

Three Cheers for Sandisfield! Party begins March 6th!

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



Plebis

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

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Counting our Pennies Where Does The Money Go?

By Rhee Kasky

In just over two months we'll be heading to the Old Town Hall for the Annual Town Meeting, the time when we vote on our 2012-13 town budget. You may recall that in the December issue of the Sandisfield Times we reported on the state of the town's expense budget for the period July 1, 2011-October 11, 2011. With the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012 we offer the following update of expenses made against the current budget. Please pay attention to this report as it is intended to help you understand how our funds are spent. With this information as background you can come to the Annual Town Meeting in May well-informed. Be prepared, as well, to vote on a Proposition 2½ override as it is very likely taxes will be increased in order to have a balanced budget in the new fiscal year.

The following are some of the important figures to watch.

The budget you voted for last May was: \$2,756,204

The amount we've spent between July 1, 2011 and February 8, 2012 is \$2,401,053.

Those expenses are broken down as follows:

- General government: \$112,587* (out of a department budget of \$233,774.)
- Highways: \$606,499** (out of a department budget of \$547,507)
- Education: \$1,087,130 (out of a department budget of \$1,356,919)
- Veterans: \$21,864 (out of a department budget of \$39,615)
- Cemeteries: \$10,673 (out of a department budget of \$19,752)
- Protection (police, fire, etc) \$91,335 (out of a budget of \$171,204)
- Health and Sanitation: \$35,826 (out of a budget of \$77,629) *Cont'd on P.13*

SANDISFIELD PLUMBER ON CAT-SHOOTING CHARGE

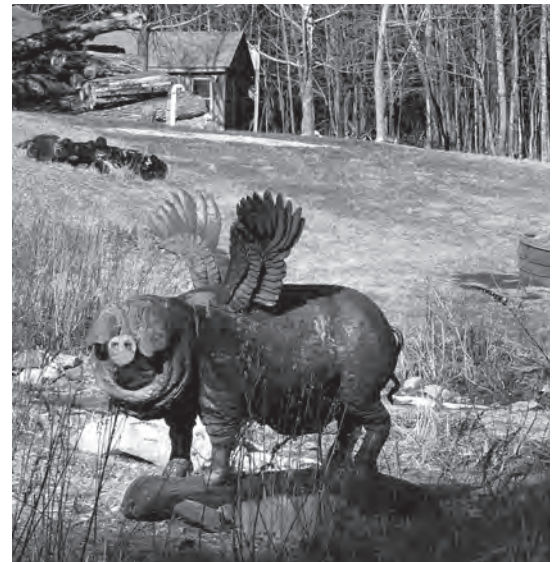
By Sandisfield Times Reporter

A Sandisfield man will appear in court this month on charges of shooting a cat named Jellybean in a neighbor dispute on a Sunday early last summer. Gene Anderson, a plumber of West Hubbard Road, has been charged with animal cruelty, and if found guilty - his first court appearance in

the South Berkshire District Court in Great Barrington is slated for March 1st - faces up to five years in prison.

According to court papers, Anderson has been involved for some time in a series of disputes with his new next-door neighbor, Richard Lassar, who has run a landscaping business from his home for the last two years. One such argument flared within a month of Lassar's arrival in the neighborhood over Anderson's suggestion that the Lassar family dog was killing his chickens - he allegedly then vowed to "shoot that ****ing dog."

Much the same sentiment was then supposedly expressed when the *Cont'd on P.10*



When Pigs Fly Farm: FEED YOUR NEIGHBORS FIRST

Article and Photos by Tina Sotis

Pretend it's summer. You're driving on the long straightaway that is the portion of Route 57 as it emerges from New Marlborough into Sandisfield. You're lulled by the beautiful day, the clouds, the green and the quiet, lost in pleasant reverie. Suddenly your foot reaches for the brake at the very moment your eyes spot, just on your left, something completely unexpected: a winged pig carved from wood standing alone in a field lush with growing flowers, herbs and vegetables, morning glories at her feet. This is no Wilbur, the pink pig of Disney fame. It is a life-size replica of a rare-heritage breed of which there are only 2500 in the world. Her name is Daisy and she belongs to Sandra and Andy Snyder, the owners of When Pigs Fly Farm. For that is where you are at a working farm borne of passion, dedication and hard work. And it is from this very farm that, for the first time, a lucky few will be able to get *Cont'd on P.2*

Feed Your Neighbors First

Cont'd from P.1

a weekly share of freshly picked produce. Andy and Sandra, who have made their living selling their goods at the Otis Farmers Market, have, to our good fortune, made the leap to a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).

Since the mid 1990's the Snyders have worked their 16-acre parcel of a 160-year-old farm, its original 250 acres now divided among the neighboring families. Their work schedule is grueling. They toil from sunrise to sunset every day for almost the entire year. Over the years they have cleared their property of the encroaching trees and the "self-reproducing" rocks while battling black flies and dealing with an extremely shallow well. And then there is the tremendous challenge of a short growing season. To get around this, the Snyders prepare the seeds by sprouting them in February. Planting begins as soon as they can work the soil, starting with the hardier of the vegetables they will have to offer, items such as lettuce, kale and spinach. Mid-May heralds the season in earnest when the rest of the planting, weeding and harvesting begin. Seven solid months of this constant work follow until January comes and the Snyders can relax for a few weeks before it all begins again.

When they took over the property they had only a 20' x 20' cleared area in which to work. Their

farm stand was a simple pallet with an umbrella and a single bowl of squash - a far cry from the pretty white shed and greenhouse that now contains their vegetables, berries, freshly-picked flowers, herbs, eggs, baked goods and soups (made in a local commercially certified kitchen). Frozen muscovy duck (obtainable only in spring) and chickens are also available. Working with other local farmers, they offer Monterey's Rawson Brook goat cheese, Sheffield's Equinox Farm's arugula and in the fall, Riiska's apples. At Thanksgiving fresh turkeys are offered. Afterwards the stand becomes a holiday shop boasting Sandra's handmade wreaths and swags and handmade items from other local merchants - photographs, jewelry and alpaca wool goods. They also sell Christmas trees from the "Itty Bitty Tree Farm" in Windsor.

Andy and Sandra have been selling most of their produce through the Otis Farmers Market but starting this year they will become part of that growing effort of CSAs. A CSA is an arrangement whereby members of a community pay a certain amount of money upfront to a farmer before the growing season begins. The farmer in turn provides a weekly supply or "share" of freshly picked produce for a certain number of weeks during the year. Andy explains a CSA as "a way to create a community of people who love the concept of having a relationship with the farmer." It is also, he says, "a way for people to know where their food comes from." This arrangement "helps the farmer by providing cash flow in the beginning of the growing season when money is needed after the long winter." The beauty of this idea is that a true, self-sustaining partnership between community and farmer is created. Everybody wins.

This year, the first of this endeavor for them, When Pigs Fly Farm will accept a limited number of shares, between 12-15. Shares are broken into 4 categories: "Regular" (20 weeks, \$550, 2 hours total farmwork); "Summer" (14 weeks, \$425,



2 hours total farmwork); "Working" (20 weeks, \$325 in exchange for eight four-hour working sessions on the farm.) A weekly share of each of the above will feed 2 adults or a small family and consists of a varying selection of produce: berries, herbs, eggs and maybe honey or maple syrup, and freshly baked bread in addition to many other items. A "Meat Share" (2 hours work and \$120) is for organic meat lovers and includes three Rock Cornish Rock chickens, two Muscovy ducks and one Narragansett turkey (butchered and ready by mid to late October). And in case you don't know what to do with all this fabulous bounty, Andy and Sandra will be on hand to provide recipes and cooking tips.

The Snyders also encourage people to visit the farm. They have, in addition to Daisy the pig, Araucana chickens, Narragansett turkeys, peacocks and one beautiful (albeit camera-shy) yellow pheasant. They would love to have the opportunity to speak to you about how to handle surplus produce from your own garden and about their own experience as farmers. Andy and Sandra appreciate all their neighbors who have encouraged and supported them and helped them believe that they could actually bring the old farm back to life. It gives credence to their choice of its name: "When pigs fly, we know we will actually have a real farm." Not just any farm, but a treasure and a resource for our entire community.

