

250TH CELEBRATION ISSUE!!

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



Plebis

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume III, Number 4

July 2012

Sandisfield

By Val Coleman

*This old town
Was hammered out of the 18th Century
And set down among the timber
And fresh rivers
Of a strange continent*

*And here it sits
For two hundred and fifty years,
By turns growing and dying,
Beginning over and over again
Like the tune of a fiddle
Or a memorized prayer.*

*Born before America was born,
It set its cap alongside three rivers
Fed by a weave of streams
And made a place where one could fill
Some pioneering dreams.*

*They all came here:
Tanners and chicken farmers
Dancers and scoundrels,
The English, Germans, Irish, Italians...
The Baptists and the Jews,
All looking to start again.*

*But this, after all, is an American town
A New England town
With the veterans of nine wars
In its cemeteries
And maple sugar on its breath.*

COUNTDOWN TO THE 250TH ALMOST OVER

SANDISFIELD'S CELEBRATION HAS FINALLY ARRIVED.

By Laura Rogers-Castro



Photo: Mario Castro

A few of us were here for the 200th Anniversary Celebration, which was no small affair. August 19, 1962. Remember? That celebration included a horse show, a tour of homes, costume block dance, a parachute jump, and a variety show. There was a "Temple of Wonder," which this writer knows nothing about, even though it was held

on Town Hill Road, where this writer currently lives. That was the first day.

The second day featured children's games, a magician, parade, fireworks, block dance with orchestra, a religious service, a carnival, and an antique furniture show. A military band played songs from "Oklahoma" and "The Sound of Music." That celebration, 50 years ago, included

the crowning of a "Bicentennial Queen."

Although no "queen" this year, the seven-member 250th Birthday Committee has created a regal celebration for 2012. Our fathers and mothers put on a good show in 1962, but we have a good one coming too. *Cont'd on p.2*

Look for lots more celebration events sprinkled throughout this issue!



COUNTDOWN TO 250TH

Cont'd from p.1

WHO PLANNED ALL THIS STUFF

50 years ago, the Bicentennial Committee was chaired by George Lundgren and consisted of 18 additional members, including three Riiskas (Alice, Edna, and Al), two Millers (Eleanor and Elsie), two Potters (Helen and John), two MaHoods (Cecil and Mayme), two Gowells (Paul and Janet), and George Etzel, Ludwik Tluszczy, Stanley Linkovich, William Rowley, Rupert King, Henry Bohlen, and Eleanor Kimberley.

Not surprisingly, two Riiskas, Linda Riiska and Bethany (Riiska) Perry, show up as committee members for our current celebration. Others on the organizing committee include: Ron Bernard, Barbara Cormier, Kathy Jacobs, Laura Rogers-Castro, and Liana Toscanini. Some of these folks wore three or four organizing hats, and they all had the support of family, friends, and neighbors. It took them two years of planning and coaxing and wheeling and getting things done. Also, attending many meetings were Lisa and Amanda Leavenworth, and Josephine and Barry Freedman. Fred Swartz designed the Sandisfield 250th logo. Many thanks to all of these folks!



Really. There will be fireworks Friday night, July 27, about 9:30, at Carr Field. About a mile west of the New Boston Inn on Rt. 57, Carr Field is between the New Boston Cemetery and The Big Red Barn. You'll recognize it because Ye Olde Lebanon Towne Militia will be already assembled on the field. Sandisfield residents John and Elizabeth Kuzmeh, members of the Militia, invited the group to recreate a colonial encampment/reenactment from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. The encampment has its own schedule of demonstrations, including musket firings, weaving, wood-working, traditional cooking, and candle-making.

The official "Sandisfield 250th Anniversary Celebration Weekend" is July 27, 28, and 29. Everything kicks off with *Rascals & Others* from 7:30-9:30 on the 27th at the Sandisfield Arts Center at the juncture of Rt. 57 and Hammertown Road. A collection of stories, songs, legends, and images, the individual pieces will be performed by community players. One thing is certain, the show is sure to entertain. It only costs \$10 for an adult and \$5 for a child under 14. You'll be out in time for the fireworks down the road.

On Saturday, the 28th, the official ceremony begins at 9 a.m. with a presentation of the flags by the American Legion, arranged by Maria Domato, followed by an Invocation by the Reverend Donald Peet, the national anthem by Jean Atwater-Williams, and a few short remarks from the Sandisfield selectmen and others.

Following the opening presentation, visitors have different options. One is to join BNRC staff Amanda L'Etoile and Doug Bruce for a "Clam River Ramble," leaving the Town Hall Annex (approximately a 1-mile drive from the Carr Field) at 10:00 a.m. The Ramble is a moderate to strenuous off-trail hike to explore Sandisfield's beautiful Clam River and learn about efforts to conserve this scenic area. The hike will most likely take more than 2 hours and leave participants ready to refuel with delicious food options back at the Country Fair.



THE COUNTRY FAIR, AUCTION, MUSIC, DANCING

Less ambitious individuals can skip the hike and casually explore the vendors and activities back at the Country Fair. Crafts will be for sale at the fair, including quilted items, wooden bowls, jewelry, felt bags, fashion knits, organic soaps, and much more. Food options include local restaurants providing meatball sandwiches, hand-cut french fries, hotdogs, clams, fried dough and additional fair fare.

The Sandisfield Scholarship Committee will offer a Silent Auction on Saturday, which will include gift certificates, tickets to events, and other treasures. All proceeds for the Silent Auction will provide additional funds to the Scholarship Fund which assists local students with college expenses.

As well as vendors, the Country Fair on Saturday will feature demonstrations such as origami (the art of paper-folding); wool-spinning; and a power sports display by New Boston Crane and Sled. Roger the Jester will roam the field from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., and the Housatonic Philharmonics will play bluegrass from 2:30-4:00 p.m.

The pupils of Chris Keller's 5th grade social studies class at Farmington River Regional School constructed 16 shoebox-sized dioramas depicting Sandisfield colonial life of 250 years ago. The dioramas will be displayed across several tables at the Fairground, along with student-written tours of each exhibit. If you like Joseph Cornell's miniature box assemblages, don't miss these.

There will be children's activities on Saturday and Sunday from at least 10:30-11:30 a.m. and 1:30-2:30 p.m. The Sandisfield Recreation Committee always provides fun activities for children. Expect sack races, pie-eating contests, 3-legged races, and many other games and activities.

On Saturday night, the Sandisfield Fire Department will host a BBQ at the American Legion Pavilion, beginning at 4 p.m. Expect hotdogs, hamburgers, and baked beans and a variety of beverages, all good, including a special "Sandisfield 250th Cocktail." Also featured, will be a potluck dessert extravaganza. Please bring a dessert to share. At 7 p.m., Harm's Way Band will be on stage at the Pavilion for dancing and keeping the celebration celebrating.

Cont'd on p.3

Are you a good go-pher? Do you enjoy helping out?



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



For Sandisfield's 250th Celebration July 25th, 27th & 28th

We just need extra hands to help the celebration run smoothly.

For more information please contact



Bethany Perry @ 413-374-0772



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Your newspaper was the subject of a feature article in the *Berkshire Style* on-line magazine. The fact that we have survived to move into our third year pleased the magazine almost as much as it pleased us. They like us. You can read all about us at berkshirestyle.com/features/sandisfield_times.html.

We have a new advertiser this issue, The Book Barn in Colebrook. Next time you drive to Winsted on Sandy Brook Turnpike that becomes Colebrook Road in Connecticut, visit the book barn. You'll find mountains of books, well maintained, well organized. Support a local business who is supporting us.

Speaking of supporting us, please send a contribution. We are a nonprofit newspaper staffed by volunteers, but we still have to pay the printer, the USPS, and other vendors. Send a few dollars to The Sandisfield Times, PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255. Thanks. By the end of July our Anniversary Celebration will itself be Sandisfield history. Some of us will be wondering what to do with all the time on our hands. A lot of people have worked very hard to throw a fine, memorable party. Why not? A 250th anniversary doesn't come around in every lifetime, and when it does it's only once.

