Veterans at the New Boston Nursing Home as well as a ceremony complete with gun salute at the American Legion. Organized by American Legion Commander, Maria Domato,

Sandisfield's Memorial Day parade is memorable for its small-town charm and heartfelt homage to the Veterans who fought on our behalf. We hope to see a much larger crowd in 2012 during the town's 250th birthday year.

Photos:

1. The sign on this float reads, "To all veterans - thank you for our freedom."
2. Ron Bernard and Jean Atwater-Williams dress in period costumes to promote the history book project.
3. The Lee High School Marching Band keeps the beat for those on their feet. Brush up on the lyrics to America the Beautiful!
4. A ceremony is held at the cemetery.
5. WWII Veteran Norton Fletcher stands with Maria Domato, Commander of the Sandisfield American Legion.



JULY EVENTS
THE SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER
 5 HAMMERTOWN RD, SANDISFIELD, MA
 413-258-4100
 WWW.SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG

Saturday, July 9 4:30 - 9 PM \$10

Big Day!!
Quadruple Header!!
 Four major events in sequence and a single admission covers them all!

- 4:30 PM REMEMBERING PEARL HARBOR 70 YEARS LATER.
- 5:30 PM STANDING DINNER
- 7 PM A Play: THE OUTSIDERS
- 8 PM OPEN MIC!

Saturday, July 23 3-5PM
Artist's Reception

"DO I KNOW YOU?"
 AN ART SHOW BY JIM SINGELIS
 Self portraits by the New Marlborough artist Jim Singelis.



Sunday, July 24 4PM
Adults \$10 / \$5 under 14

Village Harmony
 Teen World Music Ensemble





TOWN BUSINESS

Rhee Kasky

Board of Selectmen Meetings

May 2 – Selectmen attending: Richard Campetti, Patrick Barrett, Jeff Gray. Also attending: Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant; Steve Harasyko, Highway Superintendent

Richard Lassar of West Hubbard Road in to discuss the special permit process. Dolores had spoken with town counsel and since Mr. Lassar has employees who come to his property in the morning and afternoon to load and unload equipment, there needs to be a “change of use” for the property reflecting that business is conducted. For that reason Mr. Lassar will need a special permit. Mr. Lassar reported that since his last meeting with the Selectmen he has had problems with his neighbor, Gene Anderson. He alleges that Mr. Anderson shot his family cat. He took the cat to the vet and the cat is alive but he has a large vet bill. Mr. Lassar reported the incident to the state police and he is pressing charges against Mr. Anderson. The Selectmen responded that since there is now an ongoing investigation into this, and this was the first they heard of the episode, they are unable to respond other than to express their deepest concerns. Mr. Lassar doesn’t want to go forward with the special permit process until this is settled with Mr. Anderson. The Selectmen explained that he must go through this process in order to operate his landscaping business at his home address. Dolores gave Mr. Lassar the special permit package.

Steve Harasyko gave Highway Department updates. Culverts replaced on Rood Hill and Norfolk Roads. Road signs and speed limit signs replaced. Working on Viets, Fox and South Beech Plain Roads. Spring grading has begun. Steve met with Beaver Solutions and they spent two days opening blocked culverts due to beaver interference. Discussed grants offered through the MSPCA for beaver control. They offer gates that would be placed in front of culverts that would prevent the beavers from clogging them. Discussed beaver problem on Cold Spring Road where the water is level with the road. Discussed prices for trucks that need to be replaced – prices should be less than what appears on the town warrant (Steve is meeting with a representative from the company that has the state bid for trucks). Steve is borrowing a York rake from Tolland to try on the dirt roads. Discussed his request from the Finance Committee for a Reserve Fund transfer to cover the cost of the conservation Notice of Intent. Steve has reviewed all of the dirt roads and they are all in poor shape. He plans to work on them in phases, the first step being drainage. He is also looking into plans for overlays on New Hartford Road. Discussed bidding out culvert work.

Debra Harris appointed to the Technology

Committee; Barbara Cormier and Laura Messina appointed to the 250th Anniversary Committee; Vicki Bakunis and Christine O’Brien appointed as Election Officials.

Discussed the culvert at Ann Wald’s house. Even after researching the matter it is still hard to tell if the culvert is within the town’s right of way. If Ann buys the culvert, the Highway Department will install it.



May 9 – All Boards meeting to prepare for the 2012 budget. Attending: Richard Campetti, Patrick Barrett, Jeff Gray, Steve Harasyko, Dolores Harasyko, Bob Greenfield, Debbie Harris, Mary Turek, Jean Atwater-Williams, Mike Morrison, Susan Van Sickle, JoAnn Austin, Jane Gleason, Edna Leavenworth, Lisa Leavenworth, Clare English, John Skrip, Kathy Jacobs, Linda Riiska, Ron Bernard, Mary Slater, Bethany Perry, Nick Della Giustina, Ralph Morrison, Liana Toscanini, Roberta Myers, Ron Myers, Robbin Campetti, Alan Annecharico, Gene Riiska, Gary Bottums.