Sign ups for shares has already begun. Contact When Pigs Fly Farm by email at whenspigsflyfarm1@verizon.net or stop by. There are several other CSAs in the Berkshires. For more information CSAs you can visit www.berkshiregrown.com.



SMITTY PROCLAIMS, "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SANDISFIELD!"

Whereas "Housatonic plantation No. 3" was incorporated on March 6, 1762 as the town of Sandisfield, named in honor of Lord Sandys, and will celebrate its 250th anniversary in 2012; and

Whereas the Daniel Brown family established the first settlement in 1751 and called it New Boston and was soon followed by Smiths, Demings, Hawleys, Kilborns, Bosworths and others who cleared the wilderness for farms and built mills along the Farmington, Clam, and Buck Rivers; and

Whereas Sandisfield became one of the most productive agricultural centers in western Massachusetts noted for dairy products, especially cheese and butter, leather goods from numerous tanneries, maple sugar from more than 25,000 maple trees and for lumber from its 52 square miles of forest, an industry which remains important today; and

Whereas 240 of its men, almost one-quarter of the population, were Patriots who served with distinction in the Revolutionary War, many dying in the service of their country, including 22 heroes of the Civil War, and the veterans of all the wars are honored by the town with a parade and ceremony every Memorial Day; and

Whereas the town is proud of its many native sons who achieved prominence in the 19th century, the town's golden age, especially George Hull, the first postmaster and operator of the famous Hull store for 62 years and who in the 1820s and 1830s served in the General Court and then as lieutenant governor for three terms under different administrations; the Rev. Edmund Hamilton Sears, the author of the celebrated carol, It Came Upon A Midnight Clear; Elizur Smith, who's company invented the process for making grades of paper especially newsprint from wood pulp; and the town's legacy of leading citizens especially town historian George Shepard and correspondent Henry Manley, who set examples of the highest standards of public service; and

Whereas today the town is proud of its heritage of more than 100 historic buildings having three of them listed on the National Register of Historic Places including the c.1750s New Boston Inn, and the c.1842 Montville Baptist church which was converted to a synagogue in 1921 and is the current home of the Sandisfield Arts Center, the

pride of the town. The Inn and its neighboring c.1760s New Boston general store are among the oldest such institutions in the country; and

Whereas the community cherishes its heritage of cultural diversity starting in its second century in the 1850s, first by Irish immigrants and then in the early 1900s by Finns and a large colony of displaced Jews from eastern Europe, groups who repopulated and particularly enriched the communities of South Sandisfield and Montville, respectively; and

Whereas the people of the town of Sandisfield have from colonial times contributed to the historical, educational and industrial growth of the Commonwealth; and

Whereas, said town of Sandisfield is now about to celebrate its 250th anniversary; therefore be it

Resolved that the members of the Massachusetts General Court hereby celebrate the 250th anniversary of the town of Sandisfield; and be it further resolved that a copy of these resolutions be forwarded by the Clerk of the House of Representatives to the town of Sandisfield.

Editor's Note: This proclamation will be formally read on the official date of Sandisfield's 250th anniversary, Tuesday, March 6, 2012, from 4:00 to 7:00 PM at the New Boston Inn. An anniversary cake will also be served. All are encouraged to attend.

WINTER, PLAINLY

I'm not in love with winter.
The snow follows me
From town to town,
Covering my opinions
With a freshly-laundered gown.

I long for March
When winter gives up
Thrashing me,
And sets my fancies up again
After winter put them down.

*Val Coleman
Sandisfield January 21, 2012*



ADVANCE ORDER FORM

I would like to make my advance purchase of

**Sandisfield Then and Now:
1762-2012**

- Please reserve _____ copy(ies) at \$40 each (plus \$4 per book for shipping)
- Mail my book to the name & address below (I've added \$4 per book for shipping)
- I'll save the shipping charge and pick up my book(s) in Sandisfield.

**Make check payable to
Town of Sandisfield History Book
and mail to:
Sandisfield Then and Now
PO Box 770
Otis, MA 01253**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

☞ Please note that the one-time production run of this book will be limited. To ensure that you get yours, place your order right away!

**Info: www.sandisfieldthenandnow.org
or 413-441-9542**

Selectmen's Letter

By Patrick Barrett

Ben Funk Inc. recently delivered the new four-wheel drive plow/dump truck to the Sandisfield Highway Department. This vehicle replaces a thirteen year old plow truck that died of old age last February. The new truck is equipped with a wing plow which will allow the Highway Department to push snow further off the roads, providing better driver visibility. The Highway Department has been using the mild weather to chip debris that has accumulated throughout the town from the various severe storms that struck our area this past year. We would like to thank all the residents who purchased snow removal equipment this year, in preparation for a big winter, thus ensuring a snow free winter!

The Sandisfield Planning Board has been working hard with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to iron out a Right to Farm by-law that will be brought to the voters at the Annual Town Meeting. The Planning Board will also be holding a public hearing on changes to the driveway permit regulations. The changes incorporated into the proposed driveway permit by-law widen the current dimensions in order to allow

emergency vehicles to more safely access residents' homes. Planning Board Chairman Gary Bottums and Planning Board member Kathleen Faricelli-Segrin have been attending the monthly training sessions offered by the Berkshire County Regional Planning Commission. These training sessions allow our board members to become familiar with new state regulations, network with other town planning board members and gain new expertise in this field as they work to update Sandisfield's by-laws. We thank

Gary and Kathleen for their dedication and appreciate all of the hard work put in by the entire Sandisfield Planning Board on the new/changed by-laws.

We would like to thank the Farmington River School Committee for their work on this year's school budget. We appreciate the willingness of the School Committee to hold one of the budget hearings in town, making it easier for our residents to attend. We would also like to thank

Lisa Leavenworth and Deborah Harris for the work they have put into grasping the nuances of the Zoning Board of Appeals and making suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of this organization. We would also like to thank Charles Pease for fixing the roof of the Sandisfield Highway Garage. He was able to patch places on the metal roof, doing his best given the deteriorating conditions of this structure. This building clearly needs to be updated with grant monies secured for a new facility in the not too distant future.

Nomination papers are available at the Town Hall Annex for anyone interested in running for public office this May. The last day to obtain nomination papers is March 19 and the last day to submit nomination papers is March 21. The Annual Town Caucus will be held at the Old Town Hall on April 3, at 7:00 p.m.

OFFICES UP FOR NOMINATION

Office	Term	Currently held by
Moderator	1 year	John Skrip
Selectmen	3 years	Patrick Barrett
Treasurer	2 years	Teresa DellaGiustina
Auditor	1 year	Ralph Morrison
Board of Assessors	3 years	Kathleen Burrows
School Committee	3 years	Susan Van Sickle
Board of Health	3 years	Kathleen Faricelli-Segrin
Planning Board	5 years	Vacancy
Library Trustee	5 years	Anita Wirth

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We earn the trust of our clients and customers;

We value and contribute to life in the Berkshires;


We give honest advice honed by our nearly 40 years of experience.

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

Image: Tina Sotis ©2011



ber of great products and services for the general raffle and it appeared that at least one member of every family went home with a prize.

In the past as many as 250 people have turned out for this event which takes months to plan. Vehicles line both sides of normally placid Cold Spring Road for over a quarter-mile in both directions. Chapter president and event organizer Khristinia Moretz said that the turnout was a bit lower this year, perhaps because some may have assumed that the relatively mild season (to that point) would affect conditions. But in fact conditions were superb and the ice was up to 10 inches thick in spots. Some also enjoyed skating on the snow-free, perfectly smooth surface. Others huddled by the fire and no doubt swapped fish stories with friends. See you next year! 

A COLD FISH STORY

By Ron Bernard

Photos by Larry Dwyer

Every winter for the past 13 years a group of enthusiastic and hardy souls has assembled for a day of ice fishing and family fun. And so, on February 4, members of the Berkshire Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America met for the tenth time at Spectacle Pond to match wits with bass and pickerel and to enjoy an outdoors day at Sandisfield's largest body of water.

The purpose of the Walton League, a national conservation organization, is "to protect fish and wildlife, critical habitat and water resources."

The fishing derby is the Otis-based club's most important fund raising event to help promote these goals.

