

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



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YANNER PARK

After a sorry start, a brighter future?



Photo: Setsuko Winchester

It has been sixteen years since Sandisfield was entrusted with 200 acres of hilltop land donated in memory of members of the Yanner Family – a gift underpinned by the wish that the space would in time prove enriching to our community. Instead, indecision and obfuscation has left the park in a sorry state. But the story is not over yet – and maybe, thanks to new suggestions, there will be a future for what many believe could still be turned into a magical place. In the following article

Nick Dyja untangles the sorry story of Yanner Park's past. On page 2 we report on possible plans for the future.

In 1950, John and Marie Yanner of East Hartford, Connecticut purchased massive tracts of land on both sides of Sandisfield's Town Hill Road. They acquired the land from Albert Cornish of the Bronx, New York. This land remained within the Yanner family until 1995, when the estate of Merwin "Jack" Yanner (who died in 1990) donated it to the town, "For the purpose of est-

ablishing a public park or public recreational area in memory of John, Marie and Jack Yanner."

In 2004, a non-profit organization, Friends of Yanner Park, was formed to create a plan to achieve the family's vision. By 2007, Friends of Yanner Park had raised over \$18,000, which included a \$3,000 grant from the Highlands Community Initiative. But the organization's plan never came to fruition, despite widespread popular support for the goal of a

Cont'd P.2

IN GANDERWORLD: IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE

By Brigitte Ruthman

As I was driving along South Sandisfield Road early last month, an injured gander crossed in front of me. I had seen him almost daily during my commute to work. He was part of two nesting pairs of Canada geese, waterfowl known to mate for life.

Every spring the same protective pairs set about raising troops of goslings that they march back and forth across the paved road that bisects their waterway. It's their road, really, and passage often involved attacks on unwitting passing motorists, hissing and other manner of a mother goose and mate's clear message to leave their turf.

It wasn't a car that caused the near-demise of this particular goose. Paul and Alice Boyd who live near

the junction of South Sandisfield and New Hartford Roads had heard splashing and squawking on the water at the end of July. They then saw the bird hobbling, picking half-heartedly at his food. I found the creature on August 2nd. He was alive, but he had gashes in his left leg – no broken bones, though – and was quite unable to fly. He was quite unwell, and so two days later I delivered him to one nearby place I thought could possibly treat him – the Audubon Center in Sharon.

Cont'd P.3



IRENE: We floated out, unhurt



Photo: Setsuko Winchester

We fretted, we shopped, we sand-bagged and then we hunkered down – and Irene swept over us like a brief soggy nightmare, from which we all emerged into the next day's sunshine more or less unscathed. An old stone bridge swept away here, a playground inundated and its asphalt torn up there, a scattering of ceilings fallen

and basements flooded, and more than a dozen roads closed because of flooding. But the Morrison brothers' fire-and-public safety teams worked impeccably – ironically, since they and all the Sandisfield heroes had been due to be feted at an Arts Center event, which was cancelled because of the onrushing hurricane. The event will be rescheduled, giving the village ample opportunity some time soon to thank Ralph and Mike for works – basement pumpings, morale boostings, hands helping – that so often, as their response to Irene demonstrated, are above and beyond the call of duty. ♣

A State Visit

Article and Photos By Debbie Harris

On Monday, August 8, 2011 State Senator Ben Downing and State Representative William "Smitty" Pignatelli, were in Sandisfield for a brief tour of our town. After the tour the two legislators met with about a dozen Sandisfield citizens for an informal question and answer session.

They began with three crucial points: first, that this year the commonwealth will lose about \$400 million from the Federal government, second, that bringing high speed broadband to the western part of the state is a high priority, and finally, reminding

Cont'd P.3

THIS TIME: A SIMPLE PLAN.

by Simon Winchester

Despite the alarmingly neglected state of Yanner Park today, plans are still being considered and debated for the future of the great tracts of land on Town Hill Road. A new plan, which acknowledges for the first time today's straitened economic circumstances, has just been sent to the Select Board.

Liana Toscanini, who spent three years with the Friends of Yanner Park, discovered in her old files what she calls her 'Plan B' for the space – a plan hitherto unsubmitted. Examining the plan with fresh eyes, she decided that, since it required the expenditure of a modest sum of private money which has already been raised, it could and perhaps should now go for official consideration. So she sent it in to Town Hall in mid-August: a decision – or a signal – could come from the Selectmen as early as next month.

There is currently \$12,000 in the Berkshire Bank's Yanner Park account, most of it raised with great effort from scores of pancake breakfasts that were held during the years 2004-2009. Ms. Toscanini's plan is that these funds should now be released to create a modest public space in Yanner Park, with sufficient basic facilities to encourage townspeople to use the grounds, to become familiar with the space, to come to accept that this belongs to them for recreation and amusement.

She submitted a budget and, though some of the included items (a butterfly garden a sculpture park) still smack of the over-the-top grandiloquence of the initial failed plans, it seems entirely realistic and reasonable: \$2000 for a softball field, \$2000 for some short trails into the woods, \$1,000 for benches, \$4,000 for grading and creating a car park and general tidiness.

There is little indication of the Select Board's views, other than the general feeling that things have changed from the days when the Board acted mainly to block innovations of any kind. One current member, not wishing his name to be used, cautioned the Times that "this is not the time to point fingers, to apportion blame," and went on:

"We have a wonderful resource in Yanner Park, a piece of beautiful hilltop land which we should remember belongs to us all. If we realize the problems we have with taxes here, and do everything to the park with private money, we could still create something wonderful for the town.

"It could be a place where people can meet up, arrange a pickup softball game, go cross-country skiing, have a summer farmers' market, open-air movies – you name it. We just need the leadership, some money which is already there, and plans that are realistic. It can be done!"


And could something be done, in time for the 250th anniversary celebrations next year? "Let's hope so," says Liana Toscanini. "It is certainly possible," says the unnamed Selectman. "There are not so many roadblocks nowadays." 



Photo: Setsuko Winchester

YANNER PARK: AFTER A SORRY START A BRIGHTER FUTURE?

Cont'd from P.1

five-acre park with a playground, baseball field, butterfly garden and various walking and hiking trails.

There are many possible reasons for the impasse, and as many opinions expressed as to who or what is to blame. It is generally agreed, though, that Yanner Park's development was halted by a lack of realistic funding, especially the absence of any substantial federal, state or private sector grants.

Liana Toscanini, an active member on the board of the Friends said, however, that it was "inertia" that eventually doomed the project. Ms. Toscanini, who is experienced in fundraising, had always described the Yanner Park project as "the perfect type of project" for attracting grant money – noting that of the \$400,000 she raised over a six year period for the Sandisfield Arts Center, half came in the form of grants. But for Yanner Park, it proved impossible to get them. The Town of Sandisfield owns the property and any development on the land required Select Board approval which was never forthcoming. The Friends of Yanner Park could have had hundreds of thousands of dollars, she said - but absent that approval, that money would simply lie dormant, unable to be used.

The problem, as some see it, goes well beyond the need for attracting grants for the park project. In order to receive the kind of state and federal funding that a park project like this would seem to merit, a town must first present an "open-space plan", essentially a very detailed mission statement outlining the town's goals, an inventory of town property and various other resource assessments.

An open-space plan requires Select Board approval – and this never came about either. It never even got to the Board. A Committee met three times to discuss it, eventually tabled it, disagreed with and about it, and the plan promptly faded and died. Most opposing committee members rejected the plan because they thought it might bring about more government

intervention in town affairs. Many were reminded of the bitter divisions caused in town over the proposals a dozen years ago to give the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act designation to some of our bigger local streams – a move that was eventually rejected by townspeople.


Those in favor of the open-space plan sought to highlight the fact that an open-space plan is non-binding. They also reiterated that an open-space plan showed that the town was worthy of a grant. Additionally, Susie Crofut of the Highlands Communities Initiatives identified Sandisfield as one of the few towns without an open-space plan. Without such a plan, it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to receive federal and state grants. Ms. Toscanini agreed. "I just don't know what grants you can get without an open-space plan," she said.

The \$3,000 dollar grant that Friends of Yanner Park received from the Highlands Community Initiative went directly to paying the fee for a master plan for the proposed park - a plan constructed by the University of Massachusetts' architecture school, the Conway School of Landscape Design. The plan was ambitious – it suggested building an ice rink, a butterfly pavilion, a children's playground. But it went nowhere because without an open space plan, no serious grant-giving body would even consider Sandisfield.

Mary Turek was one of these vocal opponents. In an interview, she said she feared the impact that an open-space plan would have on Sandisfield residents' taxes. She believed an open-space plan would increase the amount of tax-exempt and tax-reduced land that the Town of Sandisfield had. In turn the revenue lost due to the increase in tax-exempt and tax-reduced sites would be made back through a tax increase on Sandisfield citizens. "I was very concerned that small people would be saddled with the tax burden. That burden of taxes would have fallen on the middle and lower class, and most people couldn't afford it," she said.

Ms. Toscanini, however, is steadfast in the belief that an open-space plan would not have created an oppressive tax burden on the lower and middle class. "The open space plan identifies land in conservation, it does not actively promote conservation unless residents identify that as a goal in the community survey," she explained.

Ms. Turek maintains that it was the poor explanation of the open-space plan that made her oppose it. But Ms. Toscanini is adamant that the project could have been completed anyway, and without state or federal aid.

"The makings of a park could have been done easily with volunteers," she said. Grants would have made the entire process much easier. "If you want the fancier items, like the ice skating rink, the playground and the pavilion, grants will make that much easier. Here's the question: Do you want that money, or do you want to do 100,000 pancake breakfasts?" 

LEGISLATORS MEET SANDISFIELD

Cont'd from P.1

all that western Massachusetts has very different problems from those in the east of the state.

Town Clerk, Dolores Harasyko, first told the visitors what is on all of our minds: that several years ago, when the Spectacle Pond acreage was donated to the state, we were promised monies in lieu of taxes. To date Sandisfield has not seen one penny of that money. This property is assessed at \$3 million and could have been sold to developers instead of giving it to the state. Downing and Pignatelli asked for copies of the map and promised to look into this situation.

While still on the topic of monies promised by but not received from the State, the issue of reimbursement costs for transporting children to the regional elementary school was discussed. Senator Downing said he was on a committee looking into issues regarding regional schools.




Senator Ben Downing



Representative William "Smitty" Pignatelli

The duo then suggested we work on a regional – rather than a purely local - basis to obtain grants. For instance, if one town highway department has a grader, and another town has a different, large, piece of equipment they should look into sharing that equipment so that neither town needs to own both. Pignatelli also pointed to the adage that "the squeaky wheel gets the grease". He noted that the State is trying to streamline the grant submission process to make it easier for towns to receive municipal grants.