Discussed using the pro bono services of a local resident who is a grant writer. Patrick requested that the chairpersons of each committee put together a wish list of grants to apply for. Discussed the lack of an Open Space Plan.

Discussed progress on the town website. Jean Atwater-Williams talked about the content of the site and the next phase which is to have each department develop text on what they would like to place on the website. Dolores expressed concern about this phase of the project given the amount of time the staff would need to devote to it. They are already maxed out on work as it is. Jean responded that she would offer training on updating websites and Liana Toscanini offered to help as well.

Dolores reviewed requirements for posting, cancelling and changing the dates of meetings. She also reviewed what is required in the minutes of each committee meeting: how to record votes taken at the meeting; making certain that the names of the people making motions and seconding them are included; reporting on the outcome. She also discussed who is allowed to vote on appointed committees and that members must be registered Sandisfield voters who are appointed by the Selectmen and sworn in by the Town Clerk.

Kathy Jacobs, Finance Committee Chair, called on departments to review their budgets:

Dolores reviewed the General Government budget where salaries will be increased by 2% except for the Selectmen who opted to level-fund their salaries again this year.

Steve Harasyko reviewed the Highway Department budgets. Reviewed revised quotes for both trucks; discussed needing a four-wheel drive; discussed the wording of the one-ton truck; the lifetime of the

trucks which Steve estimates to be 7-10 years (one of the trucks to be replaced is 13 years old).

Library Trustee Clare English reviewed the Mass Catalog Library System. By joining we will have greater access to books. Salaries increased by 2%.

Jane Gleason, administrative assistant to school the superintendent, addressed the increase in the school budget, including the following capital improvements: new van; carpet replacement; upgrades to the HVAC system; fencing. Some of these upgrades are required by the insurance company. American Recovery & Reinvestment grants are no longer available while at the same time school staffing needs to be increased due to state requirements. In addition, the school is increasing its pre-school program to five full days and that means an additional teacher and extra van driving. Health insurance premiums have increased by 10%. Jane talked about school choice and the fact that we lost 5 students to towns that offer full-time pre-school. The hope is that if we offer full-time programs we will keep students in our district. Discussed why we lose students: possibly for a family’s logistical convenience as well as after school programs. If the budget does not pass there will need to be a special joint town meeting with Otis and Sandisfield. If there is no solution at that meeting then the State Commissioner for the Department of Education will decide what the towns will have to pay. The teachers union contract has been settled with a ½ percent raise and an increase to 15% in what they will need to pay for health insurance. School superintendent JoAnn Austin disclosed her salary of \$29,000 a year for two days a week although she reports that she works most days.

Robbin Campetti reviewed the Recreation Committee budget. She will try to save some of it for the 250th events.

Police Chief Michael Morrison reports a 2% increase for salaries plus additional expenses for upgrading to high speed internet.

Fire Chief Ralph Morrison reported increased expenses for fuel, heating oil and utilities for the fire house. Discussed upgrades needed for the computers, fax and internet and he reviewed the budget item for Fire/EMS volunteer compensation, indicating that there are only two other towns in our area that do not offer some form of compensation.

Clare English reviewed the Veterans Services budget which needs to be increased because more veterans are applying for benefits. The town pays but receives 75% back from the state the following year.

Liana Toscanini reported that the 250th Committee will be reducing the requested expenditures and conducting more fundraising events. The committee will be attending the June 13th Selectmen’s meeting and they asked that Fire/EMT and police be present.

May 16 – Selectmen attending: Richard Campetti, Patrick Barrett, Jeff Gray. Also attending: Steve Harasyko, Highway Superintendent. Absent: Dolores Harasyko (town elections).

Steve Harasyko reported: removing trees on Dodd Road and at the library; continuing to clear culverts

Cont’d on p.10

An Alpaca Grows in Sandisfield

By Roberta Myers Photos by Debbie Harris

In 2003, Sonja (Annecharico) Gray and her sister, Robin, went to an alpaca event. As they grew up at the family farm on Stump Road, its fields had anywhere from 14 to 20 Herfords, and Sonja missed having animals.