Let 'er rip. 🍷

Bill Price
West New Boston

Finance Committee Opening

There are two openings on the Sandisfield Finance Committee. According to by-laws, committee members whose term has expired must reapply for Finance Committee appointment. The by-laws state the Committee shall consist of five members who are registered voters or taxpayers, no more than one of whom may be a non-registered voter. Please submit a letter requesting appointment to the Sandisfield Finance Committee on or before July 15. The appointment will be made after July 15 and before July 31, 2012.

Send request for appointment to:

johnskripjr@gmail.com

or

John Skrip
Sandisfield Town Moderator
PO Box 544
Sandisfield, MA 01255

Your letter should include information about skills relating to finance and your interest in the town of Sandisfield.

We thank you for the time and effort in submitting your application to us.

Sincerely,

John Skrip
Town Moderator

COUNTDOWN TO 250TH

Cont'd from p.2

SUNDAY, AND ALL WEEKEND

Along with the food, crafts, children's activities, and the colonial encampment, on Sunday, July 29 there will be an awesome classic car show with members from the Olde Yankee Street Rods Car Club from Great Barrington. The club will broadcast oldies music along with providing tours of their beautiful cars.

Also on Sunday, there will be a fruit pie contest. Barbara Riiska is coordinating the contest. She can be reached at (413) 258-4761 for an entry form. Bakers should make a 9" fruit pie with a homemade, double crust. (*See pie rules, page 18*)

A special highlight of the weekend will be Open House for Sandisfield Farms from noon-4 p.m., organized by Andy and Sandra Snyder of When Pigs Fly Farm. At least seven of Sandisfield's local growers will open for visitors with special sales and highlights. At press time, the following farms were scheduled for the Open House: Riverview Llamas, Red Barn Alpacas, Born to Run Barrel Houses, Joshua Farms, Snow Farm, Looking Glass Gardens, and When Pigs Fly Farm. Maps with driving directions will be available at the Country Fair.

July will be busy in Sandisfield! As you drive through town during the month, take in the beautiful greens and blooms you'll see at various locations, landscaped and sponsored by Snow Farm, C.W. Nelson, Bobby O'Brien, When Pigs Fly Farm, and maybe some Sandisfield youngsters (our future 300th birthday planners), too.

See you at the Celebration!

Tuckers Redux

A small crew is rebuilding, refurbishing, and shining up the recently closed bar/restaurant on Rt. 8 in Roosterville. Chris Campetti (right), who has been employed there for nine years, and Marty Cormier and Jeff Blacker, the owners, intend to open again in mid-July. It will be MJ Tuckers, with a new slogan: "The Way It Used To Be." MJ for Marty/Jeff. BYOB for wine and beer until licensing is completed.

Marty Cormier said, "We want to keep it a local place where you can bring your family, enjoy good food at affordable prices." His family has operated the place for 20 years. "We're not going to compete with the Red Lion Inn," he added, "but we have something they don't. We learned to make pizza from Joyce Campetti, when she and Tuffy owned the place. Can't beat that."



Meet Some Sandisfield Rascals... and Others

Want to “meet” some of Sandisfield’s colorful personalities, witness remarkable events from bygone days? Your chance is Friday evening, July 27, at the Arts Center. Director/Producer Ben Luxon and a cast of community actors will present a series of theatrical sketches from the town’s earliest days to our own time. Then and Now, if you will. The stories are amusing, sad, even shocking ... but memorable.

“Lord Sandys,” First Lord of Trade and the Plantations in 1762, for whom our town is uniquely named, will make a rare appearance. Then learn about the saga of Col. Knox and his band of patriots as they struggle through Sandisfield on a cold day in January 1776 dragging captured British cannons for General Washington in Cambridge.

Attend an 1805 wedding ceremony at the New Boston Inn. Be there when a rejected suitor shows up uninvited. Does “Harriet” still roam the hallways and the ballroom in her wedding dress, softly singing?

Our own brilliant but eccentric Dr. Ira Smith invented an airplane in the 1820s. The contraption made one short flight, with the doctor in it. Visit Sandisfield Center’s renowned Hull Store in the booming 1840s and its proprietor, Lt. Governor George Hull. He sells everything there, even has a church pulpit.

The Fuller family on Town Hill Road suffered the losses of their young daughters



and a grandchild to disease in 1853. Their sad story and an eloquent poem about it are guaranteed to move you.

Did you know that Sandisfield was a rough-and-tumble town in the 1870s? The shocking incident of Johanna Sullivan makes the point. Clairvoyance was all the rage at the turn of the century. Learn how “Dr. ZanZan” in far-off Chicago led authorities to the body of Mrs. Brewer in South Sandisfield in 1899. If you grew up or summered in Montville, you may recognize some of the old Jewish ladies who swap hilarious and not-so-funny stories about everyday life in the 1930s.

There’s much more: poets, musicians, singers, correspondents and even our own world-famous boxer, Dave Shade. They’ll all be there to entertain, inform and delight you. July 27 at the Sandisfield Arts Center.

FLYOVER ABORTED

Among the special events scheduled for the Celebration, a military flyover isn’t going to be one of them. The 250th committee had requested a flyover for the opening ceremony but the 104th Fighter Wing at Barnes Air National Guard base had to decline due to “operational commitments.” Major Mutti, our contact there, could not have been nicer, as were the folks at the Federal Aviation Administration. While everyone was very help-

ful in assisting us through months of paperwork and approvals, it seems that, “Due to the large number of events the Air Force has been receiving lately, it is now required that any event determined eligible has to have a strong level of military participation and recognition (** please note that a color guard, the singing of the National Anthem and a brief announcement of the military does not constitute a strong level of participation and will not be enough to determine your event eligible).” While it will be difficult to replicate the excitement (or noise level) of a squadron of F-15s flying overhead, we hope to find a suitable replacement event. Stay tuned!

A Walk and Two Hikes

In gearing up for the three-day Celebration, you should consider going on one or all three activities that highlight the natural history as well as the history of Sandisfield.

Weather permitting, Laura Rogers-Castro will lead a butterfly walk at Snow Farm, 16 South Beech Plain Road, on Saturday, July 14 at 10:00 a.m. Participants will discover fun facts about these “flying flowers” and learn how past land use influences the animals that you see today. (Yes, butterflies are animals!)

On Tuesday, July 18, at 10:00 a.m., Amanda L’Etoile of the Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC) will lead a hike at Bob’s Way on Route 23 just over the Otis border. Amanda is very knowledgeable about mammal tracks and sign and will share her expertise with participants. Bring snacks and water and wear appropriate footwear for forest and wetland habitats.

On Saturday, July 21, 10 a.m. (rain date Sunday, July 22), Tom Ragusa and Ron Bernard, local history enthusiasts, will lead a special hike on the Knox Trail where it crossed through Sandisfield. Meet at North Beech Plain at Perry Road. See Ron’s article in this issue for additional insight on the trek led by Colonel Knox in 1776 to save Washington’s army in Boston.

“250 CandleSTICKS” Community Art Project

The 250th Birthday Committee needs 250 residents to participate in an art project to be installed in Sandisfield Center.

Find a sturdy stick, about 4 feet long and 1-2” inches in diameter, paint it a bright color or pattern, and drop it off in the specially marked can at the town dump by July 13. These “candles” will be installed along the old road that diagonally traverses the field where the own Green once stood near the intersection of Sandisfield Road and New Hartford Road.

Please do not use reflective, neon or sparkly paint as we don’t want to distract drivers at night! IF you have any questions, please call Liana Toscanini at (413) 441-9542 or email liana@communityaccesstothearts.org.



COLONIAL MILITIA RETURN TO SANDISFIELD

By John Kuzmech

From 1775-1789, especially during the American Revolution, property near the New Boston Inn served as a training site for the call to arms to defend the cause. This summer may well be the first time in 220 years that men in colonial attire and muskets have gathered in Sandisfield.

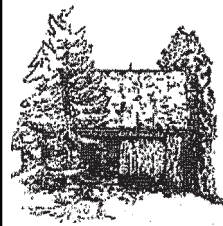
The Lebanon Militia, a fine group of Revolutionary War re-enactors, will be on hand at the 250th Celebration at Carr Field. The re-enactors will drill and present cannon artillery demonstrations, primitive woodworking, meals cooked in a camp kitchen and period crafts on Saturday and Sunday, July 28-29.