Representative Pignatelli stated a master plan, covering not only existing conditions but plans for the next 5-10 years, would be useful – even on a department by department basis. The session ended with the legislators noting that the best chance of a grant proposal being awarded is to have "shovel ready" projects. Grant givers, they said, do not like to give money that will simply sit in town coffers for a few years until the town is ready to begin the project. 

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

"To See the World in a Grain of Sand-isfield"

Setsuko Winchester

I was recently asked to speak to a Highland Community organization here in Massachusetts about community newspapers and the evolution and impact of the Sandisfield Times. The director there said that they had heard wonderful things about our little newspaper and thought that other village communities might be interested in learning how to get one started or to know what some of the biggest challenges might be. It got me thinking about one small and unexpected problem that has lately confronted our paper - and that is, believe it or not, the very antithesis of smallness: an abundance. An abundance of news, an abundance of content - and often not enough space to fit it all in.

But come to think of it, this is really not a problem at all - but actually a nice and somewhat hoped-for blessing. The truth is that when we first started, in the spring of last year, we were not sure that we could find enough material to fill even eight pages. We thought even that was ambitious. To fill that many pages, we'd have to go well beyond the borders of town to find news, said some. Nothing ever happened in Sandisfield, said others; we'd quickly run out of things to say. And if anything did happen, it would be of no consequence. Moreover, this was a very silent town. Most thought it better to keep quiet and mind your own business - a newspaper, minding everyone else's business, just wouldn't work.


Which is why the first issue was a mere eight pages. Not much confidence. Maybe we had a lot of questions about our community but there were precious few who

wanted to ask them and even fewer who would answer.

How long ago that seems! In the year and a half since, everything has changed. There is so much news - almost too much - that we often find (as in this month) that we go over our budgeted allowance of 16 pages because of all the submissions we receive from a town eager to send in material, to talk to us, to talk to each other by way of us. Not only that, we have found that readers' interest in our paper went far beyond our townfolk. We started to run out of papers by the middle of the month - and had to go back to the printer and ask for more.

This - more pages, more papers - may have caused us some financial stress, but I'll leave that until we make our next appeal for support, in mid-winter. This note is rather about the delights of the abundance we now confront. We found that Sandisfield's smallness, rather than rendering it insignificant, mirrors that of many other towns in America - that we are a template for all America's rural realities. We found that people positively love reading - and writing - about other people's business. We found that people much prefer openness to secrecy. We found that people love to know what town government is doing, or not doing, and why.

The paper has shown that by narrowing our focus to Sandisfield alone - no Otis, no Tyringham, no Monterey - we have been forced to examine ourselves more closely, and in doing so are finding that in asking real questions about real problems we as a community can help bring about real solutions. Putting faces to facts can help - has helped - to make us all more human.

All human life is here in our tiny town - an abundance of complexity and wonder. As William Blake said: *to see the world the universe in a grain of sand*. In a grain of Sandisfield, in fact. We at your paper are here and plan to stay here now, to offer up a snapshot of our small town life, a mirror to ourselves, one month at a time. 

IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE

Cont'd from P.1

Mitchell Serota, an intern rehabilitator, lifted the gander gently from the cardboard meat packing box. He was indeed in serious condition as a result of an open wound to his left leg. He was malnourished, likely suffering from an infection, and so weak he hardly resisted.

Unnamed, to avoid jinxing his recovery, he is at the time of writing still there. His injuries, the staff at Audubon surmised, were the result of an attack by a snapping turtle.


So he is now one of 250 songbirds and waterfowl who are treated each year by a staff of four wildlife rehabilitators - a number which included a rare golden eagle delivered by snowmobilers in February and released a month later in Goshen.

Injuries caused by snapping turtles are not uncommon, says Erin O'Connell, a wildlife rehabilitator and outreach coordinator at Sharon Audubon. Neither are problems caused by swallowed sinkers, or parasites.

Serota dressed the wound and gave him antibiotics and pain medication. In a couple of days O'Connell was "tubing" him to force nutrients into his stomach. He began eating on his own again Tuesday, "tolerating" human contact.

The clinic, which operates on a shoestring \$4,000 annual budget funded through donations, includes cages for transitioning birds from indoors to outdoors and a one room treatment area.

Lauri Fortin, a state wildlife biologist who worked for the Sharon Audubon in the 1990s and is married to its director, Scott Heth, coordinates the state's wildlife rehabilitation program.

At last check the gander was chiseling away at his feed. The plan is to release him just where I found him, so he can rejoin the goslings he so diligently protected, now grown and so nearly indistinguishable from their parents. His mate remains single, as do most geese who lose their partner late in life. 

TAKE A HIKE

A Walk in Sandisfield's own Grand Canyon

Article and Photo by Larry Dwyer

Roberta Myers has a favorite trail just below Lower Spectacle Pond called 'The Gorge' that she wanted me to see. Roberta is 77 years old, but she's a real ball of fire. I was really amazed how fit she was for a septuagenarian, but I wouldn't really see her in action until we reached the Gorge. We started from her house on Cold Spring Road, walked across a maintenance trail that crosses the gas pipeline that runs through Sandisfield, and then into the woods.

Roberta has been to the Gorge dozens of times, but not as often as in the past and hardly anyone ever goes there anymore. The old trail was maintained by the Rowley family for many years, but now it is overgrown and portions have been logged, so the old familiar landmarks are no longer visible. It was slow going getting our bearings, but we finally found our way down to the beginning of the Gorge.

Upon arrival I was awestruck by the unspoiled natural beauty of the dramatic swirls carved out of the rocks by torrents of water over millennia. It's a peaceful place and quite unlike anything I've ever seen in the Berkshires. As we moved on, we approached a stream, and crossed a moss covered log that was surreal, giving passage to the other side. We then climbed along a narrow ridge of rocks and onto a ledge from which we had to descend. On the ledge was a thirty year old nylon rope, tinted green from algae, and tied to the root of a tree. I brought my own rope for climbing, but I asked Roberta if we were coming back this way and she said no, so we had to use the rope that was there. Serenity gave way to apprehension and Roberta climbed down as if she were still a kid, and I struggled down after her which was a little embarrassing, because this isn't so easy for a person my age.

I have to keep telling myself, "Larry, you're 57 years old and you're not as young as you used to be."

The drop wasn't very high—twenty feet at most. I finally got down to the bottom, but I strained my foot, and it hurt like hell, but I couldn't let on that she was showing me up.

From here we crossed the stream again and then arrived at the bottom of what Roberta's grandchildren referred to as the 'Sneak Through.' The Sneak Through is a tunnel carved out by massive amounts of water over many years. We ascended through the tunnel and up a steep grade. From this point we ascended onto a narrow ledge on the other side and then headed home through the woods.

After we left the Gorge things started to go wrong. Since hardly anyone ever travels there anymore the trail has long disappeared. We climbed uphill and after walking about a half-hour and not seeing any familiar landmarks, it became apparent that we were lost. For a moment I panicked, but I said to myself, "Keep your cool."

Most of my previous hiking has been on marked trails with only a limited amount of trailblazing. Even though we had a compass and map, I wasn't really confident that we would find our way out.

Finally I said to Roberta, "I think we better look at the map."

We took out the map and I said, "I think we have to head east." I was doing a lot of thinking.

Then Roberta related a story about another time that they got lost in the woods.

She said, "Luckily one of the kids who was with us had a small metal toy compass. We looked at his compass



and that's how we got home. My husband was driving up and down Cold Spring Road looking for us."

This wasn't very reassuring, but we studied the map and then Roberta took off with it. I had the compass, and instead of heading east, she started heading north again.

Then she said, "There have been instances where people lost at sea start swimming in circles, because one hand is stronger than the other."

I thought to myself, "Well, your right leg must be stronger, because you keep going to the left." We stopped and looked at the map again and I said, "Let's try heading east again. We should be right near the pipeline."

Finally we headed east and it looked like a clearing up ahead. We walked a little further and we were out of the woods. I breathed a sigh of relief. From this point it was easy to find our way out.

If you read my column last month, I said that I only use a map and a compass for navigation and that I was wary about using a GPS, but after this, I finally bought one. Now, I'm trying to figure out how it works, while I soak my feet in some nice cool water.

See you on the trail. 

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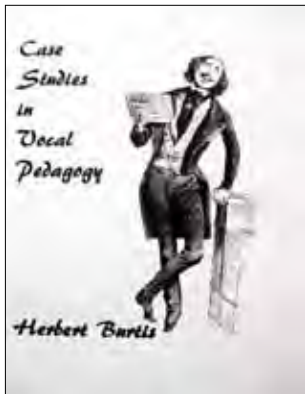
"Be true to your work,
your word, and your friend."
Henry David Thoreau

Image: Tina Sotis ©2011

Book Review

Not Weeping but Singing *by Val Coleman*

"Case Studies in Vocal Pedagogy"



By Herb Burtis
Santa Clara, California. Alberti Publishing.
 91pp. \$20
 (Available from roodbill@verizon.net.
 Proceeds to the Ferris-Burtis Foundation)

This is a wonderful book, whimsical and serious at the same time – a collection of a series of stories of Herb's remarkable adventures as a voice teacher, starting when he was at the Amato Opera on Bleecker Street in New York and ending with his time with the magical mezzo-soprano, Lorraine Hunt, whom he coached in his studio on Rood Hill Road here in Sandisfield.

Herb, by the way, is considerably more than a voice teacher. He has had a long career as a concert pianist, harpsichordist and organist performing all over the world as well as teaching at Harvard and Smith. This is his fifth book, which includes a volume of poems engagingly titled "And Save the Wine for Me Another Day."

Case Studies In Vocal Pedagogy is eight chapters of light-hearted narratives about singers of all sorts including "Boo Hoo Betty," a compulsive weeper ("One can't

weep and sing simultaneously," says Herb.) and an elderly nun who showed up at Harvard one day with a "wonderful" voice, but problems with her low notes. Herb solved them. Describing himself as "an evil voice teacher" Herb tells the tale of an unhappy soprano who responded to his "fire siren" exercise in which you are required to vocalize (letting the voice 'soar') in the middle of the night. It worked, the soprano ended up with a great career as a coloratura.

Stories about many of the great divas (or as Herb calls them "natural singers") thread in and out of his book. He stood in line for four hours at the old Met on 41st Street to get standing room tickets to hear Kirsten Flagstad. He once inadvertently kicked Ben Luxon out of a rehearsal room at Boston's Symphony Hall (Ben, of course, is now a close friend and occasional student). You'll hear about Birgit Nilsson and yes, even Maria Callas.

