

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

## Holiday

## Greetings

*Tribunus*

*Plebis*



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume II, Number 9

December 2011



### Counting Our Pennies

*Town Budget Update*

### IT'S YOUR TAX MONEY – HERE'S HOW IT'S SPENT

*By Rhee Kasky*

In just six months we will meet again at the Old Town Hall to vote on a Town Budget for Fiscal Year 2013. I know it seems like just yesterday when we were all wrestling with the figures for FY2012, trying to understand the school budget, finding ways to cut back on expenses so that we wouldn't have to hit our savings account and generally having a difficult time trying to pass (and failing to do so) Proposition 2½. This column is designed to give you a summary of the expenditures made against the FY2012 budget between July 1, when our fiscal year began, and October 11, 2011. We hope you'll be diligent and watch our expenses as much as you do your own, ask questions about items you may not understand and have a clear understanding of the budget process when you come to the Annual Town Meeting in May. It is very likely that with the state of financial affairs in our *Cont'd on p. 2*

### David v. Goliath:

The Curious Saga of the Sad Little Road and the Great Big Lane

*By Simon Winchester*

Tiny Sandisfield is currently locked in a tussle with one of America's mightiest building conglomerates after a fiasco concerning the resurfacing of one of our town's key roadways.

Lane Construction, a 120-year old firm based in Cheshire, Connecticut, allegedly used the wrong asphalt mix and made errors in compacting procedures, on the 1.2 mile stretch of Rte 183, that links South Sandisfield to the Connecticut line. Sandisfield Selectmen, in an unusual display of defiance, are now demanding the road be ripped up and resurfaced, all at the contractor's expense.

The row first blew up because the state of Massachusetts Department of Transportation, which regards Rte 183 as an important through-route between southern Berkshire County and Connecticut's Litchfield County, had been withholding tens of thousands of dollars in promised grant money for the road surfacing which was performed earlier this year. Inspectors claimed that because of the supposed construction errors the road surface would not last for sufficiently long under the stress of locally harsh weather and heavy traffic, and would soon require additional work.

Sandisfield, caught in the middle of this row, has been consequently refusing to pay Lane Construction's bills for the final phase of the project. In a tactical victory late last month town Selectmen persuaded Mass DOT to release its share of the funds, but our three elected officials voted on 21<sup>st</sup> November to demand in return that Lane Construction now completely resurface the road without further *Cont'd on p.9*



Route 183

*Photo: Setsuko Winchester*

### The Great Halloween Nor'easter of 2011

*By Setsuko Winchester*



On October 29, a freak snow storm not only took the incredulous citizens of Sandisfield by surprise, but astonished a late-blooming rose, baffled unharvested crops and hobbled farm machinery at the ready for fall clean-up. It did so with unprecedented timing and by dropping an unexpectedly large amount of precipitation on our hamlet. Town Officials measured

*Cont'd on p.3*



### Just a reminder:

The next issue of the *Sandisfield Times* will be a January/February edition scheduled to come out on January 15, 2012.

*Happy Holidays from the Staff of the Sandisfield Times and see you Next Year!*

## Counting Our Pennies

Cont'd from p. 1

country and, for that matter, around the world, a tax increase over our levy limit will once again be on the table.

The following are some of the important figures to watch.

- The budget you voted for last May was: **\$2,756,204.**
- The amount expended between July 1 and October 11, 2011 is **\$1,022,679.** Those expenses are broken down as follows:
  - General government: \$61,258.81 (out of a department budget of \$233,774.02)
  - Highways: \$283,884.30 (out of a department budget of \$547,507)
  - Education: \$513,842.61 (out of a department budget of \$1,356,919)
  - Veterans: \$10,938.34 (out of a department budget of \$39,615)
  - Cemeteries: \$5,534.91 (out of a department budget of \$19,752)
  - Protection (police, fire, etc): \$46,757.87 (out of a budget of \$171,204)
  - Health and Sanitation: \$20,194.67 (out of a budget of \$77,629)
  - Unclassified expenses: \$80,268.34 - this line includes the Stabilization Fund payment, maintaining town properties and a host of other "miscellaneous" but necessary items (out of a budget of \$359,452)

What you may not know is that when we voted on this budget in May, we didn't have the money on hand. Budgets are prepared based on **anticipated income.** Taxes generally come in during May and November so some of the May tax receipts are used for the current and upcoming fiscal years. Fortunately, we have a high rate of tax collections.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is another source of income, albeit only about \$103,000. Some of that money is in abatements for veterans, the blind and the elderly. Our best estimate on tax revenue for this fiscal year is \$2,377,343 (including residential, commercial, industrial and personal property taxes). Add in the \$103,000 from the state and revenue from miscellaneous receipts the town receives, and we just about reach the figure needed to support our FY2012 budget.


Additional information you should have:

- The line items in the budget are developed by the heads of the various town departments.
- It is the Selectmen's version of the budget that is presented to the voters.
- The Finance Committee simply recommends approval or disapproval of the budget items based on the collection of data from all departments.

That's the overview on our operating budget. More detailed explanations of these expenses are available at Town Hall. If you're interested in reviewing them give either Dolores or Clare a call. You can also attend any of the monthly Finance Committee meetings on the second Wednesday of the month at the library (7:00 p.m.) or sit in at the Selectmen's meetings on Monday nights, 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex.

Now let's talk about our Free Cash account. Many of you know that back in 1990 the Town of Sandisfield was not in good financial shape. In fact, our position was so poor that the state would not allow us to borrow any more from the bank. Since that time, thanks to a group of people that includes Noel Nilsen, Joe Riccio, Clare English and others, our Free Cash account has grown and now we have a fund for emergencies. However, and here's where you need to pay attention, last May, when the voters refused to approve Proposition 2½, we had to dip into that account for \$75,000, and then take another \$75,000 from the Tax Overlay account in order to balance our FY2012 Town Budget. That left us with \$853,787 in Free Cash. This October, as a result of the damage from Storm Irene, we had to go into Free Cash again, this time for \$187,500. That amount, added to what we expect to receive from FEMA, should cover the storm damage. But remember, that leaves us with only \$666,287 in Free Cash. What we all must understand is that we cannot continue to tap into that Free Cash account – except for the emergencies it was designed to support. We cannot say to ourselves, "we don't need to raise taxes because we can take the money we need from Free Cash". We will be broke once again if we continue that habit.

You've been reading elsewhere in the Sandisfield Times about the monumental task of providing accurate information to FEMA for reimbursements. It's a gigantic undertaking, examining every inch of the 30-plus roads that were damaged. Steve Harasyko and the FEMA folks are on top of it, thank goodness, and we should be able to get the full 75% that FEMA is committed to paying. But that does not preclude us from continuing to watch our savings cautiously, and stepping up to the plate at Annual Town Meeting time to approve the departmental budgets and, if necessary, vote to pass Prop 2½ to keep our town in good financial standing.

Please make an effort to learn as much as you can about our budget process. Your knowledge will put you in a position to ask good questions and vote appropriately in May. Thanks for your attention to these very important issues. 

## Our Regional Selectmen Ask: Shall We All Join Forces?

Article and Photo by Debbie Harris



On Tuesday evening, November 8, a rare meeting of Selectmen from six towns took place at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex. The gathering, initiated and hosted by Sandisfield Selectman Patrick Barrett, included representatives from Monterey, Tolland, New Marlboro, Tyringham and Otis, as well as Mr. Barrett and Jeff Gray, another Sandisfield Selectman.

Scott Jensen of Monterey began the discussion by noting that often the concerns of Western Massachusetts are not expressed in Boston. He said that the same issues affect the eastern and western halves of the state differently. For example, the State Legislature is considering raising the tax on gasoline, which has less of an impact in the densely populated eastern part of the state with its extensive mass transit systems than it does on the rural western areas of the state that are highly dependent on private automobiles. Mr. Jensen said, "We need to let our state representatives know just how we feel."