An advance party sets up camp at 5 am and the derby is well underway by 7. ATVs and snowmobiles fan out across the ice in search of good spots. Tents quickly sprout up all over the pond, augers drill away, lines are baited and for the next five hours the contest is on. It is serious business: first prize for the heaviest fish is \$300 plus bragging rights! This year Bill Baysinger's 2-pound, 14 oz, 18-inch long large mouth bass took first place. Michael Naventi's 1-pound, 4 oz pickerel was best among the kids' division. The fish are weighed, recorded and returned to water. Generous local businesses donate an amazing num-



Who's Who in Sandisfield

by Maxene Kupperman-Guñals

One warm summer evening in 2011, Ralph Morrison, Sandisfield's Fire Chief, told me that there are about 3300 people in residence in our town in the height of the summer. Ruth Dec-Friedman and I had concocted the crazy idea that everyone should be represented during the 250th birthday celebration of Sandisfield, and we are completing the list of all the residents of our town. Although it is a painstaking process, it really is quite illuminating:

- We are a very diverse group of people from all over the world.
- There are many of us who don't have a Sandisfield 258 phone number. (Imagine!)
- There are many of us in Otis Woodlands.
- There are no Sandisfieldians whose last name begins with Q (so far).
- More than 18 people in our tiny town have the same family name—and it is not a common name! (As soon as you let us know your name, we'll tell you what that family name is!)

We'd like each person in town to be represented by name and one little fact on a cardboard brick. The bricks will be on at least 17 8' x 4' walls, and SANDISWALL 2012 will be unveiled at the Sandisfield 250th birthday celebration in July.

Some people are easy to locate, i.e people who publish this newspaper, or major players in the smooth running of Sandisfield. It's easy to know Ralph Morrison or Edna Leavenworth or Karen Cooley - after all, what would our town be without them?

So far we've located just over 1100 names. But this is only the beginning!


You may be one of those people whose name is just below the radar. Maybe you live in Otis Woodlands where a great many people have a Sandisfield address. Maybe you live with your grandmother and she is the one to whom the house is registered. Many of you are students and your name does not appear anywhere but on your school records. Maybe you are a part-time resident - here only a few weeks of the year.

Whoever you are, your name deserves to be among those who are commemorated on SANDISWALL 2012! Please use one of the following ways to contact me so that you can be included:

Email: slix92@aol.com

Phone: 212-873-4559 (usually until around mid-May) or 413-258-4030 (more sporadic, I'm in my house only a few times a month)

Mail: P.O.Box 175, Sandisfield (can be forwarded immediately) or 215 West 92nd St/14E, NYC NY 10025

Spell your name clearly as we want to be able to write your name correctly. Let us know what you would like to be remembered for in 2262! 



By Debbie Harris

TRACKING DOWN WINTER'S MYSTERIES

Did you ever wonder where all the animals go in the winter? Some, like many birds, fly south to find some place warm. Others, like turtles and salamanders, may bury into the mud and sleep the winter away. But many animals stay around here to enjoy the Berkshire winters, just like you and me.



The animals that do stay "at home" for the winter often leave clues about who they are and what they are doing. The most obvious clues are their tracks. If you see animal tracks you should try to identify the animal. The following are a few hints to get you started.

First, think about what animals live in Sandisfield. If you find tracks in your backyard they might have been made by a squirrel, a bird, or a rabbit.

Next, look at how many toes the tracks have. If there are four toes on each foot you're looking at an animal in the dog family (e.g., fox, wolf, coyote, pet dog) or the cat family (bobcat or neighborhood cat). If the print has small triangular marks in front these are claw marks. Claw marks can be left by raccoons, skunks, coyotes, foxes and dogs. Since cats retract their claws they don't normally leave claw marks.

If there are four toes on the front feet and five toes on the hind feet you're looking at tracks left by a rodent (mice, voles, chipmunks, squirrels or porcupines, to name a few). If there are five toes on both front and back feet the track was made by a raccoon or a member of the weasel family, or possibly a bear or a beaver. If there are only two toes you're probably looking at a deer or moose track (you can tell the difference by the size of the track – deer tracks are much smaller than moose tracks).

You can also tell if the animal was hopping about. For example, squirrels bound along with their larger hind feet ahead of their smaller front ones, with the front feet side by side. Rabbit's hind feet

also land ahead of the front ones, but the front feet don't land next to each other.

Finally, can you tell in which direction the animal was going? If there are claw marks it's easy – the claw marks always point forward. If there are no claw marks, look for where the snow is pushed back. The pushed back areas show where the animal came from.

Another thing to look for is a line in the snow. Mice might leave a tail imprint and porcupines leave troughs where they drag their tails. If the tracks go over downed trees the animal is likely a big one while small animals often crawl under downed tree limbs. If the tracks are close together they were probably made by a small animal and if far apart by a larger animal. If the tracks stop at a tree they might have been made by a squirrel or other tree-climbing creature.

Also look for other clues, like little drops of yellow pee every 20 feet or so. This is probably the calling card of a fox.

Here's a little check sheet you can use to help you in your identification:

1. What shape is the track?

If the track is heart-shaped you are probably looking at a deer.

If the track is not heart-shaped go to question 2.

2. Does the track have three forward-facing toes?

If the answer is yes go to question 3.

If the answer is no go to question 4.

3. Are the toes webbed?

If the answer is yes you might be seeing tracks of a duck.

If the answer is no you might be looking at turkey tracks.

4. Are there 4 toes?

If the answer is yes go to question 5.

If the answer is no go to question 6.

5. Are there claw marks?

If the answer is yes you might be seeing coyote tracks.

If the answer is no you are probably looking at tracks made by some sort of cat.

6. Are the toes webbed?

If the answer is yes these tracks were likely made by a beaver

If the answer is no go to question 7.

7. Does the track look like a small hand?

If the answer is yes look for a raccoon in the area.

If the answer is no there may be a black bear nearby.

So, when you're on your winter adventures think about all the other creatures that are out and about with you.

Happy Hunting! 

THE SANDISFIELD LIBRARY NEWS


By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

I am pleased to report that the library's "new book" titles are as follows:

- *Death of a Kingfisher* by M.C. Beaton
- *Dressmaker* by Kate Alcott
- *Healing* by Jonathan Odell
- *Lonewolf* by Jodi Picoult
- *Oath of Office* by Michael Palmer
- *Private Games* by James Patterson
- *Restless in the Grave* by Dana Stabenow
- *Home Front* by Kristin Hannah
- *Love, Honour and O'Brien* by Jennifer Rowe
- *The Autobiography of a Sniper* by Chris Kyle

and coming soon:

- *Devious* by Lisa Jackson
- *The Legacy of Eden* by Nellie Davy
- *Catch Me* by Lisa Gardner
- *The Thief* by Clive Cussler
- *Mudwoman* by Joyce Carol Oates
- *Blood in the Water* by Gregor Demarkian
- *Cat's Claw* by Susan Wittig Albert
- *Force of Nature* by C.J. Box
- *Guilty Wives* by James Patterson
- *Stay Close* by Harlan Coben

The Genealogy Assistance classes are going well and the library has a subscription for Ancestry.com for use by our patrons. This information allows us to look at the U.S. Census from 1790-1930 and, on April 2, 2012, the 1940 census will be released. You can also research ship records and World War I and II draft cards! Classes will be held on March 28 and April 25, 6:30pm at the library. 





Local Quilter Semifinalist in International Show

Sandisfield's own Teresa Bills used her love of horses as the basis for her beautiful quilt, "The Gray". The quilt was selected as a semifinalist for the 2012 American Quilters Society show and contest to be held March 14-17 in Lancaster Pennsylvania. This show features competitors from 41 states as well as 10 foreign countries.

The 201 quilts in the show represent a wide variety of techniques and design methods ranging from traditional patterns to painted designs and embellished abstract art.

For more information please see www.americanquilter.com.

Best of luck to our local artist! 🍀

Sandisfield Historical Society News

by Josephine Freedman

The month of December was a busy month for us all. The Christmas fair on Saturday, December 3rd was a great success. We had great weather for a change, lots of interesting vendors and food. Many vendors like to attend this event because they really enjoy meeting and conversing with the friendly Sandisfield community. The chili and corn chowder supplied by the New Boston Church was wonderful and reasonably priced as usual. The "kids" all enjoyed the wagon rides and Santa's visit. We hope to see you again next year.