At the heart of the book is Herb's musicianship, his method of teaching which includes everything. First, and most important, breathing. "Good singing," says our author, "is based on three things: breathing, breathing and breathing. Everything else is vocal gravy."

He also talks about the body, explaining in a marvelous passage, that maybe fat people sing more easily because they are not trying to hold in their abdominal muscles. And, of course, he tells us that "a singing teacher has to go beyond technique and enter the realm of psychiatry to help some singers learn to just sing the damn song!"


I must tell you some of Herb's aphorisms and maxims that dance through the book:

"Energy is what singing is all about. Energy is what everything is all about."

"Jellyfish can't sing. They just float around and sting people."

"I have yet to meet an unhappy piano."

"Everyone is singing beige these days."

"Singing is really an adult occupation." 


BRING THE WORLD TO YOUR DOOR!

How would you like a young Hungarian in your home? Or a teenage student from China, or Brazil, or Croatia? Might you fancy taking a young man from beef-crazy Argentina to see what the meat is like at next year's Sandisfield Steak Roast? Or teaching a young lady from Moscow how to handle a kayak on West Lake?

The deadline is fast approaching for this year's applications to one of this country's best-known student exchange outfits – the 36 year old, San Diego-based non-profit, the Pacific Intercultural Exchange – for anyone willing, or brave enough, to open his or her home to a visiting foreign student.

PIE's President, John Doty, said that the students currently on his rolls are all between the ages of 15 and 18 years, are English-speaking, have their own spending money, carry accident and health insurance, and want to share their cultural experiences with their new American families. "At this critical time in our country's history," said Doty, "hosting an international teen is the best and purest form of public diplomacy the United States has."

For anyone interested, the process begins with a toll-free telephone call to P.I.E. at 1-866-546-1402. P.I.E. area representatives will then attempt to match students with host families. John Doty encourages families to contact the program immediately, as it will allow the proper time for the students and hosts to get to know one another before they actually meet for the first time.

Host parents do not get paid for boarding a foreign student, but can claim a monthly charitable donation deduction for each month that they have a student at home. 



TALES FROM THE DUMP

By Forrest Hull

Share Your Ideas

"Going Green" requires a commitment that needs to be done at all levels: government, corporate and grass roots. Sometimes the best ideas come from people in their communities.

One of the biggest problems affecting the earth today is stuffing it with things that virtually never break down - like plastics. We recycle in the hope that it will make a difference, but did you know that plastic can only be recycled once?


According to Elizabeth Royte in *Garbage Land*, "Plastic isn't truly recyclable in the way that glass, metals and fibers are. Streams of mixed plastic can be turned into only one other product (plastic wood, garden pavers, or toothbrush handles, for example). When their useful life is over, these products cannot be recycled again. They have to be burned or buried. Either way, they add toxins to the environment." (p. 190)

In Massachusetts, plastics with #1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 are recycled, which is all plastics except those



already recycled and plastic bags.

Many people have begun to reduce the use of plastic in their lives. They have switched over to reusable grocery bags, eliminating the havoc plastic bags create. Some companies are making biodegradable "plastic" cups and containers. The occasional restaurant will serve takeout in paper containers.

Are there other solutions to reducing the amount of plastics we use? Your suggestions will be printed and appreciated. 



Can Caterpillars Predict the Weather?

By Debbie Harris

As outdoor summer activities give way to indoor necessities like (UGH!) homework, it is especially important that parents and kids alike guard against what has become known as Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD). NDD is not a medical condition, but rather a description of the human costs of alienation from nature. However, the symptoms of NDD include attention problems, obesity, anxiety and depression. This column will, hopefully, help families to overcome NDD in a fun way.

All you have to do at this time of year is walk around outside to see caterpillars crawling on the ground. These caterpillars will, come spring, turn into the

wonderful butterflies and moths that help to pollinate plants and flowers and give us such pleasure to watch. Getting an up close look at the process of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly or moth is an easy, relatively clean, great and fun way of introducing kids to the magic of nature.

Most caterpillars feed on plant material. Different species of caterpillar choose different, and often very specific, plants upon which to feed. The Woolly Bear caterpillar is quite prevalent in and around Sandisfield. It also is not particularly fussy about what it eats. So, the Woolly Bear is a great way to learn how a caterpillar turns into a moth (in this case, the Isabella tiger moth).



The caterpillars are called Woolly Bears because they have long, thick, fur-like hairs that are black at both ends and have a band of coppery red in the middle. The adult moths are dull yellow to orange with a furry thorax (throat area) and a small head. The wings are sparsely spotted with black dots and the upper segments of the first pair of legs are bright reddish-orange.

To raise a Woolly Bear caterpillar into an Isabella tiger moth you must think of many things. You need an enclosed space as a home. You need proper food and water. You need a proper temperature in which to keep the home. So, the first thing to do is prepare its home. Although any clear plastic jar with a lid that

you have punched air holes in will do, you can certainly be creative. The more attractive your Woolly Bear home is, the more fun you can have watching it all winter as it turns into a moth in the spring.

Once you have your home, which needs to include a twig and some fresh grass, you are ready to capture your caterpillar. Don't pick up the caterpillar with your fingers because it may have secretions on its hairs that will irritate your skin. Instead, encourage the insect to crawl onto a stem. Put the caterpillar, on its stem, into your jar home. Every day you should add fresh grass. You should also spray the container lightly with water every day. However, be sure not to put in too much water as you don't want your pet to drown; to caterpillars a blob of water is like a lump of syrup the size of a small car and becomes very sticky and difficult to escape from.

After a while your pet will tire of perching on the twig and will go to sleep (hibernate) on the bottom of its home. When this happens remove any remaining grass, but leave the twig in the jar all winter long. Find an outside place that is protected from bad weather (like a covered porch) and watch the caterpillar hibernate during the winter.

In the spring, when weeds begin to turn green, it is time to start feeding your caterpillar again. Feed it fresh grass every day. Soon it will spin its cocoon of silk. About a week later it will become an Isabella tiger moth. Then, on a nice day, take your caterpillar jar outside and set your moth free.


Folklore has it that the relative amounts of brown and black on the skin of the Woolly Bear caterpillar indicate the severity of the coming winter. If the brown stripe is thick the winter will be mild but if the brown stripe is narrow the winter will be severe. Watch your caterpillar and the weather to see if there is any truth to this folklore. It will add to your fun. 

Photo: Wikimedia Commons




250th Celebration: Nine Months and Counting!

By Laura Rogers-Castro

Sandisfield will be celebrating its 250th birthday next year and plans are underway for this momentous occasion. Although many programs and gatherings will be scheduled throughout the year, the main event will be held July 27, 28, and 29. Each month, the birthday-planning committee will keep Sandisfield Times readers abreast of the coming attractions and let you know how you can help be a part of this community celebration.

During the July weekend, one of the main features will be a country fair. The birthday-planning committee envisions a fun day with a pie-eating contest, tractor pull, sack race, frog-jumping contest, children's games, and all sorts of other "good-ole country-living" activities. The Recreation Committee is on board to help plan the children's activities, but there are still opportunities for others to help with the adult-oriented events. Although July is too early for a giant pumpkin contest, maybe a newsletter reader would like to coordinate a bake or pie contest? Or, is there a Sandisfield resident willing to coordinate and judge a flower-arrangement or quilt contest?

This celebration only happens every 250 years so, unless you are planning to live a really long life, now is the time to get involved! Birthday-planning committee meetings are posted at the Sandisfield Town Hall and are noted on the Sandisfield 250th Birthday Facebook page. If you have an idea or would like to help, contact Laura Rogers-Castro at 258-4688. 

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

From Russia, via Paris, to Sandisfield (with Love)

The Amazing Life of Barbara Karinska

By Jean Atwater-Williams

Varvara Andryevna Zmoudsky was born in 1886 in Kharkov, Ukraine, into a wealthy family. Like most young ladies of her class, she was taught the traditional art of embroidery, a skill that would prove essential to her survival.

In 1908, she married Alexander Moïssenko who died the next year, just months before the birth of their daughter, Irene. In 1915, Varvara moved to Moscow with her second husband, Nicholas Karinska. There, she became totally entrenched in the arts scene and hosted a salon every evening after the theater or ballet. She also set up a shop selling embroidery and linens. When the Bolsheviks took power, her husband fled, leaving Karinska and Irene behind. At first she remained in the new Russia, but escaped several years later when, as the newly appointed "Commissar of Museums", she planned an official visit to Germany but instead slipped into Brussels with her nephew and daughter, into whose clothing she had stitched the family jewels.

Karinska moved to Paris in the mid 1920's, but after two years of luxurious living, the treasure brought from Russia was gone. Karinska made a meager living

Photo: Courtesy of Adam Manacher



crocheting shawls and flowers, and making traditional Russian headdresses. Little by little, she acquired costing commissions. Her most significant commission came in 1931 from the Ballet Russes de Monte Carlo for the ballet *Cotillion* by the 27 year old choreographer, George Balanchine. This would mark the dawn of a nearly 50-year friendship and collaboration between Karinska and Balanchine, who would arguably become the most well-known celebrity of the ballet world.


In 1939, Karinska immigrated to the United States where her first commission was for a serpent for the New York World's Fair. Her creation was so long that it required two taxis—Karinska held the head in one, and her assistants brought the tail in the other, as the two cars drove side by side to the exhibition hall.

As Karinska's fame grew she was hired to work in many genres. She costumed opera greats such as Maria Callas and Renata Tebaldi. She designed and produced costumes for the *Ice Capades* and the *Ice Follies*. She even costumed burlesque star Gypsy Rose Lee! Karinska worked on numerous Hollywood

films, creating costumes for Gary Cooper, Ingrid Bergman, Marlene Dietrich, Judy Garland and Ginger Rogers, to name a few. For the 1948 film *Joan of Arc*, Karinska won an Academy Award for Costume Design.

The proceeds from *Joan of Arc* reportedly were what Karinska used in 1951 to buy a house on Silverbrook Road. The historically important Joseph Wolcott house (c. 1765) was in poor condition, and Karinska most certainly saved it. She called the property "St. Joan Hill" and she held it for more than 20 years. Her friend and colleague, George Balanchine, was a frequent visitor. Here she gardened, kept sheep and chickens, sewed and did her needlework, and undoubtedly found inspiration in the beauty that surrounded her. She loved to garden and planted hundreds of roses – all red. Her sheep, each one named, dotted the rolling pasture upon which her second-floor sewing room looked out. Karinska is remembered by those in town who knew her as a quiet, formal person who commanded great respect and admiration. In 1972, at the age of 86, she sold the property she so loved to the Manacher family, who have continued to devotedly care for and maintain it.