The members embrace 18th century military camp life, crafts and occupations of the time, and recreate the life of the colonial militiaman and his family. For a militia member, a typical Sunday started with church services, after which members would "muster" or train as a militia, honing skills to serve the community in times of danger. Rather than uniforms, the members wore a mix and match of civilian clothing with possibly a hint of military clothing dating from the French and Indian Wars. Each man was responsible to provide his own clothing and equipment.

Current commanding officer, Captain Kenneth Giella, reports that the original Lebanon Militia Company was formed in the 18th century to defend the town of Lebanon, Connecticut, against the oppression of English Tyranny. Today the Militia is a diverse organization of men, women, and children who share a love of the birth of our country. Members are from all walks of life and are proud of their ability to portray Militiamen, Artillery, Camp Followers and Artificers.

The best way to learn about history is to live it. You can, too.

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From left, a friend of Becki's, Elise Moran, Hilario, known as "Lechunga," and Becki Olivieri

A Life-Changing Mission to Mexico

By Becki Olivieri

Becki Olivieri, 17, of South Sandisfield, graduated this spring from Mount Everett High School in Sheffield. A singer, actress, and photographer, she has sung for 11 years in Chorus Angelicus, a children/adult choir in Torrington. Currently working on Cape Cod, Becki will decide soon whether to attend UMass in Boston this fall or return to Mexico for, as she says, "a bit."

Her participation in Chorus Angelicus was sponsored by Sandisfield's Bill Crofut Arts Fund, which also sponsored her mission to Mexico. The Fund provides training grants for Sandisfield young people to the age of 18 in art, music, dance, and theatre, and can extend to lessons coaching, educational trips, instruments, and after-school classes. Sandisfield teachers, instructors, and organizations, as well as individuals, can apply for expenses related to arts training. For information, call Susie Crofut at 413-258-4994.

With the help of the Bill Crofut Fund, I was able to join a short-term mission trip to El Rancho del Rey in Monterrey, Mexico, this past February. A safety home for underprivileged and at-risk boys, the Ranch helps these boys and seeks to enable them become model citizens. When a boy in need is identified, he is given medical attention, enrolled in a local school, and invited into the ranch family with open arms.

I wasn't sure what to expect when I stepped off the plane. I was nervous and a little intimidated by a completely new culture, and had let my imagination run away with the idea of "underprivileged" children and "third-world" conditions.

By the first morning, I was already attached to the boys, had made friends with the staff, and loved the beautiful mountains around the ranch. I became part of the family, and every day was an adventure. The trip turned out to be more than I could have imagined. It was the single greatest experience of my life.

In nine days, I was able to see how much the help of El Rancho changed the boys' lives. Without the ranch, many of these boys would have been living on the street, or abducted and made soldiers for drug cartels. Many of the boys came straight off the streets, many have relatives involved in the drug wars, and many have lost their parents and have no one to care for them. El Rancho del Rey was a kind of Noah's Ark, saving the boys from danger and helping them find a better life.

I was amazed how these kids, and everyone I met in Mexico, can put aside everything they have been through and simply live life happily. They had nothing, yet made the most of everything. They counted their blessings that they were alive and had people who cared about them.

When the boys are asked how they are doing, they cheerfully respond that they all are, "Benedidos, Prosperados, y muy, muy, guapos!" translating to: We are blessed, we are prosperous, and we are very, very good looking! Even if they have nothing to be happy about, they still find a way to celebrate what life has given them.

When I returned home, I realized that there are many misconceptions of Mexico. Americans associate Mexico with drug wars, violence, and inferiority to our own consumer-driven society. The truth is, America struggles with violence and drugs as well, but because Mexico is a third-world country we hear about their struggles more frequently. In fact, it is a beautiful country filled with beautiful people.

Every day I am reminded of how much the boys mean to me and how much I miss them. This trip changed my life. I have learned to appreciate everything I have and recognize how truly lucky I am to have had all the opportunities in my life. In those short nine days, I felt I helped make a difference at El Rancho and in the lives of the boys there. The boys became attached to me at the hip as I became attached to them. They were receptive to everything our group showed them, grateful for the gifts we brought, and just eager to be accepted by us.

If I made a difference in their lives, they made an enormous difference in mine. I returned to America a changed person. No puedo imaginar mi vida sin El Rancho del Rey y todas las personas increíble que conocí allí. I can't imagine my life without Rancho del Rey, and all of the incredible people I met there. I am very grateful for the help and support of the Bill Crofut Fund which made this life-changing experience possible.

For more information about El Rancho del Rey, log on to www.elranchodelrey.org

Help save El Rancho! Please make a donation!

Boys at El Rancho del Rey, Monterrey, Mexico



WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF COL. KNOX

By Ron Bernard

Join Otis resident and trail guide Tom Ragusa and local historian Ron Bernard on Saturday, July 21, for the first-ever memorial hike over the Sandisfield section of the Knox Trail.

Everyone knows that this month we will celebrate 250 years of history as a municipality. But few may be aware that an even much older legacy, a humble one-horse path through the 17th century Berkshires wilderness, played important roles both in Sandisfield's early settlement and the most significant event to occur here.

What's come to be known as The Knox Trail was originally a simple Indian trail that connected Springfield with the southern Berkshires hinterland. As early as the 1650s the trail was used by fur traders as a route to Albany and later as a recognized route to Sheffield. In the 18th century its importance increased as a war road with different names including The Great Road, a curious overstatement.

On a cold day in early January 1776, Colonel Henry Knox led an artillery train from Fort Ticonderoga in New York to support General Washington's army, camped at Cambridge. The two-month trek through the wilds of Western Massachusetts, including a portion of northern Sandisfield, was instrumental in forcing the British army to evacuate Boston.



Hauling cannons from Fort Ticonderoga for the siege on Boston, Henry Knox and teamsters passed through northern Sandisfield. (National Archives)

History buffs have long been fascinated with this story and the route taken by Col. Knox. Recently the last unmapped portion of the trail – the Sandisfield section – was identified. Join Tom and Ron on Saturday, July 21, to walk that same path.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Degree of difficulty: Probably rigorous; not recommended for young children.

Estimated distance: Two miles.

Expected duration: Two to three hours.

What to bring: Hiking pole and hiking boots

or good sneakers; a cell phone; insect repellent.

Plenty of water and a snack is a good idea. Dress for the occasion.

Venue: Saturday July 21, 10:00 am. Rain date, Sunday, July 22.

Sandisfield Meeting Point: Perry Road at North Beech Plain Road. (Transportation back to starting point will be provided).

Parking is extremely limited. PLEASE BUD-DY-UP.

Reservations requested. Call Tom at 413 269-7209.

wm.

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

Image: Tina Sotis ©2011



BRIDGE WATCH - NB's "LITTLE" DIG

By Sandy Parisky

If you encountered short delays last month crossing the New Boston bridge it was because workers were moving earth, hauling stones, and setting power poles in preparation of the phased demolition of the aging steel-truss bridge over the Farmington on Rts. 8 and 57.

Six heavy wood telephone poles were set in place to carry overhead utility lines bringing power to 3-phase traffic lights and nearby private properties. A trench was dug for underground conduits to carry utilities to the Old Stone House owned by Peter Levine & Ellen Croiber, and a new road through private properties owned by R. Allen, R. Morrison, M. Morrison, and P. Murray was paved to provide access to homes on Tannery Road from Tolland Road while the road that hugs the river and general store is rebuilt.

Rebuilding Tannery Road is a complex piece of the bridge puzzle. A narrow roadway in the



A roller-bit drill attached to a bulldozer was necessary to punch a hole next to the Old Stone House.

Photo: Bill Price

space between the New Boston General Store and the river, Tannery is a one-way lane more trail than road.

J. H. Maxymillian (JHM), the firm contracted by MassDOT to manage the entire project, explained that rebuilding Tannery Rd. involves placing a temporary steel or wood-lagging wall to shore up the earth beneath. This requires some type of restraint to hold the top of the shoring wall either by digging across the entire road and burying cables or a more costly option

– drilling into the earth bank, placing cables into drilled holes and filling these with cement grout. JHM chose the latter option in order to lessen the impact on the store.