Later, she attended another event with her husband, Jeff, and Red Barn Alpaca Farm was born. At first, the Grays had only two bred females and a gelded male alpaca. Now there are 34 alpacas and 3 llamas on the farm as well as two sheep on "winter va-

cation" from the Becket Chimney Corners YMCA Camp and eight chickens. The alpaca (*Vicugna pacos*) is a domesticated species of South American Camelid bred specifically for its fiber because of the softness, fineness and quality of its coat. Alpacas have been domesticated for thousands of years. There are no known wild alpacas, though its closest living relative, the vicuña (also native to South America), is believed to be the wild ancestor of the alpaca. Sonja says that alpacas are excellent livestock for small acreages as they have a padded foot with two toenails on each foot, so they don't dig up and punch through the ground like other livestock. They are aloof and very curious and don't smell much. They are great with children as they are safe to be around and alpacas don't challenge fences. Although they are not warm and cuddly, alpacas are quick learners and in weeks they can be halter-trained for walking the show ring. The llama (*Lama glama*) is also a South American Camelid, (related to the camel), widely used as a pack and meat animal by Andean cultures since prehistoric times. Llamas are good guards for the smaller alpacas. They especially work well with alpacas as they have the same care and nutritional needs.

While it is said that vicuña wool is the softest in the world, alpaca wool is a close second. It makes really soft blankets, mittens, hats and sweaters. (See side bar, left for more information on how alpaca wool is gathered.)

Sonja sends some of the wool to the New England Fiber Pool in Fall River, MA where she gets products (hats, gloves, socks, mittens etc.) all made in the USA. Some fleece is sold directly to hand spinners from local spinning guilds. Some is sent to a mill to be processed into rovings or yarn. It is sold by phone, internet, craft and at a holiday shop at When Pigs Fly Farm and alpaca events.

The Grays plan to refine their breeding program, continue showing their animals and market alpaca products locally as well as providing a resource for others interested in alpaca ownership. For more information about Red Barn Alpaca Farm visit www.redbarnalpacas.com or call 413-258-4905.



A Day of Shear Magic


Article and Photos by Debbie Harris

The Red Barn Alpaca Farm, in addition to breeding and selling Alpacas, sells yarn spun from alpaca fur, as well as finished products made from that yarn. To get the yarn, they have to shear the alpacas, which they do yearly just after Memorial Day. It takes about five hours to shear all of their animals and the public is welcome to come and watch (or, for the more adventurous, to participate). On June 4, I attended the Red Barn Alpaca annual shearing day and took some pictures.

As each animal is led onto the shearing platform (first the girls, and then the boys) its legs are tethered and the animal is laid down on its side. Some, but not all, of the animals screech loudly when they are restrained. Each animal has its teeth checked, its fur given a quick inspection and its toe nails clipped. Then the actual shearing takes place. First the fur from the torso is shaved off in one big piece. Then the neck and legs are shaved. All of the fur is put into large plastic bags for processing.

Each animal yields about 4-5 pounds of fur, but about a third of this is lost in processing. After the animals are sheared, the fur is sent to a mill in Connecticut where it is spun into yarn. Depending upon how busy the mill is, it takes about 6-12 months for Red Barn Alpaca to receive the yarn back. The farm sells mainly natural colors of yarn, but they also have some color dyed yarn for sale.

The animals look entirely different after they lose their fur. It's really funny to watch them rolling on their backs in the dust after they are shorn - I guess the bare skin makes them itch.

So, if you find yourself looking for a different experience on a Saturday in the beginning of June, stop by the Red Barn Alpaca Farm. (See next article for contact information. 

Mike and Matt, professional shearers, work their way up the east coast each spring shearing alpacas. Bottom right, Sonja Gray waits with one of the alpacas who will be sheared next. Above, left - an alpaca, after her "haircut".





Town News

Cont'd from p. 8

blocked by beavers; Tryon Construction will start working on Route 183 the week of May 23; brush left over from the ice storm on Dodd Road will be cleaned up.

Selectmen accepted Chris Rines' resignation from the Planning Board.

There will be follow up with MIG to clean up the damage to the former Wilbur and Gross properties and there was a discussion about public parking on the former Wilbur property.

Discussion on town website: training will be available for various departments on how to update their pages on the site. Patrick suggested department heads review websites from other towns and compile what they feel is pertinent.

Letter from Neil Gilpin on South Beech Plain Road regarding Victor Hryckvich's cows trespassing on his property. On May 11, 2011 Mr. Gilpin sent Victor a letter regarding the property damage his cows have caused over the past couple of years. Copy of letter on file.

Discussed overhang at the library. The frost has lifted the posts attached to the overhang at the front door. Richard is obtaining 3 quotes and will follow up. Discussed the septic at the library.



Notes from the May 23 and May 31 Selectmen's meetings were not available at press time.



