

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

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September 2012

A RESPONSE: DEMOCRACY HERE FOR THE TAKING!

*By Patrick Barrett
Chairman, Sandisfield Board of Selectmen*

First, my thanks to Pam Begin for last month's letter to the editor of *The Sandisfield Times*. I apologize for not adequately answering her question at the All-Boards Meeting prior to the Annual Town Meeting. It was the intention of that meeting to clarify for Sandisfield voters

"...Municipal finance in fact is pretty complicated..."

any questions they might have regarding the town budget so that they could be more informed/prepared for carrying out the democratic process at the annual town meeting and on Election Day. It is my hope that in this letter I can better answer Mss. Begin's question as well as shed light on the state of democracy in Sandisfield.

Municipal and State budgets do not operate in the same way as one's own family budget. Municipal finance in fact is pretty complicated and town staff who deals with our funding has had extensive training on the matter and meet frequently with Sandisfield State Auditor Dennis

Cont'd p.2



1958. Tuffy and Joyce Campetti with field hands Joy, John, and Candace, with Dawn standing.

Making Hay

TWO CUTTINGS A YEAR ON LAND FARMED OVER TWO CENTURIES

By Bill Price

Driving north on Rt. 8 you can see the hayfields if you look quickly to the left just after you cross the Farmington River bridge. But you get only a glimpse before trees and brush cut off your view.

Continuing north toward New Boston, you drive for nearly a mile alongside rich river bottom land on your left that you can't see. The hayfields at Valley View Farm stretch all the way from the bridge to the beginning of Roosterville Road just before you reach Villa Mia.

They are the largest hayfields in Sandisfield – and possibly the oldest. They are still producing two cuttings a year and the family that owns and operates the farm is the same family of Campettis that bought the property in 1918.

"The difference now," says Matt Pachulski, the 4th-generation to farm this land, "is that while most people take a vacation from their jobs to go somewhere, we take vacations from our full-time jobs to do haying. That's a love for farming right there."

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DEMOCRACY, HERE FOR THE TAKING!

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Mountain in order to ensure that things are being done properly.

Towns receive operating money from state aid, two of the biggest checks coming from Chapter 90 funds for highways/bridges, and Chapter 70 funding for regional school transportation. Sandisfield also gets money from property taxes, excise taxes on motor vehicles as well as fees for such items as construction permits, liquor licenses, business licenses, part of the money obtained from traffic citations written in town and so forth. At the beginning of a fiscal year, the State and Town do not know how much money will be received from various revenue sources during that year.

Property taxes are based upon the assessed value of homes as determined by the Sandisfield Board of Assessors, which reassesses the value of a third of town residences in a given year. Thus property values are in a constant state of flux. We do not know how many building permits will occur in a given year, or if there will be any new growth, nor can we determine income from excise taxes, as one can never know what people will be doing in regards to personal transportation. More importantly Sandisfield does not know how much local aid will be given by the State in time for the Annual Town Meeting.

Thus, when Sandisfield's budget is set for May it is based on best estimates from previous years. There are also numerous unfunded mandates that departments are required to meet/fulfill. By law, we also have to fund any appropriations favorably voted upon at the Annual Town Meeting. So when a town official is asked how much money

"...a large majority of the registered voters in Sandisfield are not participating...."

will be coming in during the upcoming fiscal year it is impossible to provide a definite answer.

In her letter Ms. Begin also questioned the state of democracy in Sandisfield. She wrote: "I thought we lived in a DEMOCRACY and that being a taxpayer, you could ask questions without being 'ACCUSED' of attacking the Selectmen." Residents in Town do have the right to question their public officials; conversely, citizens who support the hard work of these same officials also have the right to say what is on their mind. Democracy is not strictly limited to those who oppose the way things are being run, but in fact is open to all voices that care to participate.


Democracy in Sandisfield is here for the taking for those who choose to become actively engaged. Unfortunately a large majority of the registered voters in Sandisfield are not participating.