Although JHM can't say exactly when the power company will finish overhead utility work – it is not a question of if the bridge will be restricted to a single traffic lane during its phased demolition, but when – it's certain that folks traveling here for our 250th Celebration hope this comes after the July 27-29 weekend.

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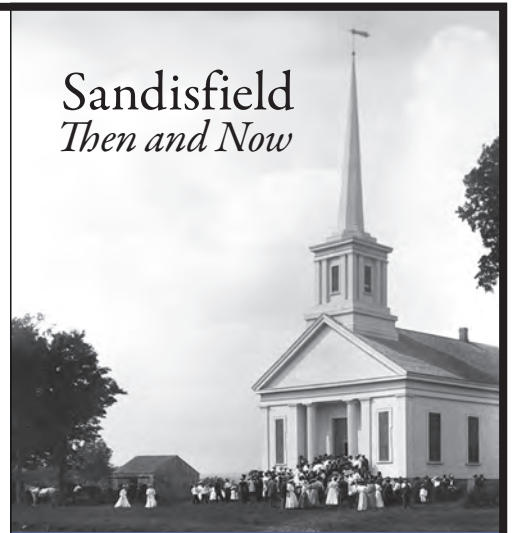
Sandisfield Then and Now will be available for purchase at the 250th Celebration.

\$40 while supplies last, cash or checks to "Town of Sandisfield." No credit cards.

Find our table, next to the table for *The Sandisfield Times*.

For more information, call 413-269-0012.

Sandisfield Then and Now



1762-2012

by Ronald M. Bernard

Weed Control at West and Abby Lakes?

By Bill Price



In what appears to be a weed-control program, the Department of Conservation and Recreation sprayed what is very likely weed-killer on the slopes and spillways of West and Abby Lakes at the beginning of June.

The DCR has yet to respond to requests by the *Times* for information about the recent work at the reservoirs.

A few neighbors who often walk the lakes report having seen unmarked vehicles and tanks used for spraying on the grounds around both lakes. Leslie Harrison of West Street said, "It seems that the DCR has decided in the busiest season, when the lakes are popular with

families, dog walkers, fishermen, kayakers, and canoers, to spray weed killer over the property, into the water, into the air. There was no warning or notice on site about what they were doing, nor was there any information about it on their website."

Other neighbors, Al and Janet Adams, Sandisfield Road, noticed the same activity as they walked near and over the dam, as well as a strong pesticide odor and a burning sensation in their throats. Al spoke to the workmen, who wore no identification, who told him they were spraying an herbicide and it might be a good idea not to walk there for "a couple days."

Lori Wilkinson of Sandisfield Road says that during the heavy rains at the time the odor was "horrendous" and that the tractor remains in the orchard near West Lake, its tanks still full.

At home after the stroll around the lake, Al called the offices of Representative Pignatelli and Senator Downing to ask if they had any information about the spraying program. The response from Smitty's office was that "the DCR does this every year at flood control lakes, and the lack of signage was 'an oversight.'"

Al doesn't believe more information can be carved out of the DCR, and adds, "Three guys with a spray rig, no ID, filling their tanks from the lake and spraying something wherever they want, no sign, no nothing? Maybe it's cheaper to do it that way, but it isn't the right way. And who knows what the after-life is of whatever they were spraying?"

"Apparently," Leslie Harrison adds, "the department of 'conservation' and 'recreation' has elected to neither conserve nor encourage recreation."

More recently, a landscaper has mowed around both lakes and the dam, so the purpose of the spraying remains unclear. If and when we hear from the DCR, we'll publish an update.



JULY-AUGUST EVENTS

THE SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER

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

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Saturday, July 21 1-3pm

ARTISTS' RECEPTION

GALLERY SHOW NO. 3

ON DISPLAY THRU AUGUST 31

Snapshots of Sandisfield-
A Community Exhibition
of Photos and Artwork of
Sandisfield.

Friday, July 27 7:30pm

\$10 ADULTS, \$5 AGE 14 & UNDER

Rascals and Others a Community Theatrical Production

The Real Story
of Sandisfield



Saturday, August 11 10:30am

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2012 FORUM ON HISTORY AND AMERICAN CULTURE

The 2012 Sandisfield Arts Center's Forum on History and American Culture will focus on conscience and culture in world history and in the contemporary American political experience.

Persons of Conscience

Led by Val Coleman

Two Bears Foraging Locally

One climbing onto Mike and Grace Lutynski's porch on Silverbrook Road in May, raiding their bird feeder. Another caressing Jean Atwater-Williams' bird feeder up on Cold Spring Road last month. If you still have a bird feeder out there, prepare to kiss it goodbye.



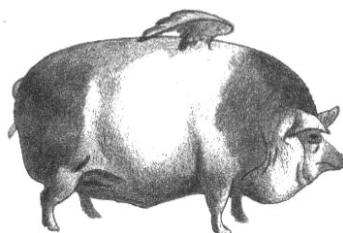
Sandisfield Historical Society News

By Norton Fletcher

Early last month, a large audience attended a great lecture at the Society's building on Sandy Brook Turnpike. Ron Bernard, author of *Sandisfield Then and Now*, talked about Elizur Spencer, a local wood-carver and inventor who lived in Sandisfield from 1803 to 1820. Spencer made spinning wheels and many other articles, and he invented a clever wooden apple peeler.

Spencer lived in a house on New Hartford Road, now owned by the Creem family. It was probably in that house where Spencer invented and assembled his peeler, one of which has survived in excellent condition and is now on display at the Society. It was donated to the Society by the Short family of New Hampshire. You can see it at the Society on your next visit. And you can read about Spencer in Ron's book.

Anyone who ordered the *Sandisfield Eats* cookbook can pick up their copy at my house, 2 South Beech Plain Rd. or from Josephine Freedman (258-4786).



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Kerry Sends Envoy

Senator John Kerry sent his communications advisor, Brigid O'Rourke, to Old Town Hall on June 21 in order to hear from his constituents west of Springfield.

Several Sandisfield voters were on hand, including Selectman Patrick Barrett. Brigid listened intently for nearly an hour as concerns were raised. Jean Atwater-Williams discussed WiredWest and how important quality broadband will be to homes and businesses not only in Sandisfield but the entire region, and how that would spur economic opportunities. Senator Kerry, reported Brigid, is very much in support of broadband for rural communities.

Roads. Rhee Kasky described how our roads are crumbling, and Patrick added that it has been extremely frustrating to get needed assistance from FEMA in the wake of Hurricane Irene. Not surprisingly, it turned out that other towns in western Massachusetts had similar complaints, and that Brigid would take that message back to the Senator.

General topics included the education policies of the Obama administration, questions about Social Security benefits, and concern over gasoline prices and the role of speculators in pushing prices up. Andy Snyder mentioned that federal farm bills benefit large agri-businesses rather than small farmers, which are the majority of farmers in the northeast. This discussion brought up the fact that no safety net exists for Berkshire self-employed or small businesses, despite the fact that they provide the vast majority of income and employment for people in our region.

The question was raised about the growing burden on our volunteer fire and emergency personnel for training and compliance, leading some to believe that volunteer departments are being pressured to be phased out in favor of "professional" departments. This would be an impossible scenario for our small town.

Brigid responded positively during the meeting, and provided contact information for follow up in specific areas. We hope she also went away with a better understanding of the realities and challenges of living, working, and governing in a rural western Massachusetts town.

Your Selectmen are Calling



As reported last month, the Sandisfield Board of Selectmen is organizing three committees to look into the managerial structure of the town. They need brains

and bodies on each committee, and now that we're winding down with the 250th Celebration we may be able to pitch in on another town project. If you're willing to serve, please send a note to Dolores Harasyko or send her an e-mail at <http://www.sandisfield.info/contact/>

The committees will look into: (1) overall town administration and whether we should hire a professional Town Manager; (2) considering lumping town facilities into the same bucket – Town Garage to Town Clerk, Board of Health to Board of Assessors – into a kind of Sandisfield Metroplex; and (3) whether Sandisfield should pursue an Open Space Plan (without which the town cannot apply for grant money). The Selectmen will chair the committees and hope to include seven or nine volunteer members on each committee.