June 6 - Selectmen attending: Patrick Barrett, Richard Campetti, Jeff Gray. Also attending: Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent; Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant

Highway updates. Beaver Solutions has installed beaver control gates on the property of the Audubon Society on Cold Spring Road. The water has already dropped 12 inches and this procedure allows the beavers to continue to live there while controlling the water level. The Audubon Society paid for the service for their property. Steve is looking into placing these gates at other locations in town.

Reviewed the process on the Route 57 culvert before York Lake. Tryon will provide a bid on the job which should only take one day. Steve has contacted our police department as they will need to close the road for the day.

Discussed chip sealing for West Hubbard, West St.

and Cold Spring Road. The grading continues.

Route 183 is going well and adjustments have been made to the original plan regarding the need for concrete headwalls in lieu of the plastic that was originally planned. Patrick requested that the grass at the top of Route 57 be mowed so as to allow for a clear view. Steve reviewed the condition of the mowing equipment which was parked for the winter and is in need of repair.

Jeff reviewed some complaints he had about mowing the cemeteries. Steve reiterated that the contract calls for mowing every other week.

The Tureks wrote requesting that the town replace the culvert at the end of their driveway. Discussed homeowners need to be responsible for their culverts if it is clearly on their property. Selectmen will draft a policy regarding culverts in the fall. Richard will follow up with the Tureks.

Patrick will approach Mrs. Gross of Route 8 to see if she would be interested in donating her property to the town to allow us to increase the park area.

Reviewed the request from Mass Highway for a "right of entry" on the former Wilbur property on Route 8.

Eric Munson mentioned to Richard that the Department of Conservation and Recreation would allow the town to get upwards of 50% stumpage fees from state owned land. Richard will follow up.

History's Mysteries

Can you identify this circa 1910 scene? Possible school house in south part of town? Contact Ron Bernard: info@SandisfieldThenAndNow.org. Image Courtesy www.DeMarsImages.com

WIRED WEST UPDATE

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to take all necessary and appropriate action to establish and to maintain, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 164 of the General Laws and in accordance with the rules, regulations and orders of the Department of Public Utilities and the Department of Telecommunications & Cable, a municipal lighting plant for all purposes allowable under the laws of the Commonwealth, including without limitation the operation of a telecommunications system and any related services, or to take any other action relative thereto.

As you may recall, the above warrant article passed handsomely at our annual town meeting in May, but the job is only half done! By Massachusetts law, a second successful vote is required before Sandisfield can establish its municipal lighting plant and join the Wired West Cooperative, paving the way for state of the art fiber optic broadband internet to come to all those in town who want it.

Stay tuned. It is expected that this vote will take place by special town meeting in early August.

For more information, you may contact Sandisfield's delegate to Wired West (Jean Atwater-Williams 413-269-0012) or visit www.wired-west.net.

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Hush! Pray Silence for the Book Lady

Article and Photos by Rhee Kasky

Are you among the 50 or 60 people who come to the Sandisfield Library each week? If you are, then that's great! Keep coming! If you're not, let me introduce you to our lovely and resourceful librarian, **Laurie Foulke-Green**, 20-year Sandisfield-ite, wife and mother of two.

Laurie's a native New Englander, born and educated in nearby Connecticut, a graduate of Northwest Connecticut Community College with an associate's degree in Fine Arts and Science. Raised with three sisters, Laurie's family's claim to fame her great-grandfather Byard Fish Foulke, a sea captain and well-received oil painter. In fact, Laurie's developed a keen sense of history about her family, having gathered together a very, very impressive visual genealogy that reflects back on many generations. I was astounded as I traveled through her family album with her. The richness of it, the pictures and letters, the phenomenal gathering of data over the ages. It's clear she has great

enthusiasm for the project, and in her spare time she is ready to help others who wish to learn more about their heritage.

Laurie worked for over 14 years doing graphics for Federal Business Products in CT, just up until the time she and her husband, George, a toolmaker, decided to start a family. First came Will who's 11, followed by Alexandra, 9. Basically a stay-at-home mom for many years (developing her skills in genealogy), Laurie became our librarian in 2009. The children were growing and she had time for other interests. Since the library is open on a part-time basis, the job fit nicely with Laurie's routine.

Our library building, which also houses the Community Center in the basement, was built in late 1977. It is owned by the town and the library portion is overseen by Library Trustees Clare English, Anita Wirth and Laurie, who, because she is also employed by the library, becomes a Special Employee and must, on certain issues, refrain from voting.

Busy in the morning when the majority of visitors come in, Laurie's day is filled with the tasks that we take for granted when we borrow books. What to order for readers is a vital part of the work and Laurie has developed an instinct for what our local residents want. Her choices are based on her experience with the reading habits of our residents, the popularity of the authors and the availability of new books. New books come in monthly and include mysteries, romance novels, history books (Laurie's favorites), nonfiction, orders for the Sandisfield Book Club members, and more. If you want a book and don't see it, chances are excellent that Laurie can get it for you through the interlibrary loan program.