We want to thank the Fire Department for the use of Fire House #2, and for their assistance in moving the fire trucks and setting up the tables for the vendors. We also want to thank those wonderful volunteers who were there at the close of the event to restack the tables and clean up the firehouse.

Our last meeting of the year was on December 10th when we had our annual Christmas/Holiday party. There was so much food at the pot luck lunch that we did not go away hungry. Although we have no running water or kitchen, we still manage to have great food, desserts, coffee and tea along with the sharing of great conversation. We plan to meet again in the Spring and hope that you will consider stopping in on the second Saturday of the month at 11 AM to check out the "Meeting House" and meet the members. Everyone is always welcome.

Two hundred-sixty copies of the cookbook *Sandisfield Eats* have been published. Of the 80 books sold thus far, we have distributed about 30 with great reviews from everyone who received them. We will distribute and sell the books in March 2012 at the church supper. If there is a celebration for the 250th at the beginning of March, the books will be sold and distributed at that time as well. You can order a book by sending a check for \$15 to the Sandisfield Historical Society and mailing to:

Sandisfield Historical Society
P. O. Box 513
Sandisfield, MA 01255

If you would like the book shipped add another \$3.50. When ordering a book be sure to include your name, address, phone number, email address.

Books will be distributed at the Anniversary events or at any of the Historical Society events in 2012. 🍀

CUSTOM HOMES, ADDITIONS, GARAGES AND OUTBUILDINGS

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#144855

MA LIC
#38268

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413-258-2821

"We Handle All the Details"
Local references available.

Steve DellaGiustina
413-258-4996

The Gardeners' Almanac



By Sue Tarasuk, Horticulturist

TESTING THE SOIL

Soil pH is a very important component of your gardening knowledge. Garden plants grow in specific limited ranges of pH and will suffer or even die if the pH is either too high or too low.

The pH scale is devised to measure the acidity or alkalinity of the soil. A pH scale ranges from 1 to 14, with 7 being neutral. A pH of less than 7 is considered an acidic soil, greater than 7 is alkaline. The lower the number the more acidic and the higher the number the more alkaline. Most plants like and thrive in soil that is just slightly acidic (pH of around 6.5) and most plants will tolerate a pH of between 6 and 8. Some plants require a pH of 4-5 (very acidic). These plants are blueberries or Rhododendron.

Most soils in the eastern US are acidic. These soils are determined by the climate and by the rocks which the soil is formed from. Because we get so much rain, the alkalinity is leached out of our soils. However, the soils in Berkshire County are, for the most part, alkaline. Their pH is closer to or even greater than 7. This is due to the fact that much of our underlying rock is limestone (limestone being alkaline). The exceptions are in Sandisfield, Otis, Monterey. When I do a soil sample in those towns, I often find the pH is lower (acidic).

Why is pH so important? Soil pH determines the availability of plant nutrients. If the pH is too high or too low, the nutrients get bound to the soil ions and are made unavailable to plants. Very acidic soil is not where microorganisms like to dwell. These important organisms digest organic matter in the soil, releasing the nutrients to the plants.

The first approach to knowing your soil and what your plants will need in order to grow healthy is to take a soil sample. It is quite simple. You can buy a kit that will measure the pH of your soil or you can go to www.umass.edu/soiltest. For \$15 you can get a pH test, test for nutrients, recommendations and the percent of organic matter in your soil. It is a great tool when gardening. The best time to do a soil sample is in spring or fall.

A soil sample is a representation of the plot of land you are gardening. It is just a small amount of soil so you will have to take plot samples over the entire area. I like to sample each garden separ-



ately as the types of soil can change dramatically from one area of your property to the next. Here is what you do.

First brush aside the surface debris. Debris from the surface will throw off the sample, showing too much nitrogen and organic matter than the soil actually contains. If sampling lawn, cut away the sod first. Now, dig a hole. Six inches deep is good for garden plants and vegetables. Two inches for lawns. Cut a uniform thick slice from the edge of the hole you just dug. Put your

sample into a clean bucket. Be careful not to contaminate the sample with dirty tools – even touching with your hands can change results. Go on to the next sample. Thoroughly mix the samples together picking out stones, sticks, etc with the trowel. You should sample approximately 6 to 12 plots – depending on size of area. When finished scoop out about 1 cup of soil from the bucket and spread on a piece of paper to air dry. When dry, bag it up and send to the lab or test with your home testing kit. You will find the address at the UMASS website.

There are a number of ways to change the pH of your soil depending on what your soil sample tells you. Ground limestone is generally used to make soils more alkaline and sulfur and aluminum sulfate can make a soil more acidic. Your soil test will tell you how much and what to add to your soil when you get back the results. If you have trouble understanding your soil sample, or would like me to do the soil sample for you, please give me a call at (413) 258-4929 or email me at susantarasuk@gmail.com and I may be able to help you. Soil sampling and knowing soil pH is a very easy way to start your garden on the right track this season. 🍀

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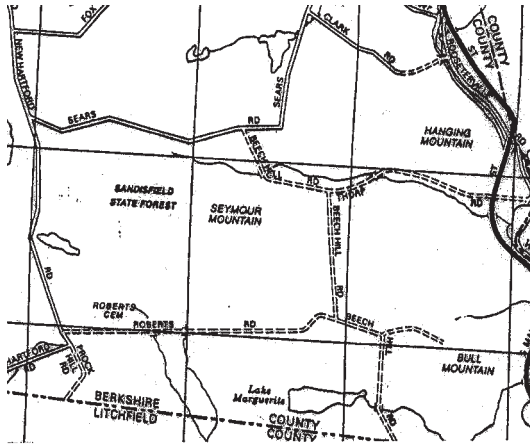
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The Free Quarter, Sandisfield's Forgotten Corner

By Ron Bernard



Southeast Sandisfield, including the Free Quarter section.

The origin of the intriguing sectional name, Free Quarter, is lost to history. In his 1885 history of Sandisfield, George Shepard said, "What gave it the name no one seems to know." Most residents will be surprised to learn that a section of town is in fact so-named. Nevertheless, "Free Quarter" is found in historical accounts and it has been carried forward in deed descriptions.

The Free Quarter comprises most of the southeastern part of town. It is bordered roughly on the north by Fox Road and on the west by New Hartford Road. It includes land lying south of Roosterville to the Farmington River, north of Roberts Road (formerly called Hardscrabble Road). Hanging Mountain and Seymour Mountain are notable topographical features.

The principal east-west passage in this section is Sears Road, renamed in 1991 after descendants of original settler Paul Sears who lived on it. Before that it was known simply as the West New Boston-New Hartford Road. It was laid out in 1780 and known for years as Free Quarter Road. Once the main link between New Boston and South Sandisfield, Sears Road is no longer continuous as its center portion is inactive.

The Free Quarter was a locus of agriculture and was never well populated. Nor was there very much non-agricultural activity, save for a few saw mills. Besides Sears, the earliest families included Williams, Crane, Belden, Wilcox, Warner, Smith, Manley, Mallison, Seymour, and Thorpe.



Colebrook River, Conn., Oct. 1876. (www.DeMarsImages.com)

Roberts Road, largely discontinued, forms the southern border of the Free Quarter. That road was laid out as a county road in 1756 and ran from New Hartford Road nearly to the Farmington River. It was an important connector between Township No. 3 (Sandisfield) with the unincorporated area south of it to the Connecticut line known as the South 11,000 Acres.

In 1737, the proprietors petitioned the legislature to establish certain additional tracts in order to balance the sizes of the contiguous townships and the pace of settlement. For the next year seven families were permitted to draw for lots in this section. The area was incorporated into the district of Southfield and then set-off to (annexed by) Sandisfield in 1819.

Most of the early families that farmed in Southfield below the Free Quarter lived along or near the old county road (Roberts Road / Hardscrabble Road).




Store and Hotel, Colebrook River, Conn., c.1900s (www.DeMarsImages.com)

They included Deming, Bettes (eastern part), Baxter, Crane (near Simons Pond/Lake Marguerite), Chapel, Bailie, Simons and (Lt. Henry) Smith and a few others. The eastern portion of this section at the Farmington River became the quaint riverside community of Colebrook River. The hamlet began in about 1790 and straddled the line with Colebrook, Conn.