As *The Times* reported last month: "The future is coming. How we deal with it is up to all of us."

Hammertown Road, like Tuckers, Re-opens

The residents of northern Sandisfield, that is the Beech Plain people, are delighted that our highway crews, working whenever they had opportunities from other, more-travelled roads, have nearly completed work on Hammertown Road.

It's open again, for the first time since Hurricane Irene last August and the rainstorm last September turned Hammertown into a series of canyons.

Road Superintendent Steve Harasyko reports there is a bit more to do, but the road is passable and, at least, "pretty good."

That sounds like a highway to Beech Plain folks who can now save a little gas and time coming down to Montville. To say nothing of visitors to town who were misled by their GPS systems into believing there was a road there during the nine months when there wasn't.



Nearly the only part of Hammertown Road that survived the rains of 2011 was the very solid bridge over the upper Clam River. It can now serve its purpose again.

TOWN BUSINESS



Edited by Rhee Kasky

Summary of Selectmen's Meetings

April 30, 2012

Attending: Patrick Barrett, Richard Campetti, Jeff Gray, Steve Harasyko, Dolores Harasyko

Planning Board members Gary Bottums and Kathleen Segrin in to review the hearing they held on the Right to Farm and Driveway Permit bylaws. The main concern regarding the Right to Farm is that the town doesn't have an Agricultural Commission. Gary offered to put one together if the bylaw passes at the Annual Town Meeting. Brief discussion on the Driveway Permit issue.

Steve presented Chapter 90 paperwork for the culvert replacement on Route 57 near the Turek's property. He also reviewed his idea for a spreadsheet for road maintenance projects that will list current conditions and problems on all town roads along with work to be done and estimated costs. Roadside mowing has started and grading continues. Blacktop patching will begin soon and Steve mentioned the culvert problem on Cold Spring Road.



May 7, 2012

Attending: Patrick Barrett, Richard Campetti, Jeff Gray, Steve Harasyko, Dolores Harasyko

This was a special All Boards meeting to review department budgets. School Committee members and school administration were present to address their budget. Tuition rates both in and out of the school district were reviewed; average cost is \$7,674 per student. Jane Gleason reviewed the formula for determining what has to be spent for each student and the breakdown of students from in or out of town. There will be a 2.2% increase in Sandisfield's share of the school budget, approximately \$25,000 including the operating expenses and the school bond.

Sandisfield resident Pam Begin asked the Selectmen what they have done to balance the budget. Ms. Begin wants to know why we have to keep raising taxes – she feels we are spending too much money on students. Patrick asked her where she feels we are over budget, pointing to all the open meetings that we

held this year to discuss the budget. Patrick explained Proposition 2 ½ and the levy limit. Ms. Begin accused the Selectmen of not following through with budget cuts. Patrick reviewed our audit and the discussion with the Department of Revenue (DOR), explaining the need to increase the levy limit. He does not see where any departments are overspending.

Susan van Sickle responded to Pam Begin's attack on the Selectmen, explaining that they do not set the school budget. The School Committee works with the school to present their budget, bearing in mind the state mandates for that budget. Ms. Begin still does not agree. John Skrip explained that the increase is a result of rising costs for utilities and heating. Rhee Kasky reported that she attended School Committee budget hearings and feels they have worked very hard to keep costs down.

Dolores reviewed a Power Point presentation by the DOR indicating that Sandisfield's tax rate has grown slower than the rest of the state. Copies of the presentation are available from Dolores who suggested that Pam take a copy. Patrick explained that we have level funded our budgets for the past several years even though operating costs have gone up. Eventually these increased expenses catch up with us and our budgets fall short. An example of some of the difficulties we face is the Police Department's application for grants to offset their budget. They found there is no grant money available and therefore their budget needs to be increased.

George Green suggested that the mill rate (the amount of tax payable per dollar of the assessed value of the property) is unrealistically low. He doesn't feel that using Free Cash to balance the budget helps.

Robbin Campetti, representing the Recreation Committee, mentioned that she has not increased her budget in many years.

Discussion on the procedure for voting on budgets and Prop 2 ½. The Annual Town Meeting votes on the line item budget and the Town Election votes on how to pay for it (i.e. Prop 2 ½).

John Burrows asked about the loan for New Hartford Road – he'd like to see the entire road repaired at one time.

Mike Morrison commented that the town's infrastructure is gone and Kathy Jacobs, Chair of the Finance Committee, agreed. Mike suggested securing a 20-year loan to fix all the roads and Richard responded that in that 20-year period we would have to repair some of the same roads we'd be borrowing for while continuing to pay the loan on them. It was suggested that the loan would be more appropriate for replacing town buildings. Jackie Bitso, Assistant Assessor, explained that the weather over the past several years has greatly impacted our road budgets. Ralph Morrison suggested we do as Tolland did and form a committee to look into hiring a Town Manager to help with these issues, among other things. Discussion ensued.

Kathy Jacobs reviewed increases and decreases in all budgets – she doesn't see extravagant increases. We were able to lower the Solid Waste Account bud-

get due to the success of the dump sticker program. John Burrows reviewed the impact of the lack of new growth on the tax rate, and Jean Atwater-Williams feels that having broadband will encourage growth in the town.

Debra Harris suggested putting together a strategic planning committee. Liana Toscanini mentioned the need for Open Space and Master Plans for the town. Rhee Kasky suggested contacting the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission for assistance in planning for the future of the town. Formation of committees will be addressed after the Annual Town Meeting.

Rhee asked about the Selectmen's request for this meeting to be a discussion about departments reducing their budgets if Prop 2 ½ override doesn't pass. Dolores, having come prepared, addressed the state mandated portions of some of the budgets. The Town Clerk must provide funds for a mandated staff for all elections and handicap accessibility to the voting machine and sees no way to cut her budget. The police, fire and ambulance have to upgrade equipment to meet state requirements. Barbara Cormier asked if each department were to cut 10% from their budgets would that bring us under the override and John Skrip said that it is not reasonable to cut budgets – Prop 2 ½ must pass. The other departments did not bring in reduced budgets.



May 14, 2012

Attending: Patrick Barrett, Richard Campetti, Jeff Gray, Steve Harasyko

Absent: Dolores Harasyko (working at the Town Election)

Selectmen voted to participate in the Regional Household Hazardous Waste program for FY2013.

Steve reviewed the pump system at the Highway Department garage. The monitoring system has failed again. Employees will no longer have keys to the pump. Instead they will be assigned numbers so that the report can be broken down by employee, vehicle, date, pump and mileage. Discussed the Osh Kosh vehicle which Steve would like to return to the Police Department as he is not using it. He is putting together a list of equipment that is not being used in order to advertise and sell it.

Discussed Town Counsel use and the lack of response from the counsel to several boards that have contacted him repeatedly for guidance.

Noted that the Council on Aging held a meeting in a private residence. There will be follow up to confirm that the Open Meeting Law is being followed.

May 21, 2012

Attending: Patrick Barrett, Richard Campetti, Jeff Gray, Steve Harasyko, Dolores Harasyko

Steve reported that blacktopping and pothole patching will start this coming week, weather permitting. There is still some money in the Chapter 90 Account for this work. Berkshire County Group Purchasing is scheduled to open bids for full-depth reclamation work on June 6.

Steve discussed his participation in forming new committees for future planning and town management. He will participate but does not want to be on any of the committees. He wants to stay focused on his job and not get bogged down with evening meetings. He's very willing to provide information pertaining to the Highway Department.

John Burrows asked for a FEMA update. FEMA has reimbursed us for about \$88,000 (Storm Irene) and we are still negotiating with them about the work on Silverbrook and Hammertown Roads. Apparently working with FEMA is frustrating, particularly on this disaster, although they have reimbursed the town for the October 2011 snow storm.

Voted and appointed Patrick as Chair of the Select Board and Jeff Gray as Clerk.