Frankly, I think one of the most delightful aspects of borrowing books from the Sandisfield Library is the signature card which shows you who else in town has read the book. It kind of creates a social opportunity to have a chat about the book. The card in the pocket technique is old fashioned and charming, that's true, but sadly, it will soon be gobbled up by technology as our library transitions further into the computer age,

a necessity for our communications with the Mass. Library System and Masscat. Books will have stickers on the covers (for scanning) and the inside pockets for the card will become extinct. Don't worry, it'll be fine, although frankly, I like the pockets because I can stick my bookmark in them!

In her spare time, Laurie is on the town's 250th Anniversary Committee where she's working on the South Sandisfield part of the history book, prowling around the area uncovering old shacks and points of interest. With her curiosity and research background it's bound to be interesting.

Laurie's happy in her work, loves the rural environment, the wildlife and country living. One of the family's favorite spots for leisure time is Lower Spectacle Pond where they go fishing, winter and summer. York Lake is another pleasure they experience.

A wish Laurie has for the town: a vault to protect old town history and research documents. Wouldn't it be lovely if we had a grant to buy one or a donation from someone who doesn't use theirs anymore?

Stop in and say hello to Laurie. Check out what's on the shelves. Read a book – it's good for you! 



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Letter From The Selectmen

By Patrick Barrett

Starting in July, the Sandisfield Board of Selectmen will begin their summer schedule. The Board will be meeting on Tuesday, July 5th at 7pm and every other Monday at 7pm through Labor Day. Please check the website or at town hall if you need further details.

Sandisfield Highway Superintendent Steve Harasyko has been working hard behind the scenes on the abundant state and conservation paperwork needed in order to complete this summer and fall's work projects. Preparatory work has begun on Route 183, which will culminate in the full depth reclamation and resurfacing of this major road from the Connecticut line to Rood Hill Road. The Sandisfield Highway Department, along with Tryon Construction Company, has been replacing all of the culverts along this road as well as improving the drainage in this area. Tree work along this road will also be done in order to ensure a safer passage for all commuters. A large culvert on Route 57 near the New Marlborough town line is failing, causing an 18 inch hole in the middle of the road. The town of Otis has graciously let us borrow a steel plate to temporarily cover this dangerous situation until a new culvert can be put into place. This work will require traffic to be diverted around this area while the project is being completed.

SOUTH BERKSHIRE HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION

The South Berkshire Household Hazardous Waste Collaborative will be holding two comprehensive collections for residents of participating towns, including Sandisfield. For more information please call the Center for Ecological Technology at 888 577 8448 ext 30 or 14.

Stockbridge July 9, 9:00AM. - NOON.
Great Barrington October 1, 9:00AM - 1:00PM.

Acceptable Materials:

- From the workbench: Oil Based (No Latex) Paints, Stains & Varnishes, Wood Preservatives, Paint Strippers/Thinners, Solvent Adhesives, Lighter Fluid
- From the garage: Fuels/Gasoline/Kerosene, Antifreeze, Degreasers, Driveway Sealer, Brake Fluid/Carburetor Cleaner, Transmission Fluid, Car Wax, Polishes, Roofing Tar, Pool Chemicals
- From the yard: Poisons, Insecticides, Fungicides, Fertilizers, Weed Killers, Moth Balls, Flea Control Products
- From the house: Rubber Cement, Airplane Glue, Fiberglass Resins, Photo Chemicals, Chemistry Sets, Floor & Metal Polish, Oven Cleaner, Drain & Toilet Cleaner, Spot Remover, Rug/Upholstery Cleaner, Hobby/Artist Supplies, Mercury Thermometers & Thermostats, Button Batteries, Compact and Tube Fluorescent lamps.

Steve has also been working with a company named Beaver Solutions in order to put up innovative metal netting in front of three culverts throughout town as a means of preventing road damage caused by beavers. This approach will allow beavers to live naturally in town yet protect culverts from being blocked and causing potential road hazards. The Massachusetts Audubon Society has already paid to have Beaver Solutions put their product in front of the culvert on Cold Spring Road. To date this remedy has allowed for steady water flow thus dropping the dangerous water levels in that area of town. Steve has written a grant for installing the Beaver Solutions device at a culvert on North Beach Plain Road and the town will be paying for an additional unit on Route 57 once the new culvert has been set. We appreciate Steve's willingness to try new environmentally friendly solutions to deal with age old challenges.