The discussion was wide-ranging, running the gamut from road maintenance and dealings with federal and state agencies, to mutual assistance between the towns, to how to run a more efficient annual town meeting. Some towns offered possible solutions to common problems while others provided information that many were not aware of.

The first issue that garnered considerable discussion was the problem of beaver dams blocking culverts and thus impeding water runoff on our roads. Monterey and Otis noted that their road crews spend approximately two hours each morning just cleaning up the dams. Tyringham and Tolland added that the Commonwealth does not allow translocation of the beavers. Sandisfield and New Marlboro have had success using a company called Beaver Solutions.

While still on the topic of road maintenance the idea of sharing services and equipment was discussed. It was agreed that sharing services is probably not practical due to distances between towns. However, sharing equipment might be another matter. For instance, one or two paving boxes, rollers and water trucks could be shared among the towns, with each town "owning" a portion of the machinery. It was noted that it might be easier to get a share in a piece of equipment passed at a town meeting than having to foot the entire bill for a new item.

Cont'd on p.7



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## Preaching to the Choir

Janus, the Roman god of beginnings and transitions, is the two-faced god who looks both to the past and to the future. That pretty much describes the month of December, when we reflect both on the preceding year and look forward to the coming one.

This past year brought many things to our little town of Sandisfield. Weather-wise we saw an unusually snowy and long winter, a wet and harsh mud season, a mild summer and then tornados in the area, an earthquake, a hurricane (or at least the tropical storm that resulted from the hurricane), and an October snow storm that left us with about 30" of the white stuff. We re-elected a Selectman, but rejected a school budget and voted down a Prop 2½ override. We said good bye to beloved friends and greeted new arrivals. In many ways, 2011 was a year like many others.

Here at the *Sandisfield Times* 2011 brought us our first anniversary. When we started the paper no one knew if it would survive. Now, well into our second year, we find ourselves not only surviving, but thriving. And so we look forward to 2012.

As was indicated in this column last month, the *Sandisfield Times* strives to be the voice of the people. But, thinking about it, perhaps we wish to be more like a chorus. After all, a chorus is composed of many voices; some may be louder or

more forceful than others, but each and every one is necessary to create the final, beautiful (or maybe not so beautiful) product. So, too, with our paper. In order to properly reflect the diverse opinions of our community, we need your help.

There are many ways in which you can help. Of course, monetary donations are always appreciated. And, in this regard, many of you will be receiving our annual appeal in the mail in a few weeks. Another way is to volunteer with us; we are always grateful to welcome new warm bodies to our small staff. But the most important way to help us is to let us know what you think. It is your opinions that helps us to create a representative Sandisfield chorus.

Your submissions are always welcome, whether in the form of a letter to the editor, an article (or an idea for a future article), a calendar event, general information you think we ought to know, or placing an advertisement so everyone will know who you are and what you do for our community. Of course, we reserve the right to edit all submissions, or to refrain from printing them due to either space or journalistic considerations. In some cases we may not print a submission in the month it was offered, but will put it "on the shelf" for inclusion in a future edition when we have more space or we feel the item is more timely.

That being said, in order to ensure that your submission receives proper consideration for publication, we find it necessary to establish a procedure by which items can be received. If you have only a hardcopy of your article/letter/etc. please mail it to us at *Sandisfield Times*, P. O. Box

584, Sandisfield, MA 01255. If you wish to send us something electronically, please do so as follows:

- Letters to the Editor: [letters@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:letters@sandisfieldtimes.org)
- Articles, ideas for articles, news tips, and/or photos: [editor@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:editor@sandisfieldtimes.org)
- Advertising copy or questions: [advertising@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:advertising@sandisfieldtimes.org)
- Entries for the calendar: [calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org)
- Notices of births, deaths and marriages: [registrar@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:registrar@sandisfieldtimes.org)

Please do not send your submissions to an individual member of our staff. Since our staff is composed of volunteers, and functions can change from month to month, sending your offerings to only one person you risk it falling through the cracks or confusion on our part as to whether you want something published or are just giving it to that person for their information. Each of the above email addresses will be received by multiple staff members, and we will know it is an "official" submission.

So, Happy New Year to all of our friends and neighbors. And, please, keep those cards and letters coming. Our chorus needs each and every one of you.

Debbie Harris  
Editor, The Sandisfield Times

## Halloween Nor'easter

*Cont'd from p. 1*

accumulations of as much as 30 inches of heavy, wet snow in some areas, breaking previous town records.

While the storm understandably caused some inconvenience, damage and disruption was mercifully less severe than in many of our surrounding communities. Observers put this down to the most ironic of reasons: an earlier catastrophic weather event. The great ice storm of 2008 helped clear out a lot of the "at-risk" trees, which in turn aided in limiting property damage and power outages here. When power did go out, it was restored in about 15 hours thanks to the quick work of crews from Western Massachusetts Electric. This contrasted favorably with the experience of many communities in rural and suburban Connecticut which lost power for up to ten days.

In summary the snow fall was greater and more spectacular but the disruption was less. However, according to Town Clerk, Dolores Harasyko, cost of clean up was \$11,200. Perhaps not the best of financial auguries for the long, cold winter ahead.



Photo: Debbie Harris



Photos: Setsuko Winchester



## A CHRISTMAS PICK-ME-UP

By Adam Manacher

Tiramisu: mascarpone, sabayon, Madeira...what's better than the exotic for the holidays! Treat yourself to the art of creation while giving your family and guests a dessert to celebrate the season!

Tiramisu, a relatively modern Italian dessert, literally means, "pick me up". Rich in eggs, sugar and coffee, one can understand the origin of the name. Mascarpone is an Italian "cheese" similar to the French crème fraîche or our cream cheese. Sabayon (or zabaglione in Italian) is an egg sauce, sweetened and slowly cooked over steaming water. And Madeira is a wonderful Portuguese dessert wine. Layering these ingredients with mini-cakes called ladyfingers, adding a hint of coffee flavoring and shaved chocolate makes just the perfect combination to lift holiday spirits.

Preparing Tiramisu involves several simple steps with one slightly complex cooking "technique" that requires some care and patience: creating a sabayon sauce. Give yourself the gift of mastering the art of the sabayon sauce and your desserts will never be the same! Sabayon is made with egg yolks, sugar, and a little added liquid, beaten in a bowl placed over a pot of simmering water. Cooking very slowly over the steam, the eggs are beaten until they thicken and double in volume. You should never see little granules of cooked egg. The finished product will be pale yellow in color and will create a "ribbon" effect on the surface of the sauce when you lift the whisk (or electric beaters) and the eggs pour back down onto themselves. If you have a cooking thermometer, the temperature will reach 165 degrees. This process takes about 7 to 10 minutes. Remove the bowl from over the pot of steaming water and place it into an iced water bath and continue stirring until cool. You have a sabayon!

Restaurants usually serve Tiramisu in neat squares or rectangles cut from a large sheet pan. I prefer to simplify the layering of ingredients by using a large bowl and serving it at the table with ample scoops from a large spoon! Here are the steps to follow for a great dessert treat.

The ingredients you will need: 9 eggs, 6 Tbsp. sugar, ¾ cup Madeira wine (or Marsala if you prefer) + extra for dipping, 24 oz. mascarpone cheese, ¾ cup espresso coffee cooled, 2 cups heavy cream, and ladyfinger cakes (find these at your local grocery store often in the ethnic/Italian section), about 2 oz. semi-sweet chocolate.

Prepare all your ingredients for layering. Separate

your eggs by gently cracking the shell in half, hold one half in each hand, and gently transfer the yolk back and forth between the shells letting the egg white drip down between the shells into a bowl placed beneath. Place all 9 yolks in one bowl. (Discard the whites or save them for making meringues.) Prepare the sabayon with the yolks, sugar and Madeira as explained above. Set the sabayon aside. Place the mascarpone in a separate bowl. Lightly beat with a wooden spoon to soften and add the cooled espresso. Beat the two ingredients together. Set aside. Next, take the heavy cream in a large bowl, beat to stiff peaks (if the bowl is chilled it makes the cream whip up more quickly) and set aside. Now grate or fine chop the chocolate and reserve on a plate.