Discussed FY13 budget. Talked about the loan for New Hartford Road. Reviewed the passing of Prop 2½ and Barbara Cormier asked who was responsible for the confusion about whether it had passed or not. Patrick shouldered the blame and a discussion ensued.

Barbara suggested that the town not accept additional requests for Chapter 61 programs. (Editor's Note: Chapter 61 was created by the state to give preferential treatment to landowners who maintain their property as open space for the purposes of timber production, agriculture or recreation. Chapter 61 was designed to classify forestland.) Patrick responded that the town has no control over Chapter 61 – it's a law we must follow.

250th Anniversary Committee members Kathy Jacobs, Barbara Cormier, Linda Riiska and Liana Toscanini in to provide an update on events for the celebration weekend. Ralph asked the committee why the Highway Department employees are being paid to work on Carr's field where the celebration is to take place. Barbara commented that the Highway Department has only spent one morning rolling the field and they will roll it again, cut some brush and fill in the low areas. Liana and Barbara said that the town was asked at the beginning of the plans for the 250th to be available to do some of the work and the Selectmen had agreed. The Highway Department has volunteered to work on the weekend of the celebration. The Selectmen agreed with Elaine O'Brien's comment to consider the work they are doing as a contribution to the event.

Discussed the 250th Committee's town beautification project and the Selectmen agreed to allow the work to go forward. Local businesses have volunteered to beautify areas near Town Hall, the library,

the firehouse and the WWII monument at the Old Town Hall. Richard suggested they check with the American Legion before working at the monument. Kathy reported that they are having problems with our Board of Health. The committee needs a permit and SafeServe information. They have called the BOH several times with no response. The group discussed the opening ceremonies where they would like to have the three Selectmen present.

Discussed the formation of a committee for planning the future of the town and another to examine the town management structure. Patrick suggested that one member of each committee be a Selectman. Simon Winchester suggested there be nine members on the planning for the future committee and seven on the one for town management. Bill O'Brien would like to be considered for one of the committees. Discussed a feasibility project.

Kathy Burrows asked about signage for the cemeteries. She presented a sample mock up and said she can order 18"x 24" signs for \$35 per sign plus the cost of the post. Selectmen approved.

Discussed the former Wilbur property that the town owns at the intersection of Rts. 8 and 57 in New Boston. Ralph continues to mow it on his own and has looked into a flag pole to be placed there. Gary Botums has two benches and Chuck Nelson is donating stone for a driveway.

**June 4, 2012**

Attending: Patrick Barrett, Richard Campetti, Jeff Gray, Steve Harasyko, Dolores Harasyko

Steve presented Chapter 90 paperwork to close the Route 183 project and apply for the replacement of a dump body that can be used on other trucks. Steve contacted Ben Downing and Smitty Pignatelli regarding Chapter 90; Ben assured him they are working on it. The bill has passed but not the funds, causing work delays.

The town now owns the John Deere tractor used by Steve and abutting towns for roadside mowing. The tractor was paid for by WMECO.

The culvert by 158 Sandisfield Road will be replaced in the next few weeks. Discussed relining the culvert on Cold Spring Road and grading at Yanner Park. Steve has been focusing on equipment repair and maintenance. Next year he will focus on services such as basin cleaning. The Highway Department was commended by Rhee Kasky for their work on Silverbrook Road.

Rhee raised the issue of the recent placement of signs around town and how they are contrary to the town bylaws. Richard had given permission to a resident to post signs for a cancer event at certain locations. He

was unaware of other signs promoting business from Connecticut; that sign has been removed.

Reviewed the Operation and Maintenance budget for this year, indicating that most of that budget was used for utilities and heating oil with little left for building repairs. The cost of heating town buildings was high, even with a mild winter. Concerns were expressed about having enough in the FY13 budget for the coming heating season. Discussed having the utilities bills reviewed by the as yet unformed committee for future town planning.

Linda Riiska from the Council on Aging and Kathy Burrows, Town Assessor, in to discuss the Senior Tax Work-off Program. Reviewed Patrick's proposed policy. The Selectmen recommend we budget \$10,000 per year in tax reductions, allowing 20 people to earn \$500 per household in work-off credit the first year of the program. If less than 20 people apply, the per household work-off credit could rise to a maximum of \$1,000. Linda would like to eliminate the wording in the proposal that requires disclosure of household income as well as the CORI check. She feels that the paperwork is an excessive burden for seniors who might, in addition, not want to report their income. Rhee responded that it would be as simple as producing income statements and Patrick added that the information is a requirement as they review who is in the greatest need of financial assistance. He has contacted over thirty towns and compared policies, determining that his proposal is fair, protects the town, and serves the seniors. There needs to be clarification about whether participants in the program are to receive a W-2 form or a 1099 form as they will need to pay tax on the work-off amount. Rhee mentioned that the W-2 is for salaried employees which would not be the case here. The 1099 would be the correct reporting mechanism. John Burrows asked how people would be chosen to do the work. Linda said the applicant would apply through the COA to see what work is available. Once the policy is finalized, Dolores will do a mailing to residents who are over 60 years of age advising them of the opportunity.

Rhee asked about the timeline for forming the committees for town management review and future planning. The Selectmen responded that as soon as there are enough members for each committee they will get started.

Patrick asked Linda about the COA minutes from an April 12 meeting to discuss bylaws that was held in a private residence. He explained that the meeting was a violation of the Open Meeting Law as it was not posted. Any time a quorum is present and discussion of town business occurs, it is considered an Open Meeting and must have an agenda posted in the appropriate places.

George Green was re-appointed to the Conservation Commission.



THE SANDISFIELD LIBRARY NEWS

By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

Genealogy Classes will be held Wednesday nights on July 25 & Aug. 29 at 6:30. The 1940 Census is available for New York!!! I can help you find your Grandparents & Great Grandparents and beyond!

Our SUMMER READING PROGRAM continues through August 11. Kids must sign up. Special prizes can be bought with "Book Bucks" (one hour of reading earns one "Book Buck").

"Paper Back" Book Sale continues through August.

New books for July:

Seating Arrangements, by Maggie Shipstead

Spring Fever, by Mary Kay Andrews

You Don't Want To Know, by Lisa Jackson

Night Watch, by Linda Fairstein

The Operative, by Andrew Britton

Friends Forever, by Danielle Steel

Tiger in Red Weather, by Liza Klaussmann

The Woman At the Light, by Joanna Brady

Close Your Eyes, by Iris Johansen

I, Michael Bennett, by James Patterson

Odd Apocalypse, by Dean Koontz

Prairie Fever, by Peter Pagnamenta 



SANDISFIELD 250TH CELEBRATION SCHEDULE

- Sandisfield Historical Society Summer Fair, July 7, 10a.m.-2 p.m.
- Butterfly Walk with Laura Rogers-Castro-July 14 at 10:00 a.m. Meet at Snow Farm, 16 South Beech Plain Road.
- Bob's Way Hike with Amanda L'Etoile, the Berkshire Natural Resources Council. July 18 at 10 a.m.. Bring snacks and water. Wear appropriate footwear.
- Knox Trail Hike, July 21 (raindate, July 22) at 10:00a.m. Hike the Sandisfield portion of the historic Knox Trail with guide Tom Ragusa and local historian Ron Bernard. Meet at Perry Road at North Beech Plain Road. Transportation back to starting point provided. Reservations requested (413-269-7209).