The Sandisfield Board of Selectmen would like to thank the members of the 250th Anniversary Committee for all of the hard work they have put in preparing for this upcoming celebration. The 250th Committee gave an hour long presentation at our June 13th selectmen's meeting, detailing all of the special events they are putting together for this historic event. Local historian Ron Bernard gave an update on the book *Sandisfield Then and Now*, which will be coming out to coincide with Sandisfield's birthday extravaganza. We sincerely appreciate the effort being put forth by these dedicated individuals in making this a truly special occasion.


The Town of Sandisfield currently has a vacancy on the

- REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY. Contact Avie at 888-577-8448, ext. 30 or 14 to register and for more information. No latex paint accepted.

Editors note: In Sandisfield, Batteries, appliances, TV's, computers and other electronics are usually collected at the town Hall - Contact the Town Clerk, Dolores Harasyko, during normal business hours for rules. 258-4711.

THERE WILL ALSO BE A HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION (different from Household Hazardous Waste). Please call the number at the top of this article for more information.


Lenox July 23 9-11AM

Great Barrington (across from Monument Mountain Regional High School) on Aug 13 and Sept 24 9-11:30AM. 



The Massachusetts Dept of Transportation plans to conduct an archeological survey. A site evaluation was scheduled for June 29

Planning Board, two openings on the Zoning Board of Appeals and five empty positions on the Sandisfield Historical Society. We would love to see all of our board seats filled in the coming months. Anyone interested in joining one of these boards/organizations should contact Dolores at 258-4711.

The Sandisfield Board of Selectmen would like to recognize the hard work and dedication of Sandisfield Animal Control Officer Kim Spring. Kim is the consummate professional who responds to a variety of animal related calls throughout town, keeps detailed reports on these incidents and most importantly cares for stray pets that periodically lose their way in Sandisfield. We are fortunate to have Kim providing a valuable service to our community. 

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SCHOOL BUDGET LAW QUESTION

This reader sent a letter to Selectman Patrick Barrett via Letters to the Editor:

Dear Mr. Barrett:

I read with interest the minutes of the March 21 Selectmen's meeting as published in the Sandisfield Times, and specifically the statement attributed to you regarding the school budget:

"... 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."

I'm hoping you can provide me with the statute to which you refer. I've reviewed fairly thoroughly, under Title XII Education, Mass. General Laws, Chapter 71 as it relates to Public Schools, and do not find a section of the statute, specific to regional schools, that affirms this statement.

I do find Ch. 71, Sec. 34, "Support of schools; appropriations; recommendations" that relates to all public schools, regional or otherwise. It states, "The vote of the legislative body of a city or town shall establish the total appropriation for the support of the public schools, but may not limit the authority of the school committee to determine expenditures within the total appropriation."

This seems to me to be a common-sense piece of legislation intended to prevent town officials from micro-managing education budgets. But, since they (town officials, and ultimately voters) have control over the total appropriation, I'd think common sense also would dictate that wise school committees would be responsive to requests to discuss specific programs.

Perhaps I missed something in my review of M.G.L. Chapter 71?

Gail Palmer
Otis



TOWN WITH BENEFITS

To the Editor:

There are numerous benefits to living in a small town. A few of them we've found are:

- Less traffic
- Better bird-watching
- Lower taxes
- No waiting in line at the Post Office
- Caring neighbors who generously give their time and resources to make a fund-raiser successful

Our whole-hearted thanks to the management and staff of Tuckers Restaurant who hosted the Winsted Fire Dept. Second Annual Blass Blast Pig Roast to raise money for our son, Rob Blass in his pursuit of a double lung transplant

Thank you Scott, Deb and all who enthusiastically helped out!!!

Warren and Karlene Blass

LETTER FROM THE DAIRY QUEEN

"...The digital revolution has come to every corner of America, devouring newspapers and magazines by the hundred. But out in the rural counties, a rearguard action is currently being fought," as the BBC's Simon Winchester reports.

"I live in the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts, in a village called Sandisfield - founded in 1762 by a British family named Sandys, but being British, pronounced Sands."

It is farm country, and always has been. Ukrainian Jews came here in the 19th Century to raise chickens - they left for Manhattan and Brooklyn, but their stone field-walls and tottering barns remain.

Seven hundred or so locals live here - maple syrup makers, bee-keepers, dairy farmers, people who ferment apple cider legally and mountain men who distil moonshine less so."

Hello Mr. Winchester,

I might note your inaccuracy regarding your move to Sandisfield. In as much as you moved to a small rural town with requisite attributes, you did not move to a town with dairy farms.

There had not been a dairy farm in this town for many years until 2010 when there was one- mine. It is now in peril.