By the 1870s, the southeast corner had become quite a robust industrial nook including saw mills, Elihu Persons' tannery, an ironworks, a carding (wool processing) mill, a number of blacksmiths, a silk factory, and the Union Chair Co. John Greenleaf, who employed 12 men in his wood-turning shop in the silk factory building, held a U.S. Post Office appointment there for several years. Daniel DeWolfe operated a sizeable general store. The Connecticut side of Colebrook River village had a large number of substantial concerns as well as a "strictly temperance" hotel and two other stores.

Two schools once served the southeast Sandisfield communities. There was a small cemetery (moved) but no church (in Sandisfield). By the time flood control project planning commenced after the big storm of 1938, commercial activity had long since ceased. But a number of historic houses and buildings, including the venerable former Hawley Tavern, remained. The massive Colebrook River Lake flood control project of the 1960s obliterated all that remained.

Today the eastern half of the old 11,000 Acres/Southfield district and the south part of the Free Quarter are depopulated and the Colebrook River hamlet is underwater. The public roads are abandoned, severely truncated or virtually impassable and the land is thickly reforested. Will the 21st century bring new residents or visitors to rediscover this wild and beautiful — and virtually forgotten — corner of old Sandisfield? 

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Henry David Thoreau



Image: Tina Sotis ©2011



AVIAN NOTES

By Margaret O'Clair

OWLS:

TO WHIT: PART TWO.

Owls are members of one of the most easily identifiable families of birds. You don't need to be a birder to recognize an owl picture or image. This is probably due to the fact that, unlike most birds, owls look directly at us. Their head feathers form a "facial disc" (heart-shaped in the case of the Barn Owl) which places the eyes prominently on the front of the face. Like us, owls have binocular vision. However, unlike us their eyes are immobile. They cannot look up or down or sideways, so in order to see around they have developed that familiar but unsettling head swivel.

Owls are most active during starlit or moonlit nights. Hunting in the dim light, their large eyes and huge pupils help them locate even slight movement on the forest floor. To protect these super sensitive eyes, owls have a transparent third eye lid that is used during the day as a protection from the sunlight. While the owl's eyes are an amazing example of adaptation, their ears are something else again. Located on either side of the head the ears are asymmetrical. One ear is larger than the other and each ear has a slightly different inner structure. Scientists believe that when the owl hears potential prey in the darkness, it turns its head side to side so that each ear hears the sound separately, thus triangulating the exact location of the sound. To further boost its ability to hear, the owl is able to manipulate the feathers around the ears to form a funnel, rather like if we cup our hands to focus more intently on the location of a sound. The owl may not be able

to see in the dark but its incredible hearing allows it to hunt efficiently in pitch darkness.

Another weapon in the owl's arsenal is, of all things, its feathers. I can attest to the fact that daylight predators make a heck of a racket when they swoop onto their prey. A Sharp Shinned Hawk flew right over my head en route to a small bird under the feeder and as I ducked down the



sound was like that of a freight train! The noise is the result of air pressure rushing over the wings of the bird. Owl feathers are extremely light – the feathers on the leading edge of the wing are really fluffy filaments which diffuse the air as it passes over the wing. This allows the owl to fly silently through to its victim. Where other birds of prey rely on surprise and speed to achieve success, the owl relies on accuracy and silence. ♡



CAT SHOOTING *Cont'd from P.1*

According to the Sandisfield animal control officer, Kim Spring. Ms. Spring had been called to the scene last May 1st after reports that Jellybean had been shot with a BB gun – and after Pittsfield veterinarians had removed a BB slug from the right side of the cat's abdomen. Lessor's wife, Kendra, had reported hearing a shot at around 4pm on that Sunday afternoon, and then seeing Jellybean running into the house, bleeding from the chest and leaving a trail of blood on the deck.

According to Ms. Spring's interview with Anderson – and who insisted that he and his son were fishing in the Colebrook Reservoir at the time of the incident – he remarked on hearing that Jellybean had been shot, "It's just like the dog killing the chickens that time. What am I supposed to do – sit and watch the cat stare at the chickens before he rips their heads off?"

State Trooper Brendan O'Neill from the Lee barracks responded to Richard Lessor's call from the Pittsfield veterinarians' office, and interviewed Anderson, who denied all knowledge of the incident. After obtaining medical records and specialist information on the power of BB guns, Trooper O'Neill decided there was probable cause formally to charge Anderson with animal cruelty. ♡

STRETCHING OUT

By Susan Van Sickle, Photo by Deb Harris

Imagine my surprise when, as a newly retired person to the area, I found that yoga was offered right here in Sandisfield. Most other activities I chose to participate in required a lengthy trip in the car. As a teacher in the town of Lee for twenty six years, I had participated in yoga classes provided by the town's insurance provider. I had enjoyed it and its many benefits. So, I called the number listed in the Shopper's Guide to find that the ad belonged to Jane Hason. Jane very graciously allows Erica Faye, the instructor, to use her beautiful great room with vaulted ceilings to accommodate her classes. I was told that classes were every Thursday evening at six o'clock.

When I arrived for my first class a year ago I was pleasantly surprised to see a fire in the fireplace, lighted candles about the room and soothing music being played. I immediately felt relaxed and welcome. The class lasted an hour and a half. I was surprised when I was getting ready to return home when someone said, "please stay and visit". This social hour at the end of the class provides an opportunity to sit and visit with others who take part in the class. I had a wonderful time. Not only had I found a way to relax, challenge my body and mind, strengthen my muscles, work on my posture and balance, but I had met several amazing women (classes are open to men as well as women) who have become cherished friends.

The class is Erica's brainchild. Eighteen years ago, while living in Sandisfield, Erica began a yoga practice to heal decades of dance injuries. She received her yoga teacher certification from Kripalu in Stockbridge in 2010 and is currently certified at the 275 level. She is also a graduate of the "yoga in schools" teaching program through the Institute for Extraordinary Living at Kripalu.

The class is suitable for older beginners as well as for yoga veterans. New students are welcome regardless of their experience. Please give Erica a call at 413-717-1038, or Jane Hason at 413-258-4428 for more information, and come have some fun - right here in the heart of Sandisfield!



250th Celebration 3 Months and Counting!



By Laura Rogers-Castro

The Excitement is Building!

The 250th Birthday Celebration Committee is excited to announce the schedule of events for the July 27, 28 and 29, 2012 weekend. The Sandisfield Arts Center will be hosting "Rascals & Others" on Friday evening, featuring our famous and talented town residents in an amusing historical presentation. The Lebanon Militia, with local residents Elizabeth and John Kuzmech, will re-create a historical encampment beginning on Friday and remaining through the weekend at Carr Field on Route 57. There will be a country fair with food, crafts, children's activities and demonstrations during the day on Saturday and Sunday (also at Carr Field). The children's activities, sponsored by the Recreation

Department, will consist of fun-filled competitions including sack races, pie-eating contests, egg-throws and three-legged relays, among others. A dunking booth will be on site allowing participants to soak some of the town's many good sports. Who would you like to see in the booth? Suggestions welcomed!

Later on Saturday evening the Fire Department will be serving hamburgers and hotdogs followed by a community dance with "Harm's Way Band" at the American Legion Pavilion. There will be a dessert potluck extravaganza during the event so start searching for your favorite dessert recipe now! In addition to the country fair and encampment on Sunday, there will be a Classic Car Show coordinated by the Yankee Street Rods, a club from Great Barrington.

Other special activities and projects in honor of Sandisfield's 250th birthday are planned during the weeks preceding the July weekend. During June and early July, interpretive guided walks

will be offered, including a special exploration along the original Knox Trail led by Thomas and Cindy Ragusa. The *Sandisfield Eats* cookbook, *Sandisfield Then and Now* history book and the SandisWALL commemorative project should all be completed this year.

This ambitious celebration, in honor of the town we all love, requires the time and energy of a great number of individuals. The 250th Birthday Celebration Committee welcomes and appreciates the full support of our town departments. There is still time for others to join the team and help make this celebration one to remember.

If you are a craftsperson or food vendor and would like to reserve a space during the country fair on Saturday, July 28, or Sunday, July 29, contact Barbara Cormier at 258-4402. The next committee meeting is March 21 at 7:00 p.m., at the Town Hall Annex. For more information, contact Laura at 258-4688.