Of the many people with whom Karinska worked, it was to Balanchine and his New York City Ballet that she "gave her heart." The admiration was clearly mutual. When Balanchine was asked by the Ford Foundation in 1963, "What is the thing you most need for your work?" he replied with a single word: "Karinska!"

Barbara Karinska died in October 1983, at age 97. Her good friend George Balanchine had died the previous April. He was 79. 

Arts and Culture Review

JIM SINGELIS: "DO I KNOW YOU"

Article and Photo by Shawn Baker

"Do I Know You?" is the title of Jim Singelis' premier show of self-portraits at the Sandisfield Arts Center. With a 30-year background in set design for theatre, film and print photography and later computer programming, he has now transformed himself into a dedicated artist.

As a young New Yorker, he applied himself with great success in his field of set design and then teaching. It was there that he met his wife Linda, who was working in the same field. After Jim's fascination with computer technology set in, the couple found a sweet home by the Konkapot River in the village of Hartsville in New Marlborough where Jim was able to work out of his studio while Linda continued her work as the charge scenic artist for the long running TV show, *Law and Order*. Jim absorbed himself in computer programming for 20 years. In 1993 he took a lesson in Argentine Tango. Instantly in love with it. He is now an accomplished tango dancer and instructor of this beautiful and demanding dance form. This is a man who leans full tilt into his passions, endlessly curious and determined in the art forms he chooses. He maintains a calm exterior, a wry sense of humor and a laid back style which betrays his inner fire.

Speaking about his work he says, "I started drawing self-portraits as an academic exercise, working hard to record an accurate likeness. Like all exercises, this one soon became boring, so I began to loosen up and stopped worrying whether the eye on the page looked exactly like the eye in the mirror, that I would just let things happen, let the drawing evolve naturally. This loosening often brought unexpected results. The drawings began to seem more real and more 'accurate' than what I saw in the mirror, as well


as more engaging and provocative. I would look at the drawing and wonder where it came from, provoking the question, Do I know you?"

Jim works in charcoal, gouache, pastel and oil, with pieces ranging in size from an intimate 6" x 6" to a confrontational full face of 18" x 24". His grasp of the art form is exciting, fresh and singular. His paintings express an introspection that is at times playful, at times daring and passionate, and always fiercely expressive.

At the show, as I move from piece to piece, a string of unlikely paired qualities comes to mind - sophisticated but innocent, humorous but painful, relaxed but intense. Each piece captures an essential clarity of expression along with a certain wildness that allows me to step in and participate.

Altogether, an impressive range of technical skill and emotional daring.

His work can also be viewed on his website: www.jtSingelis.com.

His studio is at 39 Hatchery Road in Hartsville. He can be reached at 413 528 9925 or by email: jim@studio-etc.com. Studio hours by appointment. 





TOWN BUSINESS

Debbie Harris

Board of Selectmen Meetings Summary

Meeting of June 20, 2011

Present: Selectmen Patrick Barrett, Richard Campetti and Jeff Gray; Road Superintendent Steve Harasyko; Administrative Assistant Dolores Harasyko

Steve presented highway department updates. Work on culverts is proceeding apace. Everything is in place for the Route 57 culvert replacement by York Lake. The road will be closed for one day and the police department will be rerouting traffic.

Steve received "pedestrian area" signs for River Road. He wants to temporarily place them by the Historical Society for an event they are having; the Selectmen agreed.

A letter received from the Board of Assessors regarding 18 acres of land owned by Robert Duffy on Richards Road, map 410, lot 20 was reviewed. Mr. Duffy wants to donate the land to the town. The annual taxes on the property are \$695. The Selectmen approved receiving the property and will follow up with town counsel as to whether we need a Special Town Meeting to vote to accept the land.

The Selectmen granted a one day wine and beer license for a SArc event at the American Legion Pavilion property on August 20, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

The annual contract for CET for participation in hazardous waste collection was reviewed and signed.

The Selectmen discussed the request from Berkshire Group Purchasing regarding fuel oil and diesel fuel. We will not lock into an unknown fixed rate at this time.

Next week's Special Town Meeting was discussed. If the school budget does not pass the Department of Education will set the amount we have to pay for the school budget. That money will come from available funds (which excludes Free Cash, as that fund is unavailable until it is certified by the Department of Revenue in the fall.)



Meeting of July 11, 2011

Present: Selectmen Patrick Barrett and Jeff Gray; Road Superintendent Steve Harasyko; Administrative Assistant Dolores Harasyko

Bids for two trucks were opened. We received 3 bids for the 6 wheel truck -- Tri State Truck for \$19,436; Marola's for \$177,985; Ben Funk for \$177,513.88 (option 1) and \$180,032.88 (option 2). Steve will review the bids and specs and make a recommendation at the next Selectmen's meeting.

Only one bid, from Sarat Ford for \$41,429, was received for the 2-3 yard truck. Steve will review specs and bid and make a recommendation at the next Selectmen's meeting.

Peter Levine was appointed as the Veterans' representative for the town

Steve reviewed culvert bids. They have finished the grading on Sears and Clark Roads. Roadside mowing has started. Beaver Solutions has installed gates on North Beech Plain Road; we will also be placing one on Route 57. The Army Corp of Engineers is reviewing the New Hartford Road culvert replacement project. Chapter 90 funding for FY 2012 has not yet been approved.

A meeting with Smitty Pignatelli and Ben Downing in August with the Selectmen and Highway Superintendent to tour town roads and buildings was discussed.

The septic tanks at the library and Town Hall Annex

were discussed, as was paving the Town Hall Annex driveway.

Jean Atwater-Williams discussed WiredWest. If we can have a Special Town Meeting as soon as possible we can be a part of the original group of founding towns to enter into the agreement with WiredWest. Dolores prepared the warrant for a Special Town Meeting for August 4, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall. The only article on the agenda is for the second vote for WiredWest.

Again discussed property owned by Robert Duffy. His original offer was to donate the land to the town; he now would like \$100 for it. By asking the town to pay for it, we would have to follow the Mass. Procurement Laws. Mr. Duffy is going to research further and consult with an appraiser. We will wait to hear from him.

Kathy Burrows is interested in being the point person for the town website at the Town Hall Annex. There is no money budgeted to pay for this work. Linda Riiska suggested having the seniors do this and apply it to the Tax Work Off Program if that program gets approved.

The Selectmen granted a one day all alcohol permit to the American Legion Post 456. An up to date insurance certificate has been supplied.

The Selectmen regretfully accepted the letter of resignation from Gert Kelley from the Council on Aging. We wish her well and thank her for all she has done for the COA.

Linda Riiska, Shirley Spring and Barbara Cormier were appointed to the Council on Aging.

Gene and Karen Anderson in to discuss minutes of meetings. They are concerned about the minutes of the Selectmen's meeting and the *Sandisfield Times* reflecting the alleged incident brought to a Selectmen's meeting by Mr. Lassar. Gene feels he has been damaged personally and professionally by this statement. He stated clearly for the record that he did not shoot Mr. Lassar's cat and that there is no investigation by local or state police. He also stated that there are no charges and that he did not discharge a firearm. He has lost work due to this allegation. He feels this was a civil issue and not an issue for the Selectmen. He feels the *Sandisfield Times* was extremely irresponsible for printing *Cont'd P.10*

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

TOLLAND MOUNTAIN
BUILDERS^{LLC}

HIL
#144855

MA LIC
#38268

"When Quality and Professionalism Are a Must"

"We Handle All the Details"

Local references available.

Nick DellaGiustina
413-258-2821

Steve DellaGiustina
413-258-4996

OUR VERY OWN CAPE CANAVERAL [BUT FOR PIGS, NOT SPACEMEN]

By Simon Winchester

Photos by Setsuko Winchester



Geopig enters tube here...

A brief flurry of construction activity at the north end of Town Hill Road last month has served to remind us of the presence in our village of a crucially-important part of our nation's infrastructure. For with as little fuss as possible – since this is a highly sensitive component in our national security jigsaw, and anything done to it is done entirely without fanfare - they've been working on the pipeline.

This is the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company's long-distance interstate natural gas connector, which spears for half a dozen miles through the forests of northern Sandisfield on its way between Stockbridge and Agawam, bringing gas up to the homes and industries of Boston. Precisely where the gas comes from is never certain from day to day, as the maze of interconnecting lines starts in production fields from Texas to Alberta and all points in between. But it is an inescapable fact of Sandisfield life that, buried many feet beneath our northern woods flow many millions of cubic feet of high-pressure, highly flammable,

...then travels down the tube to the pipeline.



highly toxic natural gas, helping to keep the national economy running and the population supplied with gas for cooking and environmental comfort.

The start of construction in July and August initially raised concerns that it presaged the building of a third buried line – there are already two, such is the current and predicted demand for gas – and the consequent disruption to the community that would entail. But spokesmen for both Tennessee Gas and its parent company, El Paso Natural Gas, said that in fact technicians had to excavate for more prosaic reasons: they were installing above the two pipes a launching site for a pair of specialised

in-line inspection tools known as Geopigs.

A Geopig looks like an enormous sausage with rubber wheels. It is launched into a specially designed tube that branches up from the main pipeline – this is what has been built on Town Hill Road - and is then blown down into the pipe itself, whence it shuttles around inside it, looking for cracks and kinks and blockages. It is a kind of self-propelled Roto-Rooter that ferrets its way through all those cubic feet of high-pressure gas. It makes a squealing noise as it does so - which is why it is called a pig.


Regular inspections with devices like this offer one means of preserving the integrity of a line that, in ledge-and-swamp-rich areas like Sandisfield, is prone to all manner of geology-induced problems. Not only do the rocks move and the swamps deepen, causing stress on the pipeline, but the enormous temperature swings exacerbate corrosion of the steel – one reason why the owners recently installed what are called cathodic protection units along the line here, spears of buried metal that themselves corrode and bathe the line with electrons to preserve it from chemical damage.

Geology and chemistry aside - is this section of line a danger to us?

Clearly Thelma Esteves of South Beech Plain Road is concerned that it might become a target for terrorists – she called the police last winter, worried at seeing strange vehicles and men in uniforms nearby. It was a false alarm: the men turned out to be Civil War reenactors, innocently unaware that they were play-acting atop a highly explosive pipeline.

And it did indeed explode, exactly

twenty years ago. This was when Tenneco, the firm that then owned the pipe, was building their second line to parallel the first, built in 1955. A dynamite blast threw a boulder up into the air, and then down hard onto the active gas main, which fractured. Hundreds of thousands of cubic feet of gas escaped, and more than a hundred local people had to be evacuated. No one was hurt; the line was repaired in a day.