250TH CELEBRATION WEEKEND, JULY 27-29

- Historical Encampment, featuring musket firings, woodworking demos, candlemaking, and weaving with Ye Olde Lebanon Towne Militia-July 27-29, Carr Field.
- Fireworks-Friday, July 27 at 9:30 p.m., Carr Field.
- "Rascals & Others" Play at the Sandisfield Arts Center, Friday, July 27 at 7:30-9:30 p.m. A dramatized collection of stories, songs, legends, and images. You will recognize many of your neighbors and friends as the anecdotal evening unfolds. Come join us for a celebration of Sandisfield's colorful history.
- Clam River Ramble with the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, July 28 at 10:00 a.m. Meet at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex. Moderate to strenuous hike.
- Country Fair with Crafts, Food, Music, & Children's Activities, July 28 & 29 9:00 a.m.-4 p.m. at Carr Field, Route 57.
- Opening Ceremony, July 28, at 9:00 a.m.
- Children's Activities, including sack races, pie-eating contest, 3-leg race, July 28 and 29, 10:30-11:30 a.m. & 1:30-2:30 p.m.
- Silent Auction, Sandisfield Scholarship Committee, Saturday, July 28
- Cemetery Walking Tours, July 28 and July 29
- Housatonic Philharmonics (bluegrass)-July 28 at 2:30 PM
- Fire Department BBQ & Dance with Harm's Way Band, July 28, (BBQ, 4 p.m.), (Dance, 7 p.m.) at the American Legion Pavilion, Route 8.
- Classic Car Show, Yankee Street Rods-Sunday July 29 at Carr Field, 9:00 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Local Farms Open House, Sunday, July 29. Pick up a map at the Country Fair, Carr Field.

For more information, visit www.sandisfield.info or Facebook (Sandisfield 250).
For information on hikes, visit www.BNRC.net or call Laura (413-258-4688).

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Arts and Culture Review

Great Music, Right Here

By Ben Luxon

Everyone lucky enough on June 10 to be at the Ferris Burtis concert at the Arts Center was lifted up by the joy and talent of young people committed to careers in the world of classical music.

An enthusiastic audience witnessed a marvelous concert performed by astonishingly talented young musicians. The artists donated their talent to raise money for the Ferris Burtis Foundation, the Foundation that is assisting them with their education and careers. Herb Burtis and the late John Ferris, long-time residents of Sandisfield, established the fund to help young classical musicians in the Berkshire-Taconic region. Last year, the fund distributed over \$9,000.

Gabriella Rose Makuc on piano began the program with Bach and Liszt. She is the most recent scholarship winner. I was particularly taken with her sense of command and enjoyment while playing the *Bach Prelude* and *Fugue in C*.

Next, Julian Muller, (right photo) a young cellist, played Dvorak and Chopin with a great sense of style and lack of histrionics. He is a very

thoughtful and contained (in the best sense of the word) performer. He was partnered beautifully and sensitively by Ann Chamberlain at the piano.

Morwenna Boyd, a classical guitarist, played a demanding short program which included



works by Albeniz, Villa Lobos, and a charming composition of her own. She showed a wonderful technical ease with her instrument, as had the previous performers. This level of poise from all three young people in playing not only great but demanding music was striking. We wish them every success in their chosen careers.

A guest performer, Kathleen Callahan, was accompanied by Herbert Burtis, her teacher. She sang dramatic arias by Mozart, Carlisle Floyd, and Puccini, displaying an effortless and exciting high register as well as using her chest voice to dramatic effect.

Yevgeny Kutik, the first recipient of Ferris Burtis grant, expressed his gratitude to Herb Burtis for the help in beginning and developing his career over the last several years. In Herb's words, this brilliant young violinist is "conquering the world." In the past year he played concerts in Germany and Prague and on the Friday before the Sandisfield concert performed to a sold-out house at the Embassy Series in Washington, D.C. At the Arts Center he performed a Beethoven Sonata and a Lutoslavski work dazzling in its scope and technical bravura. This young violinist plays with a mastery of the instrument and displays a remarkable range of color and dynamic, all of which is delivered with a fluency and naturalness that whatever he plays leaps into life. He was perfectly partnered by the brilliance and power of Timothy Bozarth on the piano.

EDIBLE SANDISFIELD

By Adam Manacher

Celebrating Sandisfield's 250th in the kitchen we return to the staples settlers harvested from the land in the Berkshires: corn, apples and maple syrup. What better way to honor those who struggled to set down roots in a new land than to prepare a hearty breakfast meal of warm cornmeal mush, caramelized apples, and cool sweet maple syrup?

Cornmeal Mush, Hasty Pudding, Indian Pudding...all names for a similar dish we would find on the table in late 18th century Sandisfield. (In today's nomenclature, we call cooked ground cornmeal "Polenta," a dish I wrote about last July in the food column).

Freshly ground milled corn, cooked over the open hearth; the sweet smell of gently bubbling cornmeal would warm the hearts of everyone getting ready for a busy day's chores. Easy to prepare, quick to get on the table (it is "hasty pudding"), it offered an abundant and nutritious source of calories

to those committed to raising a new community in the Berkshire hills. Apples, from newly planted orchards, and sweet, spring maple syrup from the famous maple trees of New England would adorn the rustic bowls of mush giving encouragement to all to forge forward with the work of the day.

For our simple recipe, start your preparation with the apples. Peel and slice 2 apples each into 16 wedges removing the core. Melt 1½ tablespoons butter in a saucepan, add the apples and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon sugar. Sauté the apples over medium-high heat 5 to 7 minutes until tender and caramelized. Remove from the heat and keep warm until ready to serve.

In a heavy pot bring 3 cups water to a rapid boil. In a bowl, mix together 1 cup water, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1 cup cornmeal ensuring there are no clumps. Quickly pour the mixture into the boiling water while whisking. Reduce the heat to medium-low, stirring the thickening cornmeal frequently with a wooden spoon. Be sure it does not stick to the pan bottom as it may burn. Cook for about 15 minutes. The consistency will be soft and smooth. Now call everyone to the table!

Spoon the creamy cornmeal mush into bowls, add the caramelized apples and pour cool maple syrup over the top. Taste the hearty, sweet sustenance from the soil of Sandisfield's history and prepare to take on the day!

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Henry David Thoreau



Image: Tina Sotis ©2011

Food Safety Taken Seriously

By Liana Toscanini



On June 12th, ten Sandisfield residents took the Serv Safe course organized by Barbara Cormier of the Council on Aging. Many local groups were represented including the Fire Department, the New Boston Church, the Sandisfield Arts Center, Tuckers, Vic's Seafood, the 250th Birthday Committee, the Board of Health, the Council on Aging, and the American Legion. The 5-hour course ended with a 90-question exam and everyone knowing that cold food needs to be maintained at 41 degrees or below and hot food held at 135 degrees or above!

While Massachusetts has adopted the FDA's "Model Food Code," it's our local Board of Health that bears responsibility for enforcing it. Non-profits are exempt. Nonetheless, we learned very practical and useful rules for the safe handling, storage, and serving of food which will come in handy for all the fundraisers that take place in our town. We will each receive a nationally recognized certification good for five years.

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Comings and Goings



HENRY "HANK" RAYMOND ZELEK

1924 - 2012

Henry "Hank" Zelek died on Sunday, June 10, at his home on Rood Hill Road in South Sandisfield. His widow, Joyce, described Hank as a man who would say to anyone: "Come in. Have a beer. What do you need?"

Hank was often seen driving town roads in his pickup with his Shepherd-Lab, Lucky, in the front seat beside him. He distributed surplus food from Great Barrington supermarkets to the Senior Citizens Center and individuals unable to do their own shopping, and he was well known in town as the recycler of bottles and cans from the town dump, sometimes even the New Marlborough dump, donating the proceeds to support the Boy Scouts. During annual awards ceremonies for the Scouts, Hank hosted a camp-out and pig roast for all troops across Massachusetts, and often a troop from Connecticut.

An enthusiastic hunter, fisherman, and trapper, Hank allowed friends and neighbors to use his woodland property for sports in all seasons. Hank bought property in Sandisfield in 1945 as a hunting camp that eventually became a home Hank built himself with the help of his family. He served three years in the U.S. Marines, and worked for many years at National Welding Company in Newington, Connecticut, retiring as foreman.

Born on February 8, 1924 in New Britain, Connecticut, to John and Rose (Waligura) Zelek, Hank was predeceased by two wives: Geraldine and Theresa. He was also predeceased by a stepdaughter, Cheryl Walsh, and siblings Louise Glazier, Maryann Gromer, John, Peter, Joseph, Edward and Raymond Zelek. He is survived by his wife, Joyce (Post) Zelek, one sister, Barbara Bak, a daughter, Susan, and sons Henry, Jeffrey, John and Howard. He also leaves a stepson, John Post, and a step-daughter, Susan Bylykbash; several grandchildren and great grandchildren, and his special Sandisfield friends, the Cormier family. Following a gathering of friends on Saturday, June 16, at the Montano-Shea Funeral Home in Winsted, graveside services were held at the Sandisfield Cemetery with full Military Honors.