You're Invited!
 Sandisfield is 250 years old on
 March 6, 2012!
 Join us for cake & coffee at the New Boston Inn
 Tuesday, March 6, 4pm-7pm
 & receive a copy of the official Proclamation from the Governor.
 More info at www.sandisfield.info

A Moose Lives in Sandisfield

by Larry Dwyer

There's a lot of wildlife in Sandisfield, even if we don't see it all the time. Occasionally we'll hear coyotes calling not far away and at other times, when the moon is full, packs of coyotes will call out to each other across the hills. In the summer when the windows are open it's not uncommon to hear the haunting call of an owl.

One time a bear came into our driveway and we didn't realize it until our cat came rushing into the house to hide. We, and the bear, kept a safe distance from each other as he watched us while we observed him from our rear deck of the house. He pointed his nose in the air trying to catch our scent and, wary of our presence, he casually lumbered away into the woods. That same bear had his photograph taken with our neighbor. The photo shows him sitting on the ground while feeding the bear out of his hand.

These sounds and encounters can be either eerie or exciting, but also comforting when you realize how wild Sandisfield can be. From a distance, wildlife is not much to be concerned about, but for those who make their living in the woods or depend on it for food, wildlife is perceived much differently from the casual observer.

There was the logger who encountered two coyotes while working in the woods. It was a rare occurrence, happening some winters ago. The logger was working in the woods alone when two coyotes approached the clearing where he was working. They were fairly close, only about 100 feet away, and they kept a watchful eye on the logger. Realizing that he might be in danger, the logger backed away slowly while the coyotes trailed him until he reached the safety of his pickup truck.

Another local resident had a close call with a moose he had interrupted during the rutting sea-



son. He heard a loud baying out in the woods in the back of his house and he walked down to the beaver pond to see what all the commotion was. When he got down there he saw the young moose calf that was doing all the howling, and two other large moose in the pond mating. The mating pair was surprised and when the bull saw the man, the bull dismounted and angrily advanced swiftly towards the man. He backed away slowly. He didn't want to run because he didn't want appear (to the bull) that he was afraid. When he ducked behind a tree the bull stopped. He waited behind the tree for a while. Confused, the bull eventually turned and left.

My wife has a friend in Blandford and she and her nephew saw a large mother moose and a calf crossing the road. The calf got stuck and the nephew tried to help it out, but the mother came back and chased him away. They called the town police for help but before help arrived the mother moose rescued the calf and they vamoosed!

Just recently Ron Crawford of Lower West Street had a close call when a bull moose charged him and came within ten feet of him. He was hunting near West Lake when he came upon the moose that had spotted him from 100 feet away. The moose came charging towards him. He, too, ducked behind a tree but this time the bull wouldn't leave. Ron reports, "I was scared and thought I had had it, but I stood my ground and made a lot of noise and finally the bull left. There's a lot of moose up here now and you really have to be careful, especially during the rutting season." In this case, Ron was armed with a black powder shotgun, but he was reluctant to use it and fortunately he didn't have to. Ron has seen many moose in Sandisfield and his advice is if you encounter a moose, stand your ground and make a lot of noise. If you have a gun, shoot it into the air or carry a loud whistle with you. Above all, don't run away from the moose, because it will outrun you and when it catches up to you, it will stomp on you with its hooves.

I've done a lot of hiking in recent years, and have yet to see any large wildlife on any trails, but I was wondering what I would do if I ever ran into a moose. First I thought, "RPG (rocket propelled grenade)!" Too drastic. Then I thought, "44 Magnum!" Too expensive. So I thought of something cheaper, "I'll buy a whistle, an air horn and some cherry bombs and use them in that order." So if I ever run into a moose in the woods and live to tell about it, I'll let you know how I made out. ♡



Explore the Clam River on our free guided hikes. See March and April at www.bnrc.net/events or call Amanda or Doug at 413.499.0596 for more info.

BNRC.net
BERKSHIRE NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL

Counting Our Pennies

Cont'd from P. 1

Unclassified expenses: \$162,424 - this line includes Stabilization Fund re-payment, maintaining town properties and a host of other "miscellaneous" but necessary items (out of a budget of \$359,452)

*This amount is less than the figure reported in December as the funds for Storm Irene were transferred out and assigned to the Highways budget.

**The Highways budget spent an additional \$272,715 on Storm Irene that is not reflected in the line item. FEMA will reimburse the town 75% of that amount.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is another source of income, although we only receive 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 (includes residential, commercial, industrial, personal property). Add in the \$103,000 from the state and revenue from miscellaneous receipts the town receives and we just about reach the figures needed to support our 2012 budget.

It is also very important that we pay attention to the Farmington River Regional School District line item in our budget. It is the largest line item we have and has been a bone of contention at recent Annual Town Meetings. I have attended several School Budget Committee meetings and discussions and, while there will be a small increase to the budget, I am impressed with the work the Committee has done to keep that increase at a minimum. They are doing a very credible job. The following highlights some of necessary changes in that budget:

INCREASES:

- Special needs staffing increases are made to meet the needs of new students.

- In order to compete with the services offered by most elementary schools, the Librarian, Guidance Counselor and Gifted & Talented positions will be restored.
- Parents report that when our students transition to middle school they are at a disadvantage because foreign language is introduced at the elementary level in neighboring districts. A Foreign Language consultant will be hired part-time for one class per week for each of the 5th and 6th grades.
- There will be a new math curriculum and laptops for K-3 classrooms.
- There will be an increase in transportation costs for a student attending a vocational school out of the district.

DECREASES:

- The per diem superintendent will be reduced to one day a week and the existing administrative staff will be realigned to maintain maximum efficiency.
- The tuition budget reflects a decrease in costs due to a larger senior class (which was made up of two 6th grade classes from FRRSD) graduating this year versus one sixth grade class moving to middle school.
- There will be an allocation of \$50,000 from School Choice Revenue to offset increases. The Sandisfield assessment for the operating budget reflects a 2.2% increase and the school bond assessment reflects an 8% increase.

Additional town budget 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 budgets based on the collection of data from all departments.

I must remind you once again about our Free Cash account. As previously reported, back in 1990 the town of Sandisfield was not in good financial shape. Our cash position was so poor that we couldn't legally borrow any more money from the bank - the state would not allow it. At that crucial time, a group of people came together and figured out how to begin putting money aside for emergencies and they established our Free Cash Account. Unfortunately, last May taxpayers voted down Proposition 2½ (which would have raised taxes) and authorized taking \$75,000 from Free Cash and another \$75,000 from the Tax Overlay account in order to balance our budget. I say "unfortunately" because we cannot take any more money from Free Cash. If we do, it won't be long before we have nothing at all. It is critical that we not use these funds to support our operating budget. An example of an appropriate use of that account is the \$187,500 we took in October to help pay for Storm Irene remediation.

That's the basic overview of our operating budget. More detailed explanations of these expenses are available at Town Hall. If you're interested in reviewing them call Teresa, our Interim Treasurer, at Town Hall. You may attend any of the monthly Finance Committee meetings on the second Wednesday of the month at the library (7 p.m.) or sit in at the Selectmen's meetings on Monday nights, 7 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex.

If you learn as much as you can about our budget process, your knowledge will produce good questions and an informed vote in May. ♡



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Massachusetts Cultural Council

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Sandisfield Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

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WIRED-WEST UPDATE

FIBER IN OUR FUTURE? IT'S UP TO US.

By Jean Atwater-Williams

Like electricity and phone service, the internet has become necessary to the functioning of our daily lives. Business, health care, and education, as well as entertainment and social connections are all routinely done online. Home-based businesses cannot operate without reliable internet service. Houses without access to a reasonably fast and affordable Internet connection are less valuable and more difficult to sell. And what about cloud computing, telecommuting and Netflix online? Some of our residents can do these things via DSL connections, but most of the town must suffer with satellite, cell-based or dial-up internet. All of these technologies are limited and even DSL will not be able to effectively handle online demands in the very near future. So while there's no doubt that our need for Internet service will only grow, the question is what kind of technology will be in place in the coming years here in Sandisfield?