Since then, aside from occasional gripes about the ferocious herbicides employed on the line's forty-foot-wide easement, Sandisfield has coexisted amicably with her dangerous subterranean neighbor. The pipeline owners will be hoping that the construction of the pig-launch site – meant entirely for pipeline safety – will ensure that this good neighborliness continues for years to come. 

Researched by Roberta Myers

The New Marlborough
Village Association
presents **music and more** 
music • film
authors • art **Our 20th
Year!**

Jazz, Wine & Food

Vocalist Hilary Gardner, and "West 73rd,"
a jazz quartet; plus Gala wine tasting
Saturday September 10, 4:30pm

The Apollo Trio

Curtis Macomber, violin; Michael Kannen, cello;
Marija Stroke, piano
Saturday September 17, 4:30pm

A Bob Dylan Multi-Media Celebration

with Seth Rogovoy and photographer Ken Regan
Saturday September 24, 4:30pm

Award-Winning Authors

Mitchel Levitas (NY Times), host
Andrew Hacker & Claudia Dreifus;
Bruce Murkoff; Tracy Kidder
Saturday, October 1 at 4:30pm

Receptions with the artists after the performances.
Art Gallery Shows through October 2
Hours: Fri, Sat & Sun 11 am-4 pm & during Music & More events.
Visit www.newmarlborough.org for
tickets, discounts and information, or call
(413) 229-2785



TOWN BUSINESS

Cont'd from p.8

the part of the minutes regarding the cat. He would like the times to print a retraction. Deborah Harris present from the *Times* responded that they would not print a retraction but that Gene was welcome to print a letter to the editor explaining his response to their article. Gene reviewed what he and his wife's family have done for the town and feels that they should be held at a higher level. He reiterated that this was not a town issue. Patrick responded that we were taken aback by the direction of the meeting with Mr. Lassar. He was at that meeting to discuss his non-compliance with the special permit. At that meeting Mr. Lassar stated the incident with the cat. The Selectmen did not comment regarding that event. Karen responded that it should not have been in the minutes. Gene referred to his complaints to the Town Clerk and Building Inspector in the past. He suggested that his complaints and Mr. Lassar's application may have been put aside intentionally. Patrick reviewed the progress of the special permit hearing. He reviewed that he explained to Gene the amount of work we have had to do this spring. Annual Town Meeting, Annual Town election, budget work, budget failure, Special Town Meeting. Dolores reviewed the amount of work timeline she has been presented with this spring. She explained that in no way would she have put off setting up the hearing date. She received Mr. Lassar's application on June 13, 2011 and has set the hearing date for July 25, 2011. Time has to be allotted for advertising and notifying abutters. She also responded that when Gene has complained in the past to her about a neighbor, she has instructed him to either come to a Selectmen's meeting or send the complaint in writing. Gene asked about the minutes of tonight's meeting. They will be available for the next meeting. Dolores offered Gene a copy of the minutes as they were written this night, he opted to wait for the typed, approved copy.

(Note: The complete minutes are public record and available for viewing at the Town Hall Annex.)

Karen asked about the meeting with Pignatelli and Downing. Patrick explained that it would be a tour of the town roads and town buildings. Karen discussed the lack of cell and internet service at their home and how necessary it is to have it.



Meeting of July 25, 2011

Present: Selectmen Patrick Barrett, Richard Campetti and Jeff Gray; Road Superintendent Steve Harasyko; Administrative Assistant Dolores Harasyko; Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard

The public hearing opened for the application for a special permit by Richard Lassar dba Nature Works, 19 West Hubbard Road.

The public hearing was closed with continued discussion on to be held August 8, 2011.

One day all alcohol permits for the American Legion Post 456 for August 26 and September 16, 2011 were approved.

The following positions were appointed: Clare English to the Conservation Commission and Board of Registrars; Mary Leary to the Board of Registrars; and Betty Annecharico to the Council on Aging.

The Selectmen accepted the bid for the 2-3 yard dump truck from Sarat Ford.



Sandisfield Planning Board Meeting

Summary of Minutes Meeting of July 11, 2011

Members attending: Gary Bottum, Sr., Willard Platt, Gene Riiska, Kathleen Segrin. **Guests:** Rita Kasky and Mr. Yarzab

Old business:

Mr. Yarzab in for driveway permit. Paperwork and site visit all meet specifications. Permit approved by all present. State has already approved and signed off. Paperwork sent to DPW Supervisor.

New business:

Rhee Kasky in to notify the board that she will try to attend meetings and would like to have the minutes for publication in the Sandisfield Times.

Protocols for sending minutes to be reviewed. Town Clerk requesting copies of minutes for 2011. Board discussed how to send them. Town Clerk to receive minutes from January through May 2011.

Variance/zoning change from Agricultural/Residential to Business/Commercial for John Field (L/P#412-0-16.03). Proper paperwork submitted with proper setbacks. Approval given.

Signed driveway permit to be handed to DPW Supervisor, Steve Harasyko by Chair, Gary Bottum.

Discussed Berkshire Regional Planning Commission delegate. Gary Bottum would like to fill that position. Approved.




Sandisfield Technology Committee (STC)

Summary of Minutes Meeting of August 4, 2011

Members present: Jean Atwater-Williams, John Burrows, Deb Harris, Paul Jacoby, and Kathie Burrows

Item 1 on the agenda was to have a vote whether to improve the expenditure from the STC budget to join WiredWest. John made the motion, during our discussion Jean answered that the \$1,000.00 initiation fee is a one-time fee and any additional fees would need to be approved as they may come up. Deb seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Item 2 on the agenda was to recommend that the Select Board appoint a Municipal Light & Power Manager/WiredWest Delegate and Alternate. Deb made the motion for Jean to be appointed the Manager/Delegate position and John be appointed to the alternate position. Paul seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Item 3 on the agenda was to vote whether to approve the purchase of a wireless access point to allow wireless connections downstairs in the Town Hall Annex. John made the motion to spend not more than \$150.00 for an unsecured line. Since our annual budget is \$1950.00 we all agreed that we could afford it. Paul seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. 

What Do You Love to Eat?

That's the question Maxene Kupperman of Town Hill Road is posing to Sandisfield residents, in preparation for "Sandisfield Eats," a new cookbook to be released next year for the town's 250th birthday.

You don't have to name "THE" thing you like to eat, just "A" thing you love to eat. Please email her at slix92@aol.com.

Maxene encourages everyone to help by contributing their favorite dishes and recipes!

Steak Roast 2011

Photos by Richard Migot



WEST NEW BOSTON

Capitol of Sandisfield

By Ron Bernard

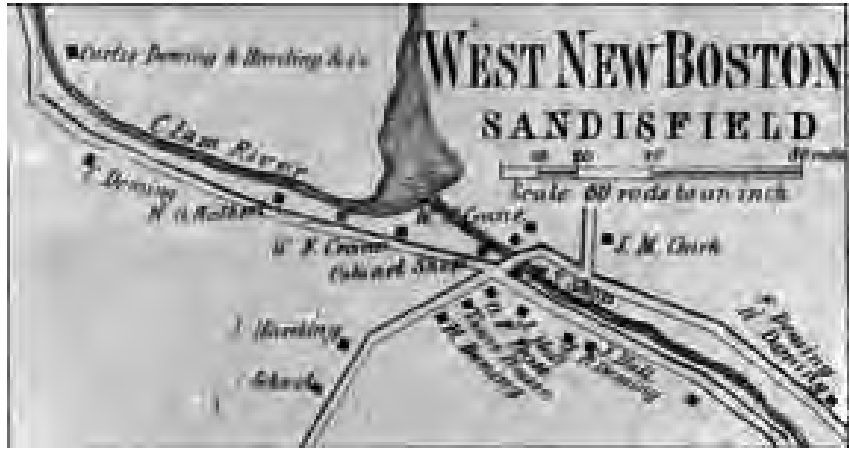
By the early 19th century steady development was proceeding westward along the “Town Road” from New Boston Village towards the other principal settlement, “Sandisfield Center.” A new, distinct community at the conjunction of the Clam and Buck rivers was emerging mid-way between the two. Residents began to identify their neighborhoods as belonging either to “New Boston east” (the original village and south), and “New Boston west” (westerly from the Clam River bridge at Sears Road towards the other emerging community of “Mechanicsville” (Montville). (Below, 1979 at Silverbrook Café, looking west. Mass. Historical Commission photo).



Early roads leading from the Beech Plain and upper Freequarter and central and south Sandisfield sections all converged here. The first mentioned dam, credited to George Marvin around 1820, opened the way for saw mills, tanneries and supporting functions like blacksmiths. Caleb Burt and his sons were the first to build an important tannery around 1822 near the Clam River Bridge. Sheriff Stephen Palmer had an inn/tavern and a harness shop on or near the present site of the Silverbrook Café. “Dwelling houses” started to go up in the late 1830’s to accommodate workers and families, independent tradesmen, and for the mill owners.

The 1840’s were Sandisfield’s prosperous, golden age. Increased population necessitated new schools around town including one that was called the “West New Boston School.” The existing New Boston village school automatically became known as “the East New Boston School,” or sometimes the “New Boston east school.” Thus, the youngest of Sandisfield’s five defined hamlets got on the map, literally, with an official place name. (Right, c.1937, West New Boston schoolhouse. Present home of Daniel Pinsky. Sandisfield Historical Society collection).

Also at this time, the citizens decided that a central Town House was necessary and that it should be in West New Boston, the new “capitol.” It was a beautiful, classic Greek Revival structure. (It burned in the 20th century and was replaced on site). Now, the only thing the community was missing was a general store,



but there are no accounts of one ever operating. By 1858 there were at least 20 buildings in the hamlet -- a mix of homes, commercial and municipal. (Below, c.1900s, the first Town Hall building. Courtesy www.DeMarsImages.com).



About 1875 when the “Little Brown Church” was being built in New Boston, the Congregational Society acquired the H. Deming house for Pastor Elbridge Bradbury who served both churches. The residence stood next to the Town Hall (current site of the municipal salt shed) and was later named “The Mary Bradbury Memorial Parsonage” after his late wife. This house burned around 1900. Membership at the Center meeting house had declined but the New Boston congregation was healthy, so in 1902 the Society bought Hattie Kilfoil Twining’s place on Route 8 for its parsonage (former home of Earl & Cora Spring Roraback, defunct).