You might, therefore, be interested in commenting on the Herdshare Bill which was before the Environment Committee when testimony was heard June 14 in the town of Warren. I testified. Two representatives from corporate dairy interests testified against herdshare- a form of CSA which returns fresh milk to consumers. Check the web site for thecompletepatient.com for that date, and you will find a footnote that the corporate thugs believed that illnesses they presumed would be caused by small fresh milk farms would

harm their corporate processed milk profits. In fact, three deaths in the Commonwealth in 2007 attributed to processed milk seem not to have sped up the already precipitous decline in processed milk drinkers, and in fact boosted fresh milk drinkers.

You might note that written comments are accepted by Rep. Anne Gobi until June 27. Although you are not currently a herdshare member here, your interest is obvious and would be well served by comments to legislators who have been impressed by food rights.

If this bill fails, the best of dairy farming will take yet another step back.

I wish to also note that your understanding about the Right to Farm ordinance is lacking in details as it relates to the nonbinding resolution I put before the town for a vote at the town meeting, which is largely a symbolic message relating to fresh milk.

I would be happy to explain further.

Meanwhile, in order to play catch up with your earlier explainer of dairy farms in Sandisfield, it would be a good idea to support herdshare.

Also, you might look up Farmageddonmovie.com- produced and directed by a friend of mine, Kristin Canty, with whom I have conducted panel discussions. The movie is being screened privately and received three stars from the Washington Post. We are looking for a venue locally.

Thanks

Brigitte Ruthman, Joshua's Farm
The only dairy farm in Sandisfield.

p.s. I consider myself pretty much of a mountain man, or woman as the case may be. However, not many of us have time to distill moonshine. Unless of course you are referring to fresh milk- in which case it would be called yogurt.

Yup, got some of that. Just as illegal.

SOME WORDS FROM OUR SPONSORS

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PLEASE NOTE:

We are no longer accepting entries for sponsorship. We do however accept display ads.

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.



Comings and Goings



Julia Hibbins Salzano
Born March 18, 2011

We are proud to announce the birth of our daughter, *Julia Hibbins Salzano*, born March 18, 2011 at Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington.

~Jennifer Hibbins & Joe Salzano
Sandisfield residents



Ann Cadoret and Chris Gadwah
Married June 11, 2011

The beautiful Looking Glass Gardens on Dodd Road, owned by the parents of the bride, was the scene of the wedding on June 11 of Ann Cadoret, of Sandisfield to Chris Gadwah of New Hartford, CT. Ann is the daughter of Chuck and Zoë Nelson of Dodd Road and Chris is the son of Larry and Mona Gadwah of New Hartford.

The couple will reside in New Hartford.



Dixie
1996-2011

Going to the transfer station isn't the same without Dixie.

Anyone who has gone to the Sandisfield dump-oh, excuse me, the Transfer Station - knew Dixie, the lovely black lab who was a fixture there for so long. Because she was always present whenever the transfer station was open, many folks thought she was "Greg's dog", or "Forest's dog."

In fact, Dixie was the beloved pet of Scott and Helen Stringham, who live across Route 57 from the Transfer Station.

They got her from George Munson as a pup almost fifteen years ago. She loved them and they loved her - but Dixie really adored the goings-on at the transfer station every bit as much as she loved her family. Helen says Dixie would always ask to go out whenever the station was open, and she held court there, greeting all who came. In fact, according to Forest Hull, our current transfer station attendant, he heard that Dixie sometimes came on off-days and waited hopefully and patiently by the hut in hopes of interaction with her fans.

The greatest problem the Stringhams had was that Dixie inspired her transfer station buddies to feed her - and sometimes the feed she so eagerly accepted was not healthy. Because of her age, Dixie became totally deaf and had very poor eyesight, but she still dutifully met her friends at the transfer station whenever it was open. Dixie had a long life, beloved by her family, and filled with the many friends she made at our transfer station. She died in June from old age.



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.

JULY EVENTS

Beginning Saturday, July 2, 10:30AM and Tuesdays at 5:30PM through August. **The "Boys of Summer" Cal Ripken youth baseball** season for players 8-12 year olds, Greene Park on Route 23 in Monterey center. For Great Barrington, Monterey, Otis, Sandisfield and surrounding towns plus vacationing players of all levels. Players can play once while visiting the area or for the whole 12 game season. Sign up when you show up. For more information, email sgraves8@yahoo.com or call 413-269-4632.

Beginning Sunday, July 3rd at Greene Park in Monterey. The summer softball season for co-ed adult softball players starts. The weekly, informal pick-up games, which have been taking place for decades, are for residents and visitors of Monterey, Otis, Sandisfield, Lenox, Great Barrington and surrounding communities. Batting practice starts around 10AM and game time is 10:30. The season runs through September.