To build your Tiramisu choose a serving bowl that is at least 2 ½ to 3 quarts in size.

Take the lady-fingers and lightly soak them in the Madeira and line them over the entire bowl (You can control the alcohol flavor by not soaking all of them. Or alternatively you can soak some of them with coffee). Spoon 1-2 inches of the mascarpone mixture into the bottom, then a 1-2 inch layer of sabayon, then a layer of whipped cream. Next, place a layer of soaked ladyfingers and shaved chocolate. Then repeat the process until you have a final layer ending with the whipped cream topped with chocolate shavings, skipping the ladyfingers. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for at least 24 hours.

Set the table with fanfare and break out the dessert! Grab a nice big spoon and celebrate the holidays with a heaping serving of delicious Tiramisu! 🍷



## Broadband Update

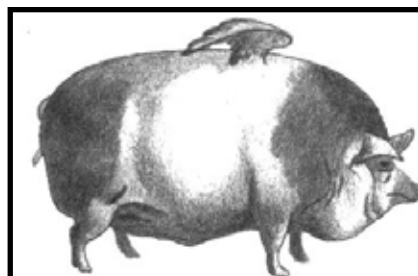
By Jean Atwater-Williams

On November 2<sup>nd</sup> John and Kathie Burrows and I attended a community meeting held by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) at Berkshire South in Great Barrington. MBI's Director Judy Dumont gave a project update and revealed some very good news. Sandisfield, along with a number of other southern Berkshire towns, is scheduled to be wired in Phase II of the MBI effort to bring fiber optic broadband internet to Community Anchor Institutions (CAI's). Phase I includes the towns along the I-91 corridor, and there are 6 Phases all together. Although in reality, some phases will happen concurrently, with the fiber projected to be "lit" (i.e. internet services will be available) by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Judy also let us know that G4S (the engineering firm engaged by the MBI) is in the process of surveying where equipment will be located at the various CAI's. In fact, G4S has already made several visits to our town, working with John Burrows and other local officials to survey Sandisfield's anchor institutions: Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, Fire and Police stations, and our Library.

For broadband delivery to residents and businesses, the MBI is leaving it up to "last mile providers." WiredWest, the only last mile provider promising to bring state of the art fiber optic network services to all residents and businesses who want them, is making progress in their efforts, as well. Since last August, WiredWest's Executive Committee has been meeting weekly and its Board of Directors monthly, working on the multitude of tasks necessary to make the last mile fiber network a reality. The groundwork necessary for Engineering and Marketing studies is underway, and on November 19, 2011, two additional towns joined the Cooperative. This brought the total member towns to 24 so far with others waiting to join. It is expected that there may be as many as 40 towns in the cooperative when network build out begins, which is projected for the second half of 2012.

So stay tuned. Fiber Optic Broadband is inching ever closer! 🍷



### WHEN PIGS FLY FARM

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*Dismantling stick by stick in Sandisfield to domestic delight in Great Barrington.*



Photos: Larry Dwyer, Bev Kimberley, John Shapiro, Ron Bernard

## The Kimberley House, Redux

*By Ron Bernard*

When Heman Dowd and his new bride Charlotte Bishop built their house on Upper Town Hill Road in 1800 could they have imagined that two centuries later it would be dismantled “stick-by-stick” and reassembled elsewhere?


This used to happen a long while ago. People often salvaged still valuable old buildings, whole houses included. Typically they moved them short distances as attachments or to new locations relatively close by. Barns were most likely to be dismantled and re-erected. Nowadays the rescue of an old house that is no longer viable, but is facing its fate in some dumpster, is a rarity; when it happens it is good news indeed.

And this is just what has happened to the old Kimberley place, an upper Town Hill Road fixture for some 200 years that has indeed foiled the excavator man. Home to generations of Kimberleys since 1870 and other families before, this neighborhood landmark was simply worn out. After the last occupants, Fred and Mary Kimberley, passed on about ten years ago, the family found a way for their ancestral home to live on.

This is where John Shapiro of Great Barrington enters the picture. An old-house enthusiast and preservationist, Shapiro was familiar with Sandisfield's heritage. Over the years he has been a caretaker for some of the oldest farmsteads and he has helped restore several ancient barns. How could he resist enquiring about the family's plans for their homestead?

A deal was struck and in 2009 Shapiro's crew carefully dismantled the place, “stick-by-stick.” Everything was removed and inventoried, even the foundation stones. Only the roof shingles were discarded. The four-day project was systematically photographed by Beverly Kimberley. Shapiro re-erected the main section beside his own house on Egremont Plain Road across from the airport in Great Barrington.

Building-secrets were teased out. The original builder tied the central beams with perfectly joined braces in the manner of furniture-making, not typical of early house construction. Two timbers were signed in red crayon by one “Chamberlain,” probably in about 1850. Charring suggested a long-ago fire.

Possibly originally a barn, the 1½-story house had six rooms up and down. Now it will be Shapiro's great room, the chimney constructed entirely from the foundation stones. Thanks to John Shapiro for his commitment which has preserved a part of Sandisfield's heritage and to the Kimberleys for their foresight. 

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Henry David Thoreau





# TOWN BUSINESS

*Edited by Debbie Harris  
& Rhee Kasky*

## **Board of Selectmen Meetings Summary**

### **Meeting of September 26, 2011**

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

Dolores reviewed the FEMA meeting she, John Burrows and Steve Harasyko attended. The estimated amount of damage from the storm is \$750,000. The town will need a Special Town Meeting to appropriate our 25% of the cost.

Rhee Kasky plans on doing educational articles in the *Sandisfield Times* about the upcoming budget season and Prop 2½.

Kathy Jacobs requested quarterly all boards meetings.

Emergency Manager John Burrows explained that second homeowners are not covered by FEMA for damages from Storm Irene, but they may be eligible for loans.

Steve finally received permission from the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the New Hartford Road culvert. The permit is good until 2015.

Dog officer Kim Spring presented a complaint about some dogs. She asked the Selectmen to issue a "failure to restrain" notice with a \$50.00 fine, which they did.

Jeff will contact Chip Crandel about work to the Town Hall Annex. It will cost about \$800. Steve repaired the back wall of the Town Hall Annex. He removed the flashing and filled in the hole in the wall.

### **Meeting of October 3, 2011**

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

The Board of Assessors presented the annual Tax Classification Hearing. The Selectmen agreed to keep all options the same as in the past.

The tax rate for FY12 will be \$10.10, up from \$9.41 for the bills going out this November. Property values have dropped approximately 9%

Steve presented Highway Department updates. All roads are passable at this time. Some are not passable all the way through, but are passable from either end. They are starting the blacktop repairs first as the plants will close soon and then blacktop will not be available until next spring. Steve is

preparing a priority list of dirt roads to be repaired once the blacktop is done. They need to work on vehicles and plows to ready them for the upcoming snow season.

Bids for snow plowing and winter road sand, the work on Route 183 by Lane Construction and needed repairs to the town garage roof were discussed.

Patrick will follow up with Town Council regarding obtaining an injunction against Richard Lassar for operating an illegal business.

Nancy Flach sent in an email suggesting the town contact the State if the property next to her belonging to Robert Duffy is offered to the town. She feels the state would have more use for it than the town.

Frank Zuidema requested and received permission to hunt at Yanner Park.

### **Meeting of October 11, 2011**

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

Steve presented Highway Department updates. Regarding Route 183, Lane Construction did not use the product stated in the contract and the work did not pass Mass DOT specs. They will have to redo the topcoat.

We are looking into a short term loan to allow us to make road repairs due to Storm Irene. It will take some time to receive FEMA reimbursement.

The Selectmen regretfully accepted the resignation of Emily Tarasuk from the Cultural Council.

### **Meeting of October 17, 2011**

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

Two bids for winter road sanding were received, one from A&M Auto and one from C. W. Nelson. Both were for \$60 per hour. This is an increase over last year's \$45 per hour. Steve will review the bids and make a recommendation at next week's meeting.