Fiber optic cable is made of strands of glass that transmit literally at the speed of light. It has such high capacity that a single strand can carry all the telephone calls in the state of Massachusetts simultaneously, and glass, unlike copper, does not degrade. Multiple strands of fiber are bundled into a cable which is then typically lashed to steel wire for strength and strung on telephone poles. A fiber optic network, with periodic upgrades of its electronics (equipment at either end of the fiber) is "future-proof", even with demand for bandwidth (capacity) increasing at an ever accelerating pace. Fiber can deliver instantaneous Internet, high-definition TV, and clear, reliable phone service. It also enables high definition teleconferencing, rapid transmission of CAD and other graphic documents as well as the ability to share data and applications efficiently with remote locations.

You have probably read about the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) and their initiative to bring fiber optic Internet to anchor institutions like town halls and schools. You

may even have seen some of the work being done on poles around town. This is a state and federally funded effort and the MBI is building a fiber optic network precisely because it is the best available, highest capacity, most reliable technology. The MBI's "middle mile" fiber optic network will improve your chances of getting a decent Internet connection, but it will not bring the fiber to your home. The MBI is leaving it up to "last mile" providers to build a network that will connect homes and businesses.

While it is clear that fiber is the ideal solution, few of the "last mile" providers are intending to build a fiber optic network. Many of the providers in discussion with the MBI are proposing wireless solutions. Wireless is easier, quicker and cheaper to deploy, but cannot deliver the speed or capacity (bandwidth) we need for the future. It also requires towers on our hills and ridges and may not work in our heavily forested landscape. WiredWest, on the other hand, is committed to building a fiber optic network that will serve all the residents and businesses of its member towns. As a municipal cooperative, WiredWest has the advantage that it does not have to satisfy shareholders with short-term profits. WiredWest was formed for the common good of the un- and under-served communities of western Massachusetts. WiredWest volunteers are engaged in the business planning process. Marketing and engineering studies are being completed in preparation to go to the municipal bond market for financing. But make no mistake – financing and building this network will be no easy task. It will require millions of dollars in financing and substantial community support in terms of making commitments to subscribe to WiredWest rather than other last mile providers.

So as we look toward our region's future, each one of us has a serious, far-reaching decision to make: do we insist on the technology we know will be the best for us now and in the future, or do we go with an inferior solution that we could be stuck with for a very long time?



Taking advantage of the mild January weather I finally finished hiking around Spectacle Pond, which has many trails that are mostly made up of maintenance, logging and colonial roads. I recommend hiking the two main trails that are marked at two intersections. Although there are no markings along the trail the trails are wide and well traveled. These easy-to-follow trails are well maintained by the Otis Wood Lands Trail Committee and the Knox Trail Riders.

The place to start is at the parking area at the south end of Upper Spectacle Pond. There are two ways to reach it: From the intersection of Route 23 and Cold Spring Road drive less than 1 mile on Cold Spring Road. From the intersection of Route 8 and Cold Spring Road drive 4 miles from Route 8 to reach Webb Road. (Webb Road is marked by two stop signs mounted on trees at the entrance.) It is a dirt road that will take you to the south end of Upper Spectacle Pond. However, don't even think of driving on this road during the mud season because you will sink up to your axles unless you can borrow a log skidder to get there. Once you park your car or skidder, as the case may be, the trail is due east from the lake spillway.

As you enter the main trail and head uphill about ½ mile, on your right near the top of the hill you will come to a sign at an intersection. If you head straight you will come to another sign directing you left towards Otis Wood Lands. If you turn right at the first sign, you will end up at Lower Spectacle Pond. (The trail to Otis Wood Lands ends on private property, so unless you live there, it's best to head towards Lower Spectacle Pond.)

On the trail to Lower Spectacle Pond there is section of an old colonial road that once led to Winsted, CT. This road is flanked by stone walls on either side and is quite picturesque. One could easily imagine early settlers walking along this primitive path. It leads to the old Rowley Farm on Cold Spring Road. Just short of the road on the right is a turnoff that leads to a camp ground next to the lake. When you reach Cold Spring Road, turn

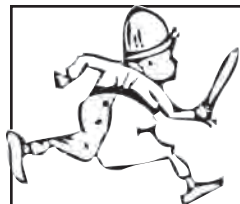
right and down the road on the left is a small red cabin. This is the head trail that leads to the Gorge. (See *Sandisfield Times*, Sept. 2011)

Here is some basic information about the Spectacle Pond trails:

- The distance to Otis Wood Lands is 1.2 miles. Double for round trip.
- The distance to Lower Spectacle Pond is 1.4 miles. Double for round trip.
- Average time to walk either trail is approximately 1½ hours, round trip.
- Terrain: The paths are well-graded, normally clear of obstructions with some steep strenuous grades.
- Scenery: Lakes, streams, spillways, primitive colonial road, and wooded areas.

I consider these trails to be a mildly strenuous, but my daughter, who climbed Mount Washington earlier this year, thought it was rather easy. Just so you know, the old colonial road is not part of the famous Knox Trail and I have seen evidence of moose in the area, so take precautions. See you on the trail. 🍷





SANDISFIELD POLICE BLOTTER – November and December 2011

November 4	Disabled motor vehicle check, Rte 8
November 5	Assist homeowner, Cold Spring Road
November 15	Motor vehicle accident, Sandisfield Road
November 17	Assist EMS, New Hartford Road
November 19	Disabled motor vehicle check, Sandisfield Road
November 19	Trespassing complaint, Rte 8
November 19	House alarm, New Hartford Road
November 19	Disabled motor vehicle check, Rte 8
November 23	Well-being check, Sandisfield Road
November 24	Trees and wires down, Rte 8
November 26	Assist EMS, Sandisfield Road
November 28	Investigate breaking and entering, Cronk Road
November 29	Disabled motor vehicle, Rte 8
December 5	911 hang up, Town Hill Road
December 5	Animal complaint, Bosworth Road
December 8	Tree and wires down, Rte 8
December 13	Suspicious activity/person, Rte 8
December 13	Assist EMS, Sandisfield Road
December 17	Motor vehicle accident, Rte 8
December 22	Suspicious activity/person, Rte 8
December 23	Motor vehicle erratic operation, Rte 8
December 31	Disabled motor vehicle, Rte 8




Suspicious Fire at Historic Beech Plain Barn *by Sandisfield Times Reporter*

Units from the Sandisfield, Otis, Monterey and Tolland fire departments rushed to the former Rowley farm near Lower Spectacle Pond on the morning of January 26. An alert passerby reported smoke billowing out of the pre-Revolutionary War main barn. A four-alarm situation was warranted because this fire, which started in old hay bales, could have quickly become a major conflagration, threatening the entire group of buildings. Thanks to these responsive and diligent volunteer firefighters for preventing great property loss at this 250-year old farm, now part of the Otis State Forest. 🇺🇸

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Comings and Goings



Riley Jack Muller
February 20, 2012

Riley Jack Muller was born 02/20/2012 to Bogart and Tina Muller of 72 South Main Street. Bogart's parents were the late Sally Ann Nemeth and the late Timothy Muller of Winchester CT. Tina's parents are Patricia Grisco and the late John "Jack" Grisco of Watertown CT. Riley was born at the Waterbury Hospital in CT. Bogart owns RSE, a local caretaking/ landscaping company. Tina works as a licensed clinical social worker in Hartford CT. Both parents love Sandisfield and can't wait to show little Riley all around. Any more questions you may have please Email Mahli72@hotmail.com

Donna Louise Somerville
1937-2012

Donna Louise Somerville of Lee died on January 27, 2012. Born in South Lee on June 1, 1937 to Jennie Mange and Howell Stanard, Donna was a graduate of Lee High School. Predeceased by her husband, Sherman J. Somerville, she leaves two sons, Kenneth and Daniel of South Lee and three daughters, Eillen Kadeli of Falls Church, VA, Amy Somerville of Becket and Patricia (Gary) Richards of Sandisfield. She is also survived by thirteen grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.



Richard Threlkeld
1937-2012

Richard Threlkeld, former correspondent for CBS and ABC News, died in a car accident on January 13, 2012 on Long Island, NY. Born on November 30, 1937 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Richard spent three decades as a news correspondent, covering seven presidential campaigns, Robert Kennedy's assassination and the kidnapping of Patty Hearst. He is survived by his wife, Betsy Aaron, herself a former CBS, ABC, NBC and CNN correspondent, with whom he lived for several years on South Sandisfield Road.