Wednesday, July 6, 6PM, Otis/Sandisfield. Kiwanis Roadside Clearing Meet at the Otis Town Green. Long pants and bug spray suggested. 269-6060

Wednesday, July 6, 7PM, History Book Committee, Sandisfield Library, 269-0012.

Wednesday, July 6, 7PM, 250th Birthday Committee Meeting, Sandisfield Library. All welcome 258-4535.

Saturday, July 9, 10AM, 2PM, Sandisfield Historical Society Summer Fair Historical Society Meeting house, Route 183 (Sandy Brook Turnpike), vendors, crafts, hot dogs, hamburgers and baked goods. Fun for all! Rain date July 16.

Saturday, July 9, 4:30-9PM, A QUADRUPLE HEADER!, \$10, Sandisfield Arts Center. For one price, four major events in sequence starting with Bill Cohn talking about Pearl Harbor at 4:30PM, Standing Dinner at 5:30 PM. The world premiere reading of a new one-act play by Val Coleman at 7PM. Discussion of the Civil Rights Era and open mic at 8PM.

Wednesday, July 20, 7PM, Women's Book Group, Sandisfield Library.

Saturday, July 23, 3-5PM, Jim Singelis, Artist Reception "Do I Know You?" Sandisfield Arts Center.

Saturday, July 23, 5-7 PM, New Boston Church Chicken Barbeque Fire House #2

Sunday, July 24, 4PM Harmony Village, Teen World Music Ensemble, Sandisfield Arts Center, - Ethnic singing traditions from around the world.

Thursday, July 28, 6 - 9PM, American Legion Post 456 Open Mike and community event , American Legion Pavilion All talents; Jam with your friends: Bring a picnic and just listen or fish in the brook. Stop in for dollar hotdogs, ice cream cone or soda. Limited bar available. For more information call 413-258-4578 Maria Domato, Commander

Saturday, July 30, 3-5PM, Sandisfield History Book Fundraiser – Afternoon Tea and Talk at the historic Manacher family home 100 Silverbrook Road. Hosted by Adam Manacher, professional chef.

COMING UP

Saturday, August 13, Firemen's Steak Roast.

ONGOING EVENTS

Town Meetings (Info call 258-4711)

Monday, July 4, Selectmen don't meet. AND Selectmen now meet on summer schedule (every other Monday) till Labor Day. July meetings: July 11 and 25, 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, 6:30PM, Otis Town Hall, Elizabeth Kuzmech, Scoutmaster 258-4906 kuzmech5@verizon.net

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

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

Farmington River Regional School District, first Monday, 7PM, Farmington River Regional School, Route 8, JoAnn Austin, Superintendent. Public welcome.

Otis/Sandisfield Kiwanis, Wednesdays at 6:30PM, Otis Town Hall. 269-6060

Sandisfield Public Library, hours Monday and Tuesday 9 AM-12:30PM, Wednesday, 6:30-8:30PM Thursday, 2:30-5:30PM, Sat: 9AM -12 noon 258-4966.

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

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

CHP summer play groups, none in Sandisfield or Otis. Call Alison Rada (413) 644-0104 ext. 1159 for more information.

Aqua Wellness Exercise Program for Seniors and People with Disabilities, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 11AM-Noon, Kilpatrick Fitness Center at Simon's Rock. \$3/each session. Even people on oxygen can participate. Dave Callopy, Facility Director 528-7773, email: dcallopy@simons-rock.edu or general information number 528-7777. looking for artists and craftspeople for the Fourth Annual Otis Arts Festival to take place on July 23.



Announcement of the Special Town Meeting June 30 was "too late" for the June issue and the meeting is "too early" for the July issue. We suggest that you check notices at the Sandisfield Town dump and/or Town Hall or the Town website www.sandisfield.info to stay abreast of the various official town functions pending due to the Proposition 2 ½ vote at the town election.



NEW MARLBOROUGH MEETING HOUSE GALLERY TO HIGHLIGHT "BLUE"

Sandisfield artist Susan Crofut will be one of the thirty two artists who will showcase their exploration of the color BLUE in an invitational show at the **New Marlborough Meeting House Gallery** on Route 57 in New Marlborough. **The show opens July 22 and runs through August 21 with work on view Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 11AM to 4PM** A variety of media ranging from carved birds to fabric fantasy, from astronomical photography to oil paintings will be on display.

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

P.O. Box 584

Sandisfield, MA 01255

www.sandisfieldtimes.org

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

The Sandisfield Times does not yet have a 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, 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 Roadside Store and Cafe in Monterey, Monterey General Store (There is a box affixed to the front of the building containing *The Sandisfield Times*.) and the Southfield 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.

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