Treasurer Clare English and Assistant Treasurer Teresa DellaGuistina updated the Selectmen regarding a loan to cover the work being done to restore the damage done by Storm Irene. They were directed to go forward with a loan for \$487,000.

During Storm Irene the gas pump computer was destroyed by a power surge. Treasurer Clare English estimated the gas usage from the previous month's reading. Fire Chief Ralph Morrison does not agree with this estimate and doesn't want to pay it. Clare will follow up with Ralph. FEMA does not reimburse for gas usage. The town's insurance company paid the claim for the computer.

Steve gave Highway Department updates. He noted that one of the new trucks should be ready in

a few weeks and the other by the end of December or early January.

Road work on the town's roads is proceeding. All roads should be graded by November. We have had to hold on Storm Irene restoration work due to funding. Steve will place speed limit signs on Route 183.

Tina Ferry was reappointed to the Recreation Committee.

### **Meeting of November 1, 2011**

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

The necessary loan for road repairs due to Storm Irene was again discussed. The Selectmen agreed that we should treat this as a line of credit and only take out money as necessary in order to reduce interest payments.

Highway Department updates. The new F350 truck is in and the plow is being installed. The roads received 24-30 inches of snow from this weekend's snow storm. Plowing the dirt roads was difficult due to the damage from Storm Irene and the fact that the storm was in October and the dirt roads have not frozen yet.

Steve recommended Donovan's bid for sand at \$14.20 a ton delivered. It is \$1.30 a ton less than the state bid. The Selectmen awarded this bid. The Selectmen also gave Steve permission to sell a plow that is not being used. The Selectmen decided to start this year's Snow and Ice budget on October 28, 2011.

The annual Cultural Council grant was signed.

Administrative Assistant and Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko requested a medical leave of absence for 6 to 8 weeks. She has contacted Elaine O'Brien to cover for her. Elaine would work Mondays and Wednesdays. The Selectmen agreed to this.

Dump sticker fees and annual business license fees will be kept at current levels.

### **Meeting of November 7, 2011**

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

Nancy Remis was present to request the town to pay for water damage to her property due to road runoff from Storm Irene. Jeff responded that the town does not work on private property. Mrs. Remis responded that this was not satisfactory and left.

Highway Department updates. Road work is continuing. FEMA estimates our submission will be ready for review December 1, 2011. We have had no contact from them. Steve has been in contact with Smitty Pignatelli about the delay and Patrick will follow up with Scott Brown and Pat Carnevale from MEMA.

Steve is getting quotes for repairs on the town garage and the Old Town Hall. *Cont'd on p.9*



# The Gardeners' Almanac



By Sue Tarasuk

## Summer In Winter

Who among us does not love orchids? They are elegant, beautiful and breathtaking in flower. However, the task of getting one to re-bloom is often something we feel is beyond our ability. I thought the same thing. Actually, it is not so difficult at all. Orchids need specific environmental conditions which are easily met on your very own windowsill. The thrill of having your Dendrobium or Phalaenopsis come into bloom is well worth the effort.



Orchids come from a tropical or semi-tropical region where there is lots of light, warmth and high humidity. They receive quick bursts of rain, and then breezes that dry off their leaves. Although we cannot duplicate these conditions, you can come close enough to grow orchids successfully.

Fortunately, most orchids like the range of temperature in our homes (65 to 75 degrees during the day and 55 to 60 degrees at night). Humidity is often harder to achieve at the windowsill where you will most likely grow your orchid. They require a rather high degree of humidity, along with good circulation of air. The easiest way, and the least expensive, is to place the orchid plants on a tray of stones. I have about twenty orchids so I put a large tray about 2" deep on the plant table. I fill it with small stones and then with water. I add a tablespoon of fungicide to keep the water from growing algae. I set each pot on a small plant tray to keep the bottom of the pot out of the water. If the roots of the orchid stay continuously wet, they will rot. The water evaporates around the plants and will create a nice humid environment. Good air movement is another important element in growing orchids on the windowsill. With air circulation, the chances of disease will be minimized and you will provide a good supply of carbon dioxide that they need to grow. Simply having good space around your plants will help provide movement around them.

Most orchids, but not all, benefit from as much sunlight as you can give them. The best indoor


location in winter is close to a south-facing window. An east-facing window gives your plants adequate morning light, and a west-facing window is fine too, but may be too bright in the afternoon. If you put a sheer curtain on the window, that will diffuse the light and be adequate. You can easily grow orchids under artificial light as a supplement to natural light or exclusively.

In the summer, I put my orchids outside in a shaded location, preferably under a covered porch. If left out in the open, there may be a chance your orchid will receive too much rain (as in this past summer) and far too much sun. The leaves will burn and drop off in bright sun.

More orchids go to an early grave from overwatering than from any other single cause. Remember, most orchids grow as epiphytes, meaning they grow on another plant but do not depend on that plant for nutrition. Their roots are not in the ground. If an orchid is overwatered, the roots cannot take up any more water. When water is left surrounding the roots, they will start to rot and the plant will die from lack of air. Other orchids have what are called pseudo bulbs. This is like a storage tank of water and nutrients. Again, too much water and the pseudo bulbs will start to shrivel and die from over watering. The best rule for most orchids, if in doubt, is don't water it. You may think it needs water by looking at the bark at the top of the pot, but the true test is to put your finger into the pot. If it needs to be watered, do so in the morning or early afternoon. This way the plant can take up the water in the daylight. I like to take my plants to the sink and immerse them in water. This way the clay pot and the potting medium will be thoroughly soaked. Usually I will do this every other week and not water in-between. Again, this will depend on the humidity in your house and the size of the plant.

The rules of watering also apply to fertilizing. Less is more. A plant growing in the bright light of summer will need more fertilizer than one in the winter. I like to give my plants an all purpose orchid fertilizer once every two or three weeks and mixed weaker than the directions instruct. Once the flower buds start to form, you can begin to feed the orchid with a "blossom booster" formula.

If you would like to start with just one or two orchids, start with an easy to grow Phalaenopsis. These are the orchids with the long wide leaves and beautiful stems of purple, pink or white flowers. They grow best in cool nights and warm days and do not need as much sunlight as some other orchids require. Once in bloom, they stay in bloom for a very long time. One Phalaenopsis orchid I had was in bloom for more than one year! Have fun. Remember: buy from a reputable nursery or florist.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at [susantarasuk@gmail.com](mailto:susantarasuk@gmail.com). 

## Time for Selectmen to Join Forces?

*Cont'd from p. 2*

The subject of municipal grants was raised. Mr. Jensen noted that there are grants available just for gathering information necessary to apply for further grants. All of the Selectmen agreed that the individual towns are too busy to apply for grants themselves, but sharing a grant writer was a distinct possibility. Mr. Barrett also noted that often grants are easier to obtain if they are regionalized rather than specific to an individual town.

Issues regarding reimbursement for monies the towns need to spend to repair damage caused by Storm Irene were brought up. Many, but not all, of the towns were experiencing frustration in dealing with FEMA. Several of the Selectmen noted that FEMA seems to only be interested in putting the roads back the way they were before the storm rather than fixing the underlying problems so that damage would not recur the next time we have a heavy rain. Mr. Jensen then told the other Selectmen that Ben Downing, in his recent on-line open forum, said that MEMA (the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency) has now put aside \$11 million to help cover the 25% of expenses that FEMA does not cover. This is a very recent development, as MEMA has been ominously quiet on the issue up until now.

After a brief intermission to allow for stretching of legs and partaking in the chocolate chip cookies provided by Mr. Barrett, the discussion turned to how to present town budgets at the annual meeting. Several of the towns hold a pre-budget meeting one to three weeks before the annual meeting in order to inform people before they actually have to vote. This gives voters time to think about what they want and tends to cut down on the length of the annual meeting. All agreed that educating townspeople as much in advance of the annual meeting as possible is vital. Another suggestion offered for keeping annual meetings to a reasonable length is to combine individual items into just a few actual warrant articles to be voted upon.