The present home of the Silverbrook Café has been a West New Boston mainstay since this building replaced the Palmer Tavern around 1853. Originally it was a shingle mill (and/or possibly a “paper mill”). The Buck River to the rear provided reliable water power. From 1860 to 1865 sawyer-carpenter Philetus Osborn ran his mill here. It survived a bad fire that damaged machinery in 1869. The place went mostly dormant until 1886 when it became the home of



“The Berkshire Creamery Association,” a successful dairy cooperative and the pride of the Town. It operated until 1919. It has been a tavern/bar & grill and a popular dance hall since 1933.

West New Boston was also home to another important mill, the above mentioned Burt & Sons Tannery, which operated into the 1860s. Over the next 35 years the building was mostly a saw mill under various owners. For example in the 1870’s it was home to E. P. Hood’s bedstead and furniture shop. It last served as a birch mill in the 1890s. Farmers and landowners from miles around brought huge wagonloads of black birch branches that were used to make fernica and oil of witch hazel, popular lotions. When the supply of birch ran out around 1901 the mill closed and the building was moved up to Sandisfield Center, where it stands today as a private home (See “The Swift-Atwater Clubhouse,” Sandisfield Times, June, 2011).

WIRED-WEST MARKS IMPORTANT MILESTONE

by Jean Atwater-Williams

On Saturday, August 13, 2011, 22 towns gathered in Cummington, MA to officially form the WiredWest Cooperative, paving the way for a state-of-the-art fiber optic network to be built and brought to your home or business. The towns participating in this landmark event were: Ashfield, Charlemont, Chester, Conway, Cummington, Egremont, Great Barrington, Heath, Middlefield, Monterey, New Marlborough, New Salem, Otis, Peru, Plainfield, Rowe, Sandisfield, Shutesbury, Warwick, Washington, Wendell, and West Stockbridge. Senator Ben Downing and former Senator Andrea Nuciforo were also in attendance. They congratulated WiredWest on its achievements and underscored the critical importance of broadband for rural communities in western Massachusetts.

**AVIAN
NOTES**
By Margaret O'Clair

**Nature's Flying
Vacuum Cleaners**

Last month I wrote about my personal – at times in my face personal, account of my encounters with a pair of nesting Barn Swallows. I didn't mention anything about the swallow family, one of the largest and most widely distributed birds on the planet. The Barn Swallow is as happy in Africa, Asia and Europe as it is above my kitchen window. Swallow and martins are in the same family. Swifts are not. To add to the confusion some of our swallows are called martins in Europe and their martins are called swallows over here. What is it with bird people and names?

Fabulous flyers, the swallows eat and drink in the air. They have small beaks but extremely wide mouths, or gapes and they fly open-mouthed, swooping and swerving collecting insects on the wing. Some swallows have bristle-like feathers over their eyes which may act as a sun shield when they are out hunting food. Swallows often nest in large colonies, sometimes with species intermixed. They have readily adapted to manmade structures. The Cliff Swallow, first described in Utah in 1776 would probably be called the Bridge Swallow today, their jug-shaped mud nests are found under bridge spans from Alaska to the East coast.

The Purple Martin, our largest swallow, now nests exclusively in man-made "Martin Apartments". You have probably seen these large white boxes on top of a large pole, with nest holes on all sides. I have not seen Purple Martins in Sandisfield, but I know they are nesting in Connecticut, and with climate change it may be time to think about putting up a martin nest box.



Except when picking up dabs of mud for nest-building, swallows spend little or no time on the ground – their feet are small, their gait is awkward.

Famous for their long distance migrations, swallows fly during the daylight hours, resting overnight on wires and marsh grasses. Barn and Bank Swallows, which nest all over North America, winter as far south as Argentina and Chile.

Having made these generalizations about the Swallow Family, wouldn't you know that there is an exception to the rule? In spite of its small beak and feet the Bank Swallow digs a tunnel into the steep banks of rivers and shoreline bluffs, carving out a small cave-like nest at the end of the one- or two-foot tunnel. Unlike other swallows it does hunt food on the ground, eating sand fleas, crustacea and other insects.

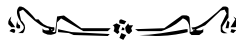


Perhaps it is their ability to adapt to us, or perhaps it is their ability to consume huge amounts of pesky insects, or perhaps their annual arrival is a sure sign of spring, but swallows have always been welcomed by humans since the Middle Ages.

I heard from several readers following the article about the attacking Barn Swallows. Blue Jays, robins and phoebes were also perpetrators of this kind of assault – but the account of a Goshawk attack from Teresa Bills was really unnerving. Bear in mind that the Goshawk is a big bird with a wing span of up to 46 inches. Teresa was horseback riding when she was jumped by a pair of nesting Goshawks. Both shrieking, one landed on her back and began beating her head and face with its wings. Looking over her shoulder she could see the huge open yellow beak screaming and screeching at her. Terrified that the horse would bolt, Teresa hung on, and after what must have seemed an eternity the bird flew off her back and the pair returned to their territory.

And I bet you thought the account of the griffin at York Lake in the April issue was a joke! (*It was-Ed*)

Photos: Wikimedia Commons



Summer Was

Summer was a hatful of candy.
Sweet little agates of memory,
Like the time I wore a bowler hat
All summer long
To make my mirror smile.

Then there was my neighbor Angelina.
We lay down on the pineneedle floor
Of my grandmother's forest
And opened the softcover
Book of love.

And there's nowadays... you know,
When summer is a blessed time
Between the winters
And such things as hats and love
Were settled long ago.

Val Coleman, Sandisfield, August 8, 2011

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your word, and your friend."

Henry David Thoreau



The Gardener's Almanac



By Sue Tarasuk

In the Blue and the Dim and the Half-light

A shade garden is often thought of as something we have to contend with if we do not have enough sun in our space. This is not the case at all. Sometimes a sunny border is just too bright and shiny. Although most people think of a garden as one that is flowering all season, most of the beautiful shade gardens we have designed or I have seen are more about the texture and color of the leaves.

There are many degrees of shade. Partial shade is one where there is two hours of unobstructed midday sunshine. Hostas may not like this hot sun, but lilies would bloom fine. Light shade would be an area that has early morning or late day sun. The morning sun is different than late day hot sun. *Hemerocallis* or daylilies would perform fine here. Filtered light is the shadow cast by a small leaved tree (honey locust) or a latticed overhang. Most of us call this "shade".



It has some sun but the sun is always moving. Bright light – no direct rays at all, would be the north end of a house. Often this is pretty bright from the reflection of the house casting light onto the garden. Dappled shade is true shade. This would be a garden under a larger-leaved tree. Deep shade or dense shade is the final category. Moss and ivy may grow here, but not much else.

If more light is needed in a garden, it may be easy to modify the shade. If your garden is near a building, you could paint that wall white. Perhaps your garden is shaded by some low branches of a near-by tree. You may be able to prune some branches to open up the light shining through the tree. You can do the same with shrubs that may be casting shadows onto the garden plants. Be careful and prune the shrubs and trees at the most appropriate time.

The soil in the shade garden must be rich in organic matter. Think of the litter of a forest floor. It is thick with humus. The best way to add humus is in the form of leaf mold. This is last year's leaves. Make a pile of chopped leaves, compost them and use them for mulch. You can also use sawdust, shredded bark and pine needles.

Your shade garden will need water often, especially if grown under large trees as trees tend to use up most of the available moisture. Before planting your garden, I would suggest installing soaker hoses. They save time and water.

Careful thought should be put into the design of your garden. A shade garden has the potential for an ever-changing and enchanting landscape if plants are carefully selected. Consider planting an early flowering shrub in your garden such as witch-hazel. It is wonderful to see the flowers emerge when snow is still on the ground.

Spring is prime time in the shade garden. After the early-blooming bulbs of snowdrops and crocuses, the garden comes alive with anemones, *Scilla sibirica* and Spanish bluebells. A shade garden without the common bleeding-heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*) is unimaginable. Be sure to plant it in the middle or back of the garden as the leaves get yellow and die in the summer heat.

Most shade plants bloom for a short time, but their leaves are lovely and endure. *Alchemilla* (Lady's mantle), Solomon's seal, Primroses and crested iris to name just a few.

Summer in the shade garden consists of cool shades of green and perhaps a bit of blue and yellow. Variegated leafed plants will add a bit of brightness but be careful you do not overdue it as it will make the garden too busy looking. Astilbe likes the shade – not deep shade – and loves damp soil. Daylily will bloom in midsummer and appreciate mid-day shade. You may well add some annuals to the shade garden if you prefer or need a bit of color-Impatiens of course and begonias. Coleus loves the heat of summer.

The shade garden in autumn continues to add color changes and vibrancy. If you have planted some shrubs such as blueberry, Viburnum or PJM (Rhododendron) their leaves will start to change and add vibrant fall color. Winterberry loves the shade and moistness of the shade garden and has persistent red berries – good for the eyes as well as for the birds.

Winter in the shade garden will show off the beautiful bark of carefully chosen small trees such as Stewartia and Kousa dogwood or striped maple.

Set up a chair or bench, put in a bird bath and take some time to enjoy the coolness of your newly planted garden. 🍷



Photos: Wikimedia Commons

SEPTEMBER



THE SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER

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

WWW.SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG

SAT., SEPTEMBER 10
8PM \$10

MAKING TASTE

Gastronomy, Heritage and Education

Katharine Millonzi has an M.A. in Eco-Gastronomy with **Slow Food International** and runs the Sustainable Food and Agriculture Program at Williams College.



She will address questions such as, **"Can revitalization of our taste buds be the key to responsible stewardship on earth?"**

SAT., SEPTEMBER 17
5PM

A Musical Performance of the
BILL OF RIGHTS

And stay afterwards for
a Community Cookout!
(\$5 per person. Reservations requested.)
Followed by a Community Sing!

AND!!



PHOTO CREDIT: DEMARSHIMAGES.COM

The DeMars Antique Photos display begins!

(Also All Welcome to the Opening Reception on October 22!)



Adam Manacher

Salinity? Divinity!

Roasting with salt or "salt roasting" is a rarely used method of cooking. It can be used in preparation of all varieties of meats and root vegetables. Most people not familiar with this method react with an eye popping reaction: "that much salt"! I recall many years ago as a chef I served a roasted turkey sandwich which won the hearts and taste buds of many regular customers. One woman with a demanding palate would frequently request our roasted turkey and praise its delicious, moist quality. That was until the day she inquired how we prepared it. "Salt!? In such quantity!?" I could never convince her to eat it again! In reality, the amount of salt that actually permeates the food is minimal. The salt and any herbs added to the salt as seasoning, just subtly flavor the food.



Salt roasting works on the principle that a 1/4" to 1/2" thick layer of salt packed around the meat or vegetable will create a crust making a little oven within an oven. The salt actually melts and hardens keeping in the steam emitted from the food. It steams and roasts in its own juices, enhancing flavor. Contact with the salt also allows the outer layer of meats to caramelize taking on color and a delicious crispy quality.