Myrtle A. Nehmer Mazzaferro
1932-2012

Myrtle Ann (Foy) Nehmer Mazzaferro died on February 2, 2012 at Fairview Commons Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center in Great Barrington. Born in Springfield, MA on December 25, 1932 to George Foy and Celina (Bell) Denesha, Myrtle was preceded in death by her husband, Vincent Mazzaferro. She is survived by thirteen children, twenty-seven grandchildren and seventeen great-grandchildren. While a resident of Sandisfield, Myrtle served the town as Moderator for many years.





TURKEY TROT

Dear Editor,

Attached is a photo of approximately 68 turkeys that were strolling on our lawn last Saturday morning. Too bad we saw this flock before the official date of the Great Backyard Bird Count.

George Grumbach
Sandisfield



WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR ROAD?

Dear Editor,

In 1876, F. W. Beers published a Berkshire County atlas that included a map of Sandisfield. There are no road names on this map. The fact is that roads did not have names at that time. On that map what is now Sullivan Road clearly appeared and showed Mrs. Sullivan's house at the intersection of what is now known as Shade Road. At that time, Sullivan Road connected to what is now known as Dodd Road.

Now, let me move forward to 1866 which appears to be the year of the first USGS Survey of Sandisfield. I have a photocopy of this map. It is a 1910 reprint from the 1886 Survey. There is no Sullivan Road. It is just not there on this map.

Dear Editor,

I have viewed a USGS map based on a 1944 to 1946 Survey. Sullivan Road is back on the map as it should be. It shows passable sections of Sullivan Road from both Shade Road and Dodd Road. The middle section of this road appears to be nothing more than a hiking trail and not passable by vehicle traffic.

My question is this: How could this road not appear on the 1866 Survey map? A survey crew missed this road? That idea is not plausible. I am stretching it a bit. Yet I think that the crew must have lost their notes concerning this road that is now named Sullivan Road.

I have not been able to find a USGS survey between 1866 and 1944-1946. If any survey exists, I would like to hear about it and view the map.

Charles Peterson
New Marlborough

LET'S HAVE SOME CHOICES

Dear Editor,

I think we all agree that we must find alternatives to fossil fuel energy production. Right now the conversation seems to be limited to solar and wind. A solar panel on an individual's house roof is one thing, practical and unobtrusive. However, acres and acres of panels on the ground is very obtrusive and very ugly. I have not been convinced that wind turbines do not affect migrating birds who fly mostly at night. Why aren't we talking about something we have in abundance, is easily harnessed and has been used successfully in the past? Water was what powered New England before electricity and it could be used to make the electricity we need now. I'm not suggesting building the Hoover Dam but we do have plenty of public as well as privately owned dams in town as well as plenty of fast moving streams. I remember years ago Jappy Campetti built a sluice way on his property next to the Farmington River, found a small turbine maker and was all set to supply power to the New Boston Store, New Boston Fuel and two or three houses across the street. The electric company put the kibosh on the plan. I'm all for looking towards the future - maybe we should also take a look at the past, too.

Margaret O'Clair
Sandisfield

SCHOOL KIDS GIVE THEIR HEARTS TO VETS

Dear Editor,

Several classes from the Farmington River Elementary School helped put a big smile on the faces of the veterans living at the Berkshire Rehabilitation Nursing facility on Valentine's Day. The classes were asked to create a special Valentine greeting to be distributed to the gentlemen who live at the facility. The cards were handed out on February 14th during a special breakfast of waffles and fresh fruit prepared to acknowledge the holiday. The residents of the facility were pleased to receive the thoughtful greetings and want to let the children know how much they appreciate their thoughtfulness and all the hard work that went into creating the cards.

Lisa Valenta
Berkshire Rehabilitation

*We thank the following
kind people
for their generous
donations-*

Karlene & Warren Blass Jr

Mario Castro & Laura Rogers-Castro

David Crandell & Wendy Gutterson

*Ruth Dec-Friedman & Richard
Friedman*

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Jeffrey Inkwon Lee

Gertrude Kelley & Roberta Lasch

Douglas & Janet MacMillan

Helen Meisl

Dennis & Joanne Olson

Valerie & Howard Smith

Carl & Rhonda Steeg

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.*

MARCH EVENTS

Tuesday, March 6, 7:00 AM - 8:00 PM, Presidential Primary, Old Town Hall.

Tuesday, March 6, 4-7 PM, Reading of Proclamation celebrating Sandisfield's 250th anniversary, New Boston Inn. Anniversary cake served.

Saturday, March 10, Noon - 1:00 PM, Rabies clinic for cats and dogs, Otis Town Hall Gym.

Monday, March 19, Last day to obtain nomination papers, Sandisfield Town Hall Annex.*

Wednesday, March 21, Last day to submit nomination papers, Sandisfield Town Hall Annex.

Wednesday, March 28, 6:30-8:30 PM, Genealogy Class, Sandisfield Library. Please note that this class has been extended and will continue to meet through April.

Thursday, March 29, 3-5 PM, Open House for Families with Preschool Children, Farmington River Regional School

Tuesday, April 3, 7 PM, Town caucus, Old Town Hall.

Wednesday, April 4, 9 AM to noon, Registration/screening for Preschool at Farmington River Regional School. For registration/screening appointment call beginning Friday, March 30. For more information contact Jill Lenny at 413-269-4466.



ONGOING EVENTS

Town Meetings (Info call 258-4711)

Selectmen, every Monday at 7 PM, Town Hall Annex.

The Children's Health Program Play Group, every Monday when school in session, 9:30 AM - 11 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 PM, Farmington River Regional School, Rte 8, JoAnn Austin, Superintendent. Public Welcome.

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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



OF INTEREST

Saturday, March 17, 3 - 5 PM, Salamander Crossing Guard Training, (free class), and Thursday, March 22, 8:30 AM - 5 PM, Distinguishing Invasive Plants and Native Look-a-Likes (\$95). Aton Forest Inc., 270 North Colebrook Road, Norfolk CT. For information or registration email contact@atonforest.org or call 860-542-5125. Aton Forest Inc. is an ecosystem research station dedicated to conservation, education and research located on 1100 acres in Norfolk and Colebrook, CT and Sandisfield, MA.

Tuesday, March 20, Early kindergarten and kindergarten registration for Southern Berkshire Regional School District, 7:30 - 9:30 AM, 11 AM - 1 PM and 2:30 PM - 4:30 PM, Undermountain Elementary School and New Marlborough Central Schools. To request a registration packet or for more information call Terry Palfini at 413-229-8754 X 377. If no school on March 20, event will take place Thursday, March 22.

Friday, March 25 thru Sunday, March 27, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, 7:30 PM Friday and Saturday evenings and 2:00 PM Saturday and Sunday afternoons, Mount Everet Regional High School. Featuring Sandisfield's Becki Oliveri as Rosemary. General admission \$8.00, \$6.00 for students and seniors.

*Please note that the following offices are up for election this year: Moderator, Selectman, Treasurer, Auditor, Board of Assessors, School Committee, Board of Health, Planning Board and Library Trustee.

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. Requirements are that you are a resident of Sandisfield and a registered voter, and that you attend a workshop.

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The Sandisfield Times is an independent nonprofit organization staffed by volunteers from the Sandisfield community and funded by individual and business sponsors. Its mission is to connect the community through reliable, regular, and relevant information. The paper is published 11 times each year, with a joint January-February issue and monthly issues thereafter.

The Sandisfield Times does not yet have a 501(c)(3) designation, therefore donations are NOT tax-deductible at this time but **donations of all sizes are needed to ensure the continuation of this newspaper**. Please send checks to: *The Sandisfield Times*, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255. For more information visit our website www.sandisfieldtimes.org.

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

Farmington Elementary School (during the school year) and Terranova's. Other locations include the The 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.

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

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Graphic Design: Tina Sotis

Contributors: Jean Atwater-Williams, Ron Bernard, Val Coleman, Larry Dwyer, Josephine Freedman, Maxene Kupperman-Guiñals, Tina Sotis, Simon Winchester and our Regular Columnists.

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