By the end of the evening everyone agreed that this was a very positive experience. Instead of waiting the anticipated six months before another such meeting is held, the Town of Tolland offered to host the next meeting on January 11, 2012. At that time it is expected that the Selectmen will act on a draft of a letter to state representatives from the entire group letting Boston know exactly what the needs of Western Massachusetts are. All agreed that this group needs to band together and "push up" to put pressure on our state representatives. The next meeting will also include the highway superintendents from each town, who, it was determined, should have their own regional meetings and then report back to the Selectmen. Mr. Barrett agreed to act as the "clearing house" for information gathered and distributed to all other Selectmen before the next meeting. 



Photo: John Stanmeyer

## IT'S ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

By Anastasia Stanmeyer

When Mary Turo was a child she brought home discarded dittos from elementary school and played teacher to her younger sister. By junior and senior high, Mary was spending her after-school hours back at the elementary school, helping grade papers and reading to younger children. That role hasn't wavered through the years. In fact, it must have been in her blood; both her grandmothers were grade-school teachers.

Now in her third year as principal of Farmington River Elementary School, Mary considers herself an advocate and supporter of her students and her teachers. "The hardest part from teaching to being an administrator is not being loved all the time," said Mary during a recent interview in her office. "When I am unsure what to do in a situation at school, I often think what I would have liked for my own children when they were at school, and then I do it. I know that I can't please everyone so I try to do what's best for the majority of the kids."

Mary is a relative newcomer to the Berkshires. She was born in Ohio, and when she was in 1st grade, her father was transferred to a paper mill in Pulaski, New York, an area known for its salmon fishing. She lived there for 30 years and met her future husband when she was in high school. They both went to Potsdam, N.Y., to attend college. Her husband went into engineering at Clarkson University, and she majored in history and elementary education at SUNY Potsdam, then on to her masters in reading from SUNY Oswego.

Mary taught for 16 years in 1st, 3rd and 4th grades in Pulaski. When her husband transferred to Cambridge, she dusted off her reading degree and became a reading specialist at Billerica School District for grades K-6. That was in 2000, when MCAS (the state's standardized testing) and the No Child Left Behind program were implemented.

"I had 4th and 5th graders reading at 1st-grade level," she said. "We didn't have the resources at that school district. A child had me for only a half hour twice a week, with my caseload of 150 children. I was working in an impossible situation and frustrated with the administration. It spurred me one day to realize that if nobody is there to make a difference, then I will."

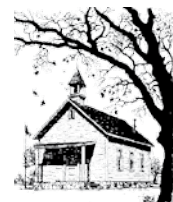
During her seven years as a reading specialist, where the sessions with students were in what used to be a closet, Mary eventually received a principal's license from Merrimack Leadership Academy. She took a job as assistant principal for a few years in the affluent town of Lexington, then went to work as Title One director in Shrewsbury for almost a year before moving to the Berkshires.

Both of Mary's children will be graduating college in May. Her son Alex, 21, is studying biological anthropology from SUNY Binghamton in New York, and her 24-year-old daughter, Kaitlyn, is finishing a degree in patent law from the University of New Hampshire. Mary's husband, Steve, still spends part of the week in Cambridge, where he works for Draper Labs. The company designs the

*Cont'd on p. 11*

## FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BULLETIN

By Tara Beardsley



The holidays are upon us, and boy are we busy! There are several opportunities for everyone in our community to visit our school this month.

Please plan to stop by on December 10th for a fun-filled day! The PTO, along with a grant from the Otis Cultural Council, will be sponsoring a "Space Rocket Camp" at the school from 9:00 AM-2:00 PM. FRRES children will be building rockets at the camp. The session will close with a big "blast-off" of their creations. The community is invited to watch this spectacular event.

Our annual Book Fair will be open to the public throughout the entire event. What a great time to get some holiday shopping done!

With the always gracious help of the Farmington River lunch staff, the PTO will also be offering lunch to the entire community for a nominal fee. Come join us for some of Lisa and her staff's delicious home-cooking!


Come meet our new music director, Mrs. Chirichella, as she leads our students' Winter Concert on Wednesday, December 21st. Each class will be performing, as well as special performances by the school band and chorus. A dress rehearsal is scheduled for 1:00 PM, and the main show will be at 6:30 PM. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend either show.

The teachers at FRRES are looking for volunteers to come into their classes and help students with math, reading and computer exercises. Mrs. Chirichella, the music teacher, is also looking for volunteers to help with some performances. Why not donate some of your spare time to help out our community's children!

Please contact Sherry DeCelle at [frspto@yahoo.com](mailto:frspto@yahoo.com) to see which time slots are available for volunteers. You may also contact Kim Chirichella at [kchirichella@ffrsd.org](mailto:kchirichella@ffrsd.org) with regards to the music program requests.

Please take notice:

- |            |                                                        |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Dec. 5     | Report cards sent home                                 |
| Dec. 5-10  | Book Fair- Open to public<br>12/10 from 9:00-2:00      |
| Dec. 7     | Parent Teacher Conferences<br>School dismissal: 11:45  |
| Dec. 8     | Adventures in Space Assembly                           |
| Dec. 10    | Space Rocket Camp 9:00-1:00<br>PTO Luncheon 11:30-1:30 |
| Dec. 15-16 | Holiday Shop                                           |
| Dec. 21    | Holiday Concert -<br>Performances at 1:00 & 6:30       |

Please call the school directly at 413-269-4466 or visit its *new* website: [www.ffrsd.org](http://www.ffrsd.org) for more school information. 





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## Town News CONTINUED

Cont'd from p. 6

Richard explained that the reason for sending out the installation of the plow and frame for the new truck is to protect the warranty as well as the fact that the highway crew is extremely busy repairing roads.

The Selectmen thank John Fields for donating his time and truck plowing during the recent snow storm.

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



## Finance Committee Minutes Summary

Meeting of October 12, 2011

In attendance: Kathy Jacobs, Chair; John Burrows, Rhee Kasky, Lisa Leavenworth, Ron Myers

Rhee asked that we email her a copy of the Finance Committee Minutes to be summarized in the Sandisfield Times. John, as secretary, will attend to that.

Received a letter from Clare English, Town Treasurer, requesting a transfer of \$2,000 from the Reserve Fund to the Veterans Benefit Fund. The fund was originally budgeted for five people and now a sixth person has had to be added. Transfer approved.

Kathy passed around copies of the Farmington River Regional School District audited financial statement so that the committee will have a better idea of how the school funds are spent.

Discussed financial implications of Tropical Storm Irene. Steve Harasyko and FEMA reps visited each road that was damaged and they have agreed upon a figure of \$750,000 to repair the storm damage. Each location was plotted by GPS. FEMA will likely pay 75% and the town will need to pay the remaining 25%, or \$187,500. The Treasurer is looking into the possibility of a loan to finance the FEMA share since FEMA doesn't reimburse until receipts are presented and we'll need the upfront funds to pay contractors.

An All Boards meeting is scheduled for November 14<sup>th</sup>. The Finance Committee will come up with a list of questions for department heads (i.e. are expenses in line with projected budgets). We will review the questions at the next Finance Committee meeting.

Other business: Discussion on the types of Finance Committees in other towns. Ours is basically an advisory committee while some others have voting rights. We will research the Finance Handbook for the benefits of each type of committee.



## Planning Board Meeting


Meeting of September 12, 2011

In attendance: Garry Bottum, Sr., Gene Riiska, Kathleen Segrin.

**Old business.** Discussed Lot/Parcel #412-0-16.03, West Street for special permit/variance (John W. Field Tree Service). Update from Town Clerk/Select Board re above. As of 9/12/2011 Town Council working on uniform/written protocol. Planning Board will receive information when Town Clerk gets it from Town Council.

**New business.** Discussed 8/22/11 Select Board meeting. Building maintenance on the agenda. Douglas Segrin inquired concerning the insufficient/lack of outside lighting at Town Hall. Select Board approved funds for lighting to come out of Operations and Maintenance as it is a town building. Town Clerk to make arrangements with an electrician.