For salt roasting you will need several pounds of coarse grain salt (kosher salt is good for this and

not unreasonably expensive). You need enough salt to completely cover and surround whatever you are cooking. First place the salt in a bowl and sprinkle with water to slightly moisten. The salt should begin to hold together when pressed. In an oven safe roasting pan put a layer of moist salt on the pan bottom, place the item you are roasting on the salt, and completely cover the item with salt to about 1/4" to 1/2" inch thickness. Pack the lightly dampened salt to adhere so the entire item is surrounded. Roast in an oven at 400 – 450 degrees. Allow 10 to 15 minutes more cooking time than normal (without the salt crust); the crust initially insulates the food from the heat. Some general cooking times will be: a whole chicken 2.5 – 3 pounds, 90 minutes; a whole fish 2.5 pounds, 40 minutes; pork loin 2.5 pounds, 70 minutes; large beets, 50 minutes. If you have an oven-proof meat thermometer you can insert it into the roast and pack on the salt and cook until the desired internal temperature. This avoids any anxiety or guessing as to when your roast is thoroughly cooked. Once cooked, crack the salt crust (use the back of a large knife, or a small meat pounder) and remove as much of the salt as you can. Brush off any remaining salt with your hand or a paper towel. Let the meat rest 5 minutes and slice when ready to eat!


Salt roasted turkey breast is a delicious way to prepare turkey, particularly in preparation for slicing to make sandwiches. I will often make this at the beginning of the week for meals throughout the week. Either a whole breast on the bone or a de-boned breast rolled and tied will work. If you prefer, buy the rolled and tied item. It often comes with the timer "button". Just leave an opening in the salt so that it will pop when cooking is done! To the salt I add chopped thyme, imparting a wonderful aroma to the cooked meat. Experiment with other herbs or even some finely grated lemon zest. Cover completely with salt as described above and roast. When done, crack and brush off all the salt and let cool completely. Cover and keep in the refrigerator until ready to slice. Slice thinly and build your favorite sandwich. And all that salt from the roasting? Put some of it aside...it is now wonderfully flavored from the turkey! Use it as enhanced seasoning to all your cooking! 

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BULLETIN

Tara Beardsley

September News



Welcome Back!!! School year 2011-2012 has begun with a few very distinct changes. First, you can't help but notice the scent of a nice new carpet permeating the downstairs hallway. You'll also notice sparkling new tile floors in the 2nd and 5th grade classrooms. As I understand it, this is the beginning of the transition from carpeted classrooms to all tile classrooms. The school committee made this decision in hopes of being able to maintain the floors more easily, and for longer, as well as keeping germ levels to a minimum.

You may also realize that a couple of our most friendly faces are missing. Music Director Elizabeth Petty, and the students beloved "Mr. Roy" Andersen, have both made the difficult decision to move on to new endeavors. We wish them well. They both will certainly be missed!

We would also like to take this time to welcome Kim Chirichella, who will be replacing Ms. Petty in the music department.

Also, let us introduce Farmington River's new PTO board members: Sherry DeCelle, President; Tara Beardsley, Vice-President; Cathy Cardaropoli, Treasurer; and Anastasia Stanmeyer, Secretary.

PTO meetings will be held the 2nd Tuesday of the month in the school cafeteria at 3:15 pm. Childcare will be provided. However, you will need to be at the school by 3:00 to watch over your child until 3:15. This will give you time to offer them a snack (and a hug) until the bus with the sitters arrives at 3:15.


We've got big plans brewing for the PTO this year. Please join us and find out how you can help out!

Please mark your calendars:

- Sept. 1 PTO Fall Fundraiser Kick-Off
- Sept. 5 Labor Day: No School
- Sept. 7 Back to School Night: 6:30 pm
- Sept. 8 PTO meeting: School cafeteria 3:15, childcare provided
- Sept. 24 Harvest Festival: Sponsored by the Otis Cultural Council along with the Otis Community Garden 5:00-8:00 pm
- Sept. 26 Fall Fundraiser Orders Due
- Oct. 6 Picture Day
- Oct. 7 Professional Day: No School
- Oct. 10 Columbus Day: No School

Farmington River Wish List: If you would like to help out, you may do so by providing a donation of any of the following always needed items: Copy Paper, Paper Towels, Tissues

And please remember to clip those Box Tops for Education off your General Mills products and Labels for Education from your Campbell's items! (Please visit labelsforeducation.com to see a complete list of eligible items. They are on more than just soup!)

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

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Letter From The Selectmen

By Patrick Barrett

The Sandisfield Board of Selectmen would like to thank all of the residents who came out to welcome Governor Deval Patrick, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute and state officials at the July 26th ceremony held at Fire Station #2. The turnout for this event was impressive and the warm reception given by our town no doubt left a lasting impression upon the many first time visitors to Sandisfield. We would once again like to thank members of the Sandisfield Fire Department and the Sandisfield Highway Department for all the work they put in preparing the grounds for this event. We would also like to thank Jean Atwater-Williams for posting the event on our website and Liana Toscani for sending out a bulk e-mail notice to her many contacts. This was truly an historic day for Sandisfield, a fitting way in which to embark upon our 250th celebration.

We would like to thank State Representative William "Smitty" Pignatelli and State Senator Benjamin Downing for taking the time out of their busy schedules to come and meet with Sandisfield residents and tour the Sandisfield Highway Department Building. Sandisfield Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko and members of the Sandisfield Assessors Office will be putting together a map of the town for our state officials, showing all of the state-owned land and chapter land in Sandisfield that qualifies for reduced taxes. Representative Pignatelli and Senator Downing will use this information to try and seek monies that were promised to the town in return for preserving lands such as Spectacle Pond. We sincerely appreciate Representative Pignatelli's and Senator Downing's willingness to help work for Sandisfield in these trying economic times.

The Sandisfield Board of Selectmen would like to recognize Val Coleman for his eight years of maintaining the sign in front of Fire Station #2. This sign provides valuable information to our community by advertising the various functions taking place in Sandisfield. With many residents not having high-speed internet service, and no central gathering spot in Sandisfield, this sign has been a key link to the dissemination of information throughout town. Thanks Val, for your years of helping to bridge the communication gap in Sandisfield.

We would like to thank Jean Atwater-Williams and the Sandisfield Technology Committee for their work in securing our entry into the WiredWest initiative. The Massachusetts Broadband Initiative will be running a fiber optic cable up Route 57, but this will only bring high-speed internet service to residents in close proximity to this location. Wired West will tap into this main line, bringing high-speed internet to the rest of town. To date, this has been a long process, and a lot of work needs to happen before all of Sandisfield will have access to this essential technology, but we

are definitely moving towards closing the digital gap in town.

The bids have been awarded for the two new highway department trucks that we will be purchasing this year. Ben Funk of New York came in with the winning bid of \$192,000 for the big truck. This price was lower than the \$205,000 amount allocated for such vehicles through the State bid. The F-350 dump truck bid was awarded to Sarat Ford with a price tag of \$45,000. This was significantly lower than the \$55,000 allocated for this item at the Annual Town Meeting. All monies saved on these purchases will eventually end up in our Free Cash account. We would like to thank Sandisfield Highway Superintendent Steve Harasyko for his work putting together the bid packets and reviewing the bids that were submitted. Steve also oversaw the pumping of septic tanks at the Sandisfield Library, Old Town Hall and the Town Hall Annex by Mount Everett Sanitation.

We would like to thank Ralph Morrison for taking the initiative to mow and weed-whack the areas where the Wilber and Gross houses stood. It is our desire to put into place a plan for transforming the Wilber property into a town park, but due to an onslaught of budgetary issues and special permit hearings this hasn't come to fruition yet. We appreciate Ralph's willingness to keep this area cleaned up while the planning process evolves.

We would like to thank Clare English for stepping forward to become a member of the Sandisfield Conservation Committee. We are still seeking a candidate to be on the Sandisfield Planning Board.

We were saddened to learn of the passing of long time Sandisfield resident Julia Fletcher. A long-time member of the Sandisfield Council on Aging, and a wonderful person, she will be sorely missed. We extend our deepest sympathy and best wishes to her husband Norton Fletcher during this difficult time. Our thoughts are with you, Norton.

Lastly, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who has put their time in working on the *Sandisfield Times*. This professional publication rivals the better town papers, has let surrounding communities know the wonderful things going on in town, and has helped break down a communication void in Sandisfield. Creating a publication of this quality each month is a challenging, time consuming endeavor, but one that is essential to our community. The more people who step forward to contribute to the *Times*, the better chance of avoiding staff members becoming burnt out, and will guaranty the long term viability of this paper. We support and appreciate the *Times* and encourage more residents to actively participate in the creation of this important town paper. ♣

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First: A Rave

Dear Editor,

My congratulations and appreciation goes out to all the talented, hard working, generous people who have created *The Sandisfield Times*. This town's natural beauty, its people, and its history have sustained my fifty years of loving Sandisfield. People who know me well know how much I value learning and have learned much from the many challenges I have encountered here. I have learned even more from generous neighbors that have shared their knowledge and have given me help.

In 1987, *The Sandisfield News* appeared for the first time and none too soon for me. My work and family responsibilities made it impossible for me to spend enough time here. The newsletter was published, printed and distributed by only a handful of dedicated people. I was grateful that its stories and news kept me connected and gave me hope that I could resume my life here. It was last published in 2007.

As I began to spend more time here and missed my newsletter, *The Sandisfield Times* appeared. Its role is clear -- it welcomes us all and holds a promise to enhance our sense of community and ensure that we are well prepared for a healthy and bright future worthy of this historic town.

With gratitude and appreciation,

Thelma R. Esteves



Dear Editor:

Your Sandisfield Times is a "class act" - every page! Thank you for putting us on the map in such an elegant and intelligent way.

Emilie Green



Surface Crave

Dear Editor:

In response to Simon Winchester's article about becoming a new U.S. Citizen and one of the privileged few in getting immediate road service on request.

I would like to state that I am a 75-year citizen of the United States, a 50-year resident of New Hartford Road and the oldest kid on the block.

New Hartford Road has been full of pot holes since the winter of 2010. We have seen no progress in repairing this road which is a main artery between Rte. 57 and CT 183. I guess the people of New Hartford Road just don't frequent the right places to make ourselves heard or have a newspaper at our disposal to make us look important.