LAURA HRYCKVICH WILSON

1921-2012

Born in Sandisfield on Feb. 28, 1921, to Frank and Mary Hryckvich, Laura grew up on the family farm on Beech Plain Road. She attended one-room schools on Cold Spring Road and in New Boston, and fondly remembered the Model-T driven by a member of the Spring family that bused area children to school.

Known as "Lovey" in Sandisfield, Laura moved from Massachusetts about 1939, but retained family and friendship ties here throughout her life.

She graduated from Lee High School and from Pratt Institute Business School in NYC. While living and working in Manhattan she met and married Kenn Wilson in 1941. They moved to New Jersey where they raised a family, traveling to Sandisfield for the summer and holidays.

Laura worked as a private secretary, office manager and bank department head during her lifetime, also spending years as a full-time mom. She was member of the Eastern Star for more than 60 years. In retirement, she and Kenn moved to Florida to play golf year round and traveled around the country with their clubs. Laura was an excellent senior team golfer, scoring a hole-in-one in 1997.

She was predeceased by her husband Kenn. She is survived by her daughter Diane Ludin and husband Roger, grandchildren Joyce Warren and Stephen Ludin, great-grandchildren Tomas and Liam Ludin and Ryenne and Mikayla Warren, all of California, her sister Ann Connor of Lehigh Acres, Florida, brother Nick Hryckvich and wife Doris of New Boston and brother Alex Hryckvich and wife Violet of Sandisfield, nieces, nephews and many dear friends.

A Memorial Service was held at St. Anselm's Episcopal Church, Lehigh Acres. In lieu of flowers donations to the American Cancer Society were encouraged.

SANDISFIELD 250th COMMITTEE CRUSTED FRUIT PIE CONTEST 2012

Sponsored by The Sandisfield 250th Committee
Crusted Fruit Pie Contest Coordinator

Barbara Riiska
101 New Hartford Rd, Sandisfield MA 01255
(413) 258-4761

Judging Criteria:

- Overall Appearance..... 30 points
- Crust 20 points
- Flavor 30 points
- Texture 20 points



Who may enter:

The contest held is open to all residents regardless of age. Commercial, Industrial and Professional Bakers are not eligible.

How to enter:

Contestants may enter as many pies as they wish. The winner will be chosen by the Sandisfield Board of Selectmen. Contestants will be anonymous until winning pie is selected on Sunday July 29th at 2pm.

Contest rules:

1. Each pie must be a 9" Crusted Pie.
 2. Submit a 3" X 5" card with your basic recipe (what fruit is in it), your name & address.
 3. No pre-made or pie mixes will be allowed.
 4. The pies may include any fruits or ingredients.
 5. All pies become property of the Sandisfield 250th Committee (Please use a non-returnable baking dish).
 6. All pies must be submitted to the Committee at the Country Fair by 4 p.m. on Saturday, July 28th and entry deadline to participate must be submitted by Tuesday July 24th 2012.
 7. The decisions of the judges are final!
- Local contest: The winner of the local contest will receive Portmeirion 9" ceramic pie dish from England valued at \$75.00 from the Sandisfield 250th Committee.

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Steve DellaGiustina
413-258-4996

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 events that involve Sandisfield residents or take place in Sandisfield and neighboring communities. Prepared by Susan van Sickle, 413-258-4877 or susanvansickle@yahoo.com.

July Events

Saturday, July 7 at 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Sandisfield Historical Society Summer Fair at the Meeting House, Sandy Brook Turnpike. In addition to the usual tag sale, homemade baked goods and lunch will be available.

Saturday, July 14 at 10:00 a.m., Butterfly walk with Laura Rogers-Castro. Meet at Snow Farm, 16 South Beech Plain Road.

Wednesday, July 18 at 10:00 a.m., Bob's Way Hike with Amanda L'Etoile. Bring snacks and water. Wear appropriate footwear.

Saturday, July 21 (raindate, July 22) at 10:00 a.m., Knox Trail Hike with Tom Ragusa and Ron Bernard (see article, page 9).

Weekend of July 27-29, SANDISFIELD'S 250TH CELEBRATION WEEKEND!!!

Of Interest

Beginning Thursday, July 5, 8:00 a.m.-9:00 a.m., and running for six weeks, through August 15, S-T-R-E-T-C-H classes will be held at the Sandisfield Art Center at no cost.

Saturday, July 14, 8:00 p.m., Laura Danehower Whyte, soprano with Benjamin Luxon, Baritone-at-the-piano, at the Sandisfield Arts Center. \$20 admission.

Saturday, July 14, the Annual Otis Craft & Country Fair on the Church Green in Otis Center seeks artists and craftsmen to display and sell their creations. The booth space is 10x10, cost is \$35. The annual fair, a benefit for the Otis Library and Museum, attracts residents, tourists, second homeowners and their guests. To reserve space, send payment and a description of your offerings to Kathy Bort, Otis Library, 48 North Main Street, Otis, MA 01253 or call Anita Weinstein at 413-269-4984.

Wednesday, July 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: "Climbing Your Family Tree." Genealogy assistance with Laurie Foulke-Green at the Sandisfield Library. Please join us. The library now has a subscription to Ancestry.com available to library patrons.

Saturday, July 28, 7 p.m. Robin O'Herin is the next performer in The Knox Trail Inn Concert Series. Robin is a Berkshires-based, acoustic blues and gospel musician with a hint of Appala-

chian mountain music. Call the Knox Trail Inn (Rte. 23, East Otis, MA) for dinner reservations at (413) 269-4400. Admission to the concert is free and is supported by a grant from the Otis Cultural Council.

August Events

SAVE THE DATE! Saturday, August 11, the annual Sandisfield Fire Department's Steak Roast, Fire Station #2 on Route 57.

Saturday, August 25, "A Jazz Evening with Charles Neville" will be the final installment in The Knox Trail Inn Concert Series. The concert, with Charles Neville's jazz quartet and vocalist as well as a New Orleans buffet dinner, is \$35 for adults and \$20 for children 10 and under. Buffet begins at 6:30 p.m. with a cash bar, and the music kicks off at 8 p.m. For those attending the concert only, tickets will be \$15 at the door. Call the Knox Trail Inn for reservations at (413) 269-4400, as space is limited for what is bound to be a memorable evening. Co-sponsored by the Otis Cultural Council and the Knox Trail Inn.

Saturday, August 25. Vendors needed for community craft and tag sale, sponsored by Tolland Ladies Aid Society. 12x12 space for \$10. Contact Shirley (258-4255) or Jean (258-4105).

Ongoing Events

Town Meetings (Info call 258-4711)

Selectmen, every Monday at 7 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Boy Scouts. Contact Western Mass Council of Boy Scouts for a local troop at 413-418-4002.

Council on Aging, every Wednesday, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Senior Center - Town Hall Annex. Pot Luck Lunch at noon, Bingo at 1 p.m. Free blood pressure screening every fourth Wednesday.

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

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

PRIZES FOR SNAPSHOTS OF SANDISFIELD

Don't forget the community exhibition of photos and artwork at SARc. The Arts Center has announced prizes of \$25 each for best photo, best artwork, and best entry by a contestant under 18 years of age. Bring your pictures, drawings, quilts ... any images old or new that tell the story of our town to SARc on July 21, between 1 and 3 p.m. The artwork will be displayed in the downstairs gallery as part of our town's 250th Celebration.

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

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

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The Sandisfield Times is an independent nonprofit organization staffed by volunteers from the Sandisfield community and funded by individual and business sponsors. Its mission is to connect the community through reliable, regular, and relevant information. The 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, the New Boston Store, the New Boston Inn, the SilverBrook Café, Villa Mia and When Pigs Fly Farm. Copies are also available in Otis at Katie's Market, Papa's Fuel, Otis Library, Otis Poultry Farm, the Farmington

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The Times can be mailed to your home by paid subscription (see form below left) 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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