Discussed telephone proposal for a variance; front porch extension on Lot/Parcel 417-0-9, Bijur residence at 130 Sears Road. Will put on November 12, 2011 agenda if requested.

Discussed revisiting Right to Farm bylaw. Will continue to discuss at upcoming meetings. 


## David v. Goliath

Cont'd from p. 1

cost to the town. Lane is said to be considering the suggestion.

Whatever occurs, the short-term losers in this battle will be the residents of South Sandisfield, who will have to endure yet another bout of disruption and noise as their local highway is torn up once again.

The area residents are a small but vocal group of villagers who have long regarded themselves as living in an enclave inconveniently removed from the decision-making processes of Montville, New Boston and Sandisfield Center.

The persistently poor state of Route 183 – which, over the three miles from the New Marlborough boundary to the state line, has deteriorated into little more than a half-asphalted cart-track – was for years a source of deep irritation to South Sandisfielders. That the recent road work appears to have been performed less than perfectly, leading to the distinct possibility that locals will have to endure further inconvenience, is an irony that will have escaped few. They can only hope that the argument with Lane Construction is settled expeditiously, and that the road will be remade - and remade to last - in very short order. 



## TALES FROM THE DUMP

Forrest Hull

### End of Year Clean-Up

Another year has come and gone, and as we all travel near and far to celebrate this holiday season with our families and loved ones, there are a few things you will need to do to get through unscathed. First, you will need to get your 2012 dump permit. You will also need to know what is recyclable and what is not, and what to do with your dead batteries, CFLs and old electronics.



As of Sunday, January 1st, 2012, your 2011 permit will be null and void. The Selectmen have again agreed to maintain the current price of \$20.00 a household. There are a few easy ways to obtain your 2012 sticker; by mail with a self-addressed, stamped envelope or at the Town Hall Annex on Mondays and Wednesdays during normal business hours.

All old batteries, CFLs and electronics will have to be stored at home in a dry place until the spring when the e-waste recycling at the Town Hall Annex resumes. The transfer station is not equipped to accept electronics and my volunteer effort to transport batteries and CFLs is over until the spring. Old batteries and CFLs should be stored in a container separately. CFLs should either be sealed in a plastic bag or wrapped in several layers of newspaper and stored in a location where they will not break and release mercury into your home and our atmosphere.

As we rip, crumple and toss this holiday season, it is important to know what we can do and possibly

make some changes in our choice of wrapping paper this year. Back in 2006 it was estimated that Americans tossed four million tons of wrapping paper and plastic bags during the holiday season. The worst part was almost all of it was recyclable. Wrapping paper is recyclable but at the same time it is *not*. Wrapping paper with foil and/or metallics is not recyclable and *must* go into the trash. Transparent number two plastic bags HDPE are recyclable but most end in the trash, headed for the landfill.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a happy, healthy holiday and New Year with friends and family in Sandisfield or across the nation. Be safe and enjoy! 🍷

### Sandisfield Historical Society Holds Annual Year-End Reception

A great time was had on November 6 by members and friends of the Society at the annual "Wine & Cheese" member-appreciation reception at the South Sandisfield headquarters. As usual, a wonderful spread of favorite dishes and treats was available.

Patrick Barrett and Barry Freedman share a light moment. Society President Norton Fletcher and Marcia Ignace looking on.



Photo: Ron Bernard

## SANDISFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

The annual Christmas Fair will be held on Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 at Fire House #2 from 10 AM to 2 PM. Of course Santa will be there along with many items for sale, including homemade baked goods, jewelry, handmade llama and alpaca items and various other gift items. Christmas wreaths and trees will also be on sale.

The cookbook sponsored by the Sandisfield Historical Society has been sent off to the printer. The publisher has assured us that the book will be available at the celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in March

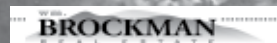
The advanced sale price of the cookbook is \$13.00. It should be ready for distribution in March 2012. We will be taking orders for the book at the Christmas Fair. Be sure to reserve your copy to ensure that you will get one of these keepsakes.

If you are unable to get to the Christmas Fair, you can order a cookbook by mailing a check for \$13.00 made out to the Sandisfield Historical Society to Sandisfield Historical Society, P. O. Box 513, Sandisfield, MA 01255. If you would like the book mailed to you please add another \$3.50 for shipping costs. When ordering a book, please include your name, address, and phone number. Also include your email address if you have one. Books will be distributed at all Anniversary and Historical Society events in 2012. 🍷

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

Image: Tina Sotis ©2011



## It's All in a Day's Work

*Cont'd from p. 8*

guidance system for the submarine-based Trident Nuclear Missile. The other part of the week he's in Pittsfield with General Dynamics which builds the missile. Their home is only a few minutes from the Pittsfield office.

"I like it here," she said. "I like that the school is small. I like it that I know every child's name and I like the teachers." She feels protective of the 20 or so teachers, and she has once again dusted off her reading specialist skills and is working one-on-one with a 1st grader. Mary wants to be perceived as fair by the children. She has worked with 18 principals in her career, and they have ranged from fun to autocratic. "I have a list of dos and don'ts," she noted. "Our main purpose is to teach our students what they need so that they are ready for middle school."

The biggest challenge as principal is that the state and federal government standards are increasing so much. The government wants children to learn reading and math at such a high level, it takes a lot

of energy out of a teacher. What gets lost is the uniqueness of what goes on in each class, and there's not much time anymore to do anything different. The focus is more on testable knowledge. In larger school districts, there is a curriculum person, a full-time superintendent and a committee. At Farmington River, the superintendent is a part-time position, and there is only Mary to oversee the curriculum.

Mary has been reaching out to other elementary school principals to glean from their experiences, and she is also part of the school leaders network in the Berkshires. She has realized that sometimes, people forget that there is a school in Otis. She is making sure that Farmington River Elementary is not forgotten.

*This is a monthly Spotlight on a Farmington River Elementary employee that also appears in the school's PTO newsletter, which can be accessed on the school's website, [www.frrsd.org](http://www.frrsd.org).*

*This poem was first written and performed in 2009 one year after The Great Ice Storm.*

## The Plight Before Christmas

*by Jean Atwater-Williams*

'Twas two weeks before Christmas, and all through the town,  
it rained, and it froze, and the trees all fell down.

Wires that were strung on utility poles snapped just like twigs, and the houses all froze.

We tried to get nestled all snug in our beds while visions of warmer days danced in our head,  
Wearing layers and layers and even a cap we huddled together, but it was too cold to nap.

We saw our white breath in the darkness above,  
So deep under our blankets we hurriedly dove..  
Our feet, they were frozen and so were our heads —  
made me think to myself that we might be found dead.

The days passed so slowly, first bored, then insane  
we waited and wondered and called out by name  
On Thursday, on Friday, on Saturday (s\*\*t!)  
on Sunday, on Monday, on Tuesday (we quit!)  
Our eyes now were sunken, our expressions ~ not merry,

our cheeks had a pallor, our noses like cherries.  
We were cold, we were tired. Our freezer went damp,  
and we were sick of the fumes from the kerosene lamp.

But on day number eight we heard the faint roar  
of a convoy of trucks and we ran to the door.  
To the top of the poles, to the stretch of the cable — “  
Please bring us your power as fast as you’ re able!”

They spoke not a word, but went straight to their work,  
and the power came on with a hum and a jerk. They heard us exclaim, as they drove out of sight —

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL! WE HAVE HEAT! WE HAVE LIGHT!

## FRRES WISH LIST

The Music Department is looking for the following donations:

Brown clothing  
(preferably about grade 1 size)  
Hard headbands  
Leggings/tights - any color  
Red/green t-shirts and turtlenecks - any size  
Black bottoms and white tops - all sizes  
Any Disney costumes - complete or pieces - pirate gear, dresses, jewels, etc.