Audrey Riiska



Burma Shave

To the Editor:

For the past three summers the look of Route 57 as it descends into the Buck River valley, beside the cemetery, has been immeasurably enhanced by the regular appearance of rhyming signs, advertising the following week's events at the Art Center. They reminded us all of the old Burma Shave ads, so charming a feature of American highways in the Fifties.

But this year - they've all gone. For why? The Arts Center has had a vigorous program - but no roadside rhymes to promote them. I have a sneaking suspicion that Val Coleman, our town's much-esteemed Muse-in-Chief, was responsible for creating the signs; and when I saw him the other day he looked hale, hearty, and not at all the octogenarian he claims to be. So why are the ads on hiatus? Is Burma Shave no good any more? Has Val run out of rhymes? Has the heavy hand of the law cracked down?

To all of these I suspect the answer is no. Val is just feeling indolent. Well, dear Mr. Coleman - off your Barcalounger and step on it. Your highway, and those who drive it, need you to get to work. Bring back the signs!

Dear Mr Coleman,

O What to do?

Our road has lost its soul, man,

And all because of you;

Six signs, six lines,

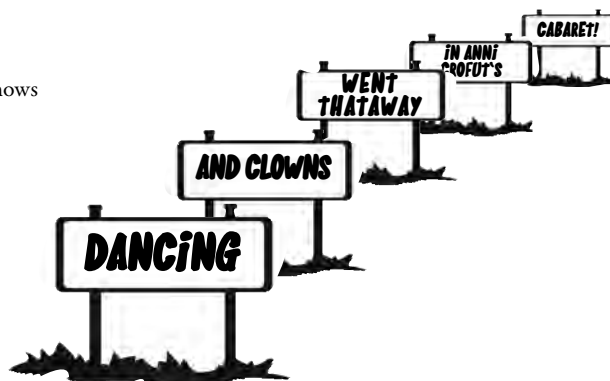
A little lick o'paint;

We'll love you soon for ever,

You'll be our total saint.

Yours truly,

Chester I. Minnows



SANDISFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Fall Festival

By Josephine Freedman

On Saturday, September 24, 2011, the Sandisfield Historical Society will hold its annual Fall Festival. The sale of homemade baked goods is always popular with the community. They are reasonably priced and delicious. We will also have hot dogs and hamburgers for sale, along with tag sale items. In addition, there will be some vendors coming to sell their wares. Please mark your calendar with that date and stop by to see our historical building. The fair will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The rain date will be Saturday, October 1, 2011 at the same time. We are located in the old Meeting House at the intersection of Route 183 and South Sandisfield Road, south of New Marlborough.

The cookbook project is definitely moving along. All recipes have been typed and entered into the computer. They will be printed at the end of August, and several volunteers will get together to categorize and review them. We have most of the short stories -- about 20 old houses, for people who submitted recipes -- that will be included in the book. Ron Bernard has been generous with his time and did the write ups that were excerpted from his history book, *Sandisfield Then and Now*.

We are taking requests for the *Sandisfield Eats* book from now until March 1, 2012. The price is \$13 before March 1 and \$15 thereafter. The books should be published by the town's 250th anniversary date in March 2012 and will be available for distribution and sale. Please contact Josephine Freedman at 413-258-4786 or email freedmj1@aol.com to reserve your book. We will accept checks made out to the Sandisfield Historical Society for the cost of the books. There will be an extra charge for shipping if you want your book mailed to you. ♡



Comings and Goings



Julia Mary Fletcher September 5, 1916 – August 5, 2011

A resident of Beech Plain Road, Sandisfield since 1977, "Julie" Fletcher, 94, died at Fairview Commons Nursing and Rehabilitation Center on Friday, August 5, 2011. Born in Brockton to Julius and Elizabeth Allen Grosse, she graduated from Laurence High School and Packard Business School before embarking on a 22-year career with the Federal Government. Upon her 1977 retirement from the Department of Justice, Admiralty Division in New York City, Julie moved to Sandisfield with her husband Norton, former and current president of the Sandisfield Historical Society, whom she wed on May 26, 1962. Her meticulous attention to detail served her well in recent years as secretary of the Sandisfield Council on Aging. A member of the American Legion Auxiliary #456 in Sandisfield, Julie's interest in the needs of others was unmatched as was the energy she devoted to everything she did. Never complaining during her time of illness, Julie's gentle and unselfish nature was a model for everyone who knew her. She is survived by her husband, Norton W. Fletcher of Sandisfield, and a nephew, Stephen J. Reilly of Bellmore, NY. In Julie's memory, donations may be made to the Sandisfield Ambulance Squad in care of the Birches-Roy Funeral Home, 33 South Street, Great Barrington, which has agreed to coordinate the effort.

A Poem for Patrick

Amidst the silent center
Where eternity is found
Dwells the mystic watcher
All knowing and profound

Some look to steepled buildings
Some to clergy garbed in robes
Some turn the pages of a book
Finding truth within the prose

But..... for me?
Among the snowy sun-splashed pines
Along a sand swept beach
Amid the gently rolling hills
I hear Mother Nature preach

Her voice falls from the heavens
Like the gentlest of rains
Her laughter rides the winds
Like a musical refrain

She speaks to me in colors
Like the yellow daffodils
Like burnished leaves of red and gold
And violet shadowed hills

Her seasons tell the stories
Of all that comes and goes
Of time and purpose, life and death
Of eternal repose

And I believe.....
When at last
He closed his eyes
To meet the Great Unknown
It was nature's voice
That Patrick heard,
Loved one, welcome home

For Patrick Carr
11/8/1967 - 7/19/2011
By Mary Cohutt

Two busy weeks, two babies, two generations, and two happy Daigles!



On July 5, Joseph Ronald Henderson was born,
grandson of Louise and Ron Daigle.



On July 19, Elizabeth Rose Burgess was born,
a Daigle great Grand daughter!

Barbara Helen Platt 1955 -2011

Barbara Helen Platt, 56, died August 3 in Torrington, CT. Barbara was the daughter of Willard Platt, Jr. of Sandisfield and was a successful businesswoman in Torrington. Barbara did a lot for her community and for the many people she knew. This year alone, she provided three large scholarships to nursing students at the Oliver Wolcott Technical School. As Barbara became ill, a major concern was her business and her many customers and employees of Angel Care Home Services, LLC. Her step-sister, Betsy Bernier, Rosemary Platt's daughter, will carry on the business Barbara loved so much.

In lieu of flowers Barbara's wishes were to have donations made to the Barbara Platt Memorial Scholarship, Oliver Wolcott Technical School, c/o James Morrор, 109 Marcia Drive, Torrington, CT 06790.



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.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Saturday, September 3, 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM, Bill of Rights Musical rehearsal. Sandisfield Arts Center. Everyone is encouraged to join.

Sunday, September 4, 4-6 PM, Cocktails and a tour of the 1770 Nathaniel Dowd House to benefit the Sandisfield History Book. Hosts Eva & Jean Paul Blachere, 153 New Hartford Rd. \$15/person, \$25/couple, Reservations required 258-3340.

Wednesday, September 7, 6 PM, Otis/Sandisfield. Kiwanis Roadside Clearing, Meet at the Otis Town Green. Long pants and bug spray suggested 269-6060.

Wednesday, September 7, 6:30 PM, Farmington River Regional School Back to School Night.

Wednesday, September 7, 7:00 PM, Sandisfield History Book Committee meets at the Library.

Saturday, Sept 10 10:30-12:30 AM, Bill of Rights Musical Rehearsal, Sandisfield Arts Center.

Saturday, September 10, 11 AM Historical Society Meeting and Potluck Lunch, Historical Society Meeting House, Rte. 183 (Sandy Brook Turnpike).

Saturday, September 10, 8 PM, Making Taste - Katherine Millonzi. Sandisfield Arts Center, \$10.

Sunday, September 11, 9 AM, New Boston Congregational Church Special Worship Service.

Friday, September 16, 7-10 PM, Turkey Roll. Bar- food, raffles and great prizes. American Legion Hall. (Rt.8). Raffle donations needed. Please call 413-258-4578/413- 258 -4473.

Saturday, September 17, 10:30 AM-12:30 PM, Bill of Rights Musical Rehearsal, Sandisfield Arts Center.

Saturday, September 17, 5 PM, Bill of Rights Musical Performance followed by a community cookout and sing. Sandisfield Arts Center. \$5 per person.

Saturday, September 17 thru Thursday, October 27, Exhibit of De Mars Antique Photos, Sandisfield Art Center.

Saturday, October 1, 3 PM, Second Annual Antiques Appraisal Day, David J. LeBeau, MFA, Professional Appraiser. \$5 admission, \$5 per item. Sandisfield Arts Center.

Sunday, Oct. 2, 9 AM Louise Daigle's last Worship Service and Communion New Boston Congregational Church.



ONGOING EVENTS

Town Meetings (Info call 258-4711)

Starting Tuesday, September 6, Board of Selectmen, Regular meeting schedule - every Monday at 7 PM, Town Hall Annex.

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

Board of Health, first Wednesday of the month, 6 PM 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 7 PM. Town Hall Annex.

Council on Aging, every Wednesday, 11 AM -2 PM, 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, First Monday of the month, 7 PM, Farmington River Regional School Rte, 8. JoAnn Austin, Superintendent. Public Welcome.

Otis/Sandisfield Kiwanis, every Wednesday, 6:30 PM, Otis Town Hall. 269-6060.

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

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



OF INTEREST

Through September, Summer softball season for co-ed adult softball, Greene Park in Monterey. Weekly informal pick-up games that have been taking place for decades, for residents and visitors of Monterey, Otis, Sandisfield, Lenox, Gt. Barrington and surrounding communities. Batting practice starts around 10 AM and game time is 10:30.

Saturday, Oct. 15, Deadline for Massachusetts Cultural Council Grant Applications in all Massachusetts towns. Applications for grants are available online at www.mass.culture.org and must be mailed no later than this date. Arlene Tolopko (269-0220), Chair, Otis Cultural Council says, "We welcome a variety of artists and musicians from the Massachusetts area who can provide entertainment, workshops, or classes for 2012." Email: Otiscc@hotmail.com, Otis Cultural Council, Otis Town Hall, Box 237, Otis MA 01253.

Saturday, September 24, 6:30-8:30 PM, Potluck Oral Histories by Anastasia Stanmeyer followed by a community sing-along. Free but all who are able are requested to bring either a main dish or a dessert. Children and guests welcome. Sponsored by the Otis Cultural Council and the Otis Community Garden. For more information contact Susan at 413-441-9579 or Eve at 413-269-7652.

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.



Photo: Susuko Winchester

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

P.O. Box 584

Sandisfield, MA 01255

www.sandisfieldtimes.org

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In Memory of Matthew Christopher

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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, the 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 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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