\*\*\* There will be a box outside of the music room for you to place your donated items in. If you have items available, but are unable to drop them off yourself, please contact PTO President, Sherry DeCelle at [frrspto@yahoo.com](mailto:frrspto@yahoo.com)



"Clarity" Oil on Canvas ©2011 Tina Sotis

## TINA SOTIS

New Paintings

*"A Year of Grace"*

Sandisfield Arts Center

ARTIST RECEPTION

Saturday, November 5, 3-5PM



Exhibiting Nov. 5 - Dec 10




# 250th Celebration 6 Months and Counting

By Laura Rogers-Castro

The Sandisfield 250th Birthday Celebration Committee is proceeding quickly ahead with preparations for the 2012 celebration. The Committee is co-chaired by Kathy Jacobs and Linda Riiska; Barbara Cormier, Ron Bernard, Liana Toscanini, Bethany Perry, and Laura Rogers-Castro are appointees. Other folks, including Josephine and Barry Freedman, frequently attend meetings. Josephine provides monthly updates on the Sandisfield Historical Society's cookbook, **Sandisfield Eats**. This book and the **Sandisfield Then and Now** history book are on schedule to be published in 2012 with pre-orders graciously accepted. Also on board for the 2012 celebration is Robbin Campetti of the Recreation Committee, who will coordinate activities for children. Laura Rogers-Castro, her husband Mario, and their son, Mario, will organize a chocolate cream pie contest for the kids. Maxene Kupperman is busy working on a project, "The Sandisfield Wall," which will include a little bit about everyone who lives in town and is willing to provide a statement or two that defines them for the wall. And, no celebration could ever occur without the support of the Sandisfield Selectmen, fire, police, ambulance and highway crews.

The next step in our preparations is to gather a list of food and craft vendors. Do you have

something handmade to sell during the July 27, 28, and 29, 2012 weekend? If you do, contact Barbara Cormier at 258-4402. Linda Riiska and Barbara are both coordinating food and craft vendors. The Committee would like to see each of Sandisfield's businesses represented at the celebration. Advanced planning will avoid duplication, as each food vendor can sell their own specialty items. Non-profit groups may also wish to have a table to communicate their goals to residents or to offer fundraiser items.

Our next meeting is December 14 at 7:00 p.m., at the Library. The Committee will be continuing plans to develop our commemorative pamphlet and "Celebrate Sandisfield 250th Birthday" memorabilia. Be sure to visit the Committee table at the Christmas Fair on December 3rd at the Firehouse. Comments, suggestions, and assistance are also welcome. For more information, contact Laura at 258-4688. 



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# STOP PRESS: Will We Have A Solar Farm in Sandisfield?

By Staff Reporter

At press time we learned that a Connecticut consulting company, CTC Electric based in Darien is investigating the possibility of building a number of solar arrays on vacant farm land in and around Sandisfield. A number of property owners have been contacted by the realtor Mary Turek who has identified suitable properties in which CTC has expressed an interest. The company was due to make a formal presentation to the Select Board on November 28th; we will have a full report on this fascinating development in our next issue.

## 2011

An unexpected Fall this year  
With its pastel leaves  
And sudden snow.

Intimations of a broken world  
That used to ride on rhythms  
That we know.

Val Coleman

**I would like to purchase a copy of Sandisfield Then & Now: 1762-2012 and save \$5 off the regular price of \$40.**

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ copy/copies @ \$35 each for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ I'll pick up my book(s) in Sandisfield

\_\_\_\_\_ Mail my book to me upon publication in June 2012 (Add \$4 per book for shipping). Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Make check payable to Town of Sandisfield History Book).

Mail my book to the address below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email: Mail this form and your check to: Sandisfield Then & Now, PO Box 770, Otis, MA 01253. This offer is good through March 1, 2012! Call Liana Toscanini (413) 441-9542 for info. Thank you for your support!



# Letter From The Selectmen

By Patrick Barrett

The Sandisfield Board of Selectmen would like to thank Sandisfield Treasurer Clare English and Assistant Treasurer Teresa DellaGiustina for their work in helping to secure a \$200,000, one year loan at an interest rate of 0.95%. The loan will allow the town to release the necessary funds for fixing the road damage caused by Tropical Storm Irene by helping to bridge the fiscal gap until revenue from the November tax bills is received.

The Sandisfield Highway Department recently put into service the newly acquired F350 truck that was purchased through funding from the Assessors Tax Overlay Account. This vehicle will provide much needed assistance in plowing the driveways of town buildings, as well as creating safer passage on the numerous dirt roads in town. Sandisfield Highway Superintendent Steve Harasyko put the winter sand purchase out for bid. Donovan & Sons, based out of Stockbridge, was awarded the contract with a price of \$14.20 per ton delivered. This beat the State bid by \$1.30 per ton and thus will be a significant savings for the town this winter. Extensive work has recently been done to fix Beech Plain Road by replacing a washed out culvert, improve ditches, and grade the road for winter. Work is also under way to improve the conditions on Rood Hill Road. By adding a new culvert, working on runoffs, and bringing new gravel for the road we hope to avoid the costly washouts that have frequently caused problems for residents in this section of town.


We would like to thank all of our local contractors who helped plow roads during the heavy October snowfall. We particularly want to recognize John Field for donating \$4,000 worth of plowing service to the town during this difficult storm. Once again, this is a perfect example of our local contractors stepping in to help Sandisfield during a time of need. The Federal Emergency Management Association will provide 75% reimbursement for costs associated with this storm, which will amount to a \$12,000 savings for the town. We thank Sandisfield Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko for submitting the necessary paperwork in order for us to receive this refund. The time involved preparing the supporting FEMA documentation is rather daunting and we truly appreciate the work she has done on these tasks this year.

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, the Sandisfield Board of Selectmen hosted a regional meeting with representatives from the towns of Monterey, New Marlborough, Otis, Tolland and Tyringham. This was a chance for town officials to discuss issues facing our respective communities and to troubleshoot possible solutions. Some of the items that were brought up included potential sharing/purchasing needed town equipment, troublesome beavers, difficult budgetary issues, and how to handle being up against the Proposition 2½ levy limit. All participating members found this forum to be extremely informative and beneficial.

Tolland will be hosting the next regional forum on Wednesday, January 11, at 7:00 p.m. at their new emergency town facility on Route 57. This is an open meeting and we encourage anyone interested to please attend.

Due to the continued sluggish economy, the Sandisfield Board of Selectmen has decided to keep the dump sticker and business license fees at last year's rates. We are anticipating increasing building fees this year as our current rates are drastically lower than surrounding communities. At our current rates the costs for paying people such as our building, wiring and plumbing inspectors are not being covered. We need to have fees that can sustain the costs of employing our town inspectors without putting undue additional burdens on the taxpayers.

We want to thank all of the residents in Sandisfield who opened their homes on Halloween to our trick or treaters. The generosity always displayed by the people in our community on this day is truly amazing. As a parent it is comforting to know that we have a safe place for our kids to participate in this yearly tradition.

On November 6<sup>th</sup>, the Sandisfield Historical Society hosted their annual wine and cheese open house at their meeting house on Route 183. This is a wonderful event to see friends in a relaxed atmosphere before the winter season sets in. My twenty-one month old daughter, Cora was utterly captivated by Historical Society President Norton Fletcher. Thanks once again for providing this special event to the Sandisfield community. 


## THE SANDISFIELD LIBRARY NEWS

Tara Beardsley, Library Trustee

Books new to the Library:

*Prince of Ravenscar* by Catherine Coulter  
*11/22/62* by Stephen King  
*Trading Christmas* by Debbie Macomber  
*Zero Day* by David Baldacci  
*The Litigators* by John Grisham

The Library is offering free genealogy assistance classes. The next class will be held on November 30<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. The class is almost full, so if you are interested in joining us, please call 258-4966 to register. If there is a strong interest in the subject, the Sandisfield Library will purchase a subscription to [ANCESTRY.COM](http://ANCESTRY.COM)

Laurie Foulke-Green,  
 Librarian 

**Christopher J. Tryon**  
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# Comings and Goings



**David M. Mason**  
1935-2011

David was born August 21, 1935 in Jamaica, N.Y. and passed away peacefully at home on October 23, 2011. He attended local schools in the Jamaica area before enlisting in the USMC in 1952. He served during the Korean War and was honorably discharged in 1955 with the rank of Corporal.

He moved with his family shortly thereafter to Valley Stream, L.I. Almost immediately he joined the Valley Stream F.D., Eng. Co. #3. The fire department was a huge part of his life for 22 years before moving to Lake Grove, L.I.

In 1963 he married his wife Joan (Meier), with whom he is pictured above, and in 1967 they built the house on New Hartford Rd. where he still resided at the time of his death. Joan says she has been coming to Sandisfield "since before she was born." Her grandfather, Louis August Meier, had a home on New Hartford Road where the family gathered. The Masons built next door. Dave spent many happy weekends and vacations there before moving there permanently in 2003. Within the family, he was known for his "Midnite BBQ's" whenever there was a family gathering.

He leaves his wife Joan of 48 years, a daughter Deborah Levin and her husband Aaron and 2 grandchildren, Renee and Avery Levin of Huntington Beach, Ca. Dave was a member of the Sandisfield American Legion, Post 456, the Sandisfield Historical Society and the Sandisfield COA.



**Toby (Albert) Rothkopf**  
1911-2011

Toby passed away on October 31, 2011 at 100 years of age in New Britain, Connecticut. She was the wife of the late Paul Rothkopf. She is survived by her son, Orson Rothkopf and his wife, Dianne, her grandchildren, David and his wife, Francine, Laura Rothkopf and Travis Woodward, her great-grand children, Samuel, Micah and Sofia Rothkopf and Lilien Woodward, She was predeceased by her grandson, Lawrence Rothkopf.

Toby was the granddaughter of the late Israel Albert of New Boston. Israel came to Sandisfield in the first wave of Jewish families coming back to the land in the early 1900s and owned King Pine Farm.

Toby was the niece of Louis and Fannie Albert of New Boston, and cousin of Julia, Edna, Ceil, and Henchie (with whom Toby is pictured above). As a young child Toby came with her parents, Frank and Bertha Albert, and brothers and sister from New York City to spend the summers in New Boston with her grandfather. Her son Orson recalls his mother describing the long journey her family traveled from New York City to Winsted when she was a child in the early 1900's. They went by train and bus and then waited for her grandfather to pick them up with his horse and wagon.

Toby Rothkopf and her family have always loved New Boston. Her family stayed here most summers as New Boston was a haven away from the heat of the city and Toby always described her wonderful memories. For many years she and Orson continued going to Toby's grandfather's home, so the family still has the area in its blood.







## Sandisfield Police Blotter

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

September 3	ATV Accident in Tolland
September 12	Alarm, Sandisfield Road
September 13	Alarm, Sandisfield Road
September 14	Alarm, Sandisfield Road
September 17	Suspicious vehicle, West Street
September 17	Summons service (3)
September 18	Motor vehicle accident, Rte 8
September 18	Well-being check, Sandisfield Road
September 19	Well-being check, Sandisfield Road
September 20	Erratic motor vehicle operation, Rte 8
September 23	Tree and wires down, Rte 8
September 27	Lost person, Sandisfield/Otis Cold Spring area
September 28	Unattended death/suicide, West Street
September 28	Motor vehicle accident, Rte 8
September 30	Motor vehicle accident, Sandisfield Road
October 1	Disabled motor vehicle, Rte 8
October 4	Alarm, Town Hill Road
October 7	Disabled motor vehicle, Rte 8
October 10	Citizen complaint, Sandisfield Road
October 11	Alarm, Fox Road
October 17	Work zone complaint, Sandisfield Road
October 17	Hang up, New Hartford Road
October 18	Possible domestic dispute, Cold Spring Road
October 18	Alarm, Fox Road
October 18	Road obstruction, Rte 8
October 19	Alarm, South Beech Plain Road
October 20	Citizen complaint, Cold Spring Road
October 29	Breaking and entering, Lower West Street
October 29	Motor vehicle accident, Sandisfield Road
October 29	Motor vehicle accident, Rte 8
October 29	Motor vehicle accident, Rte 8
October 29	Motor vehicle accident, Town Hill Road
October 29	Disabled motor vehicle, Sandisfield Road
October 31	Road obstruction, Sandy Brook Turnpike

*Courtesy of Mike Morrison, Chief of Police*

## NOW HEAR THIS!

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

### DECEMBER EVENTS

**Saturday, December 3, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM, Sandisfield Historical Society Christmas Fair, Fire House #2.** Gifts, Santa, Lots of fun for all.

**Monday, December 5, 7:00 PM Special School Committee meeting,** Town Hall Annex lower level. An opportunity for Sandisfield folk to attend a school Board meeting in our town.

**Wednesday, December 7, 7:00 PM, History Book meeting, Sandisfield Library.** For information call Ron Bernard 269-0012.


**Saturday, December 10, 5:00 PM, the ANNUAL EXTRAVAGANZA, Sandisfield Arts Center.** Super entertainment and luscious food for all celebrating this wonderful time of the year, \$5.

**Wednesday, December 14, 7:00 PM, Sandisfield 250th Birthday Celebration Committee Meeting,** Sandisfield Library.

**Wednesday, December 14, Women's Book Group, 6:00 PM, home of Rosanne Skrip, 123 North Main Road.** Pot luck supper and discussion of *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett.

**Wednesday, December 21, 11:00 AM, COA/Lee Visiting Nurse Association Blood Pressure Clinic, Senior Center Town Hall Annex.**

### ELECTION WORKERS WANTED:

Send a letter of interest to PO Box 90, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or email the Board of Registrars at [sandisfieldtownclerk@verizon.net](mailto:sandisfieldtownclerk@verizon.net). Requirements are that you are a resident of Sandisfield and a registered voter, and that you attend a workshop. 

### ONGOING EVENTS

*Town Meetings (Info call 258-4711)*

**Selectmen, every Monday at 7:00 PM,** Town Hall Annex.

**The Children's Health Program Play Group, every Monday when school in session, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM,** Farmington River Elementary School music room. Led by Laura Mesina. For more information call 413-644-0104 X 1159.

**Farmington River Regional School District, first Monday of the month, 7:00 PM,** Farmington River Regional School, Rte 8, JoAnn Austin, Superintendent. Public Welcome.

**Planning Board, second Monday of the month, 6:00 PM,** Old Town Hall.

**Senior Lunch Program, every Tuesday when school in session, 12:15 PM,** Farmington River Elementary School. For more information or reservations call Lynette 413-269-4466. Cost \$2.

**Board of Assessors, second Tuesday of the month, 5:00 PM,** Town Hall Annex.

**Conservation Commission, third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM,** Town Hall Annex.

**Otis/Sandisfield Kiwanis, every Wednesday, 6:30 PM,** Otis Town Hall. For more information call Andy Pyenson, President at 413-269-6060.

**Board of Health, first Wednesday of the month, 6:00 PM,** Old Town Hall.

**Boy Scouts, every Wednesday, 6:30 PM,** Otis Town Hall, Elizabeth Kuzmech, Scoutmaster 258-4906 [kuzmech5@verizon.net](mailto:kuzmech5@verizon.net).

**Council on Aging, every Wednesday, 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM,** Senior Center - Town Hall Annex. Pot Luck Lunch at noon, Bingo at 1:00 PM. Free blood pressure screening every fourth Wednesday.

**Finance Committee, second Wednesday of the month, 7:00 PM,** Sandisfield Library. Public welcome.

**PTO, second Thursday of the month, 3:15 PM,** Farmington River Regional School. Child Care provided.

**Sandisfield Public Library Hours:** Monday and Tuesday 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM, Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 PM, Thursday, 2:30-5:30 PM, Sat: 9:00 AM - 12 noon 258-4966.

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

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

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

We welcome submissions, comments and suggestions, including letters to the editor **BY THE 15<sup>TH</sup> OF THE MONTH PRIOR**. We may edit for space, style or clarity. We will try to publish Public Service Announcements when we have room, with priority given to Sandisfield organizations. No portion of the *The Sandisfield Times* may be reproduced without permission.

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