Leading up to this year's town meeting we invited our state legislators to meet with residents. A meeting was conducted by our state auditors to explain municipal finance and Propositions 2-1/2, an All-Boards Meeting was held so that town departments could answer questions on their perspective budgets and, as in previous years, the budget was discussed in numerous regular selectmen's meetings. The Farmington River School Committee held two open meetings on the school budget, one of which was held at the Old Town Hall in Sandisfield.

The number of residents who attended these important meetings was minuscule. Voting on articles at the Annual Town Meeting sets the operating budget for the next fiscal year, yet we only average about 75 people for this function, far below the number of registered voters. This year there were nine positions open for various town boards/committees, including a three-year term on the Sandisfield Board of Selectmen, yet only four people took out nomination papers: Teresa DellaGiustina for Treasurer, Kathleen Burrows for the Board of Assessors, Mary Turek for Library Trustee and me for Selectman. There was an opening on the Sandisfield Planning Board for over two years.

We have been advertising vacancies on two committees, one that will look at long-term planning for town buildings and the other to analyze the structure of town government. We were hoping to get nine people for the building committee and seven for the town government group, yet to date only three and five people respectively have come forward for these essential committees. From

September until mid-June the Sandisfield Board of Selectmen meet once a week and from late June through August we meet every other week. These are posted meetings with agendas, and we encourage public participation, yet these meetings are not well attended. Any residents with concerns about issues in Town may call Dolores Harasyko at 258-4711 in order to have their issue listed on the agenda of these meetings

We have serious issues facing the town in the years ahead, and town officials need all the help they can get. Democracy in Sandisfield is here for the taking. I ask everyone to take a positive, active role in helping to secure a bright future for this special town. 




Val Coleman (left and right)

DOUBLING UP ON THE VALS

Val Coleman, who two years ago built a house in the Sandisfield portion of Otis Wood Lands, first heard of another Val Coleman when she visited New York City in 1985. She stayed at the apartment of a friend who worked for the New York City Housing Authority. Her friend's boss happened to be Val Coleman. The two Vals didn't meet.

As her house was being built, a friend in Otis Wood Lands sent her a news item from *The Sandisfield Times*: "Val Coleman Turns 80." This was around the time of her 50th birthday. Val started a little research and it wasn't long before she turned up Sandisfield's Val Coleman, who, it turns out, was the same Val Coleman of the New York City Housing Authority.

This new Val Coleman got in touch with someone at the Sandisfield Arts Center who indeed knew the "older" Val Coleman, and emails were soon being exchanged, sort of "Dear Val," "With best regards, Val."

At Sandisfield's recent 250th Celebration, the Vals finally met. Val Coleman (of Otis Wood Lands) sent in the photo of the two saying, "Hi, Val." 

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

New Old Bridge, "Rascals," and Welcome Home

Thanks to the drought, a nearly forgotten bridge across the Farmington between New Boston and the Colebrook Reservoir is slowly emerging again from its watery grave. To see it, take the small road that turns left just before you cross the current Farmington River Bridge going south on Rt. 8, after you pass TJ Tuckers. A sign warns "Dead End" and later "Road Ends in Water," but keep going anyway, a little over a mile. The road is bumpy, but paved. You can't miss the bridge. It's worth the trip.

This year the reservoir is low enough that, if you're willing to get your feet wet, you can walk across the bridge.

The drought, somewhat relieved thanks to recent rain, was no surprise to me. My place is right beside the Clam River, and an unnamed tributary runs through my basement on its way to join the Clam. Usually this unnamed tributary dries up for a couple weeks in late August, sometimes it runs all year. This year it dried up in June and is still dry.

If you missed "Rascals & Others" opening night of the 250th Celebration or were turned away because too many people were already inside or you want to see it again, you have another chance. See the ad on page 5. The play was filmed using double cameras during its original production. Now professionally edited, it will be shown October 6, Saturday, at 7 p.m. and the 7th, Sunday, at 3. (Free,



A young couple and their dogs stroll across the emerging Farmington River Bridge.

with a suggested donation of \$5 per person.)

There was a cast of nineteen of your neighbors. The set – the porch of a country store – was just right. The set designers, still more neighbors, looked at photos in *Then and Now* and hammered the porch together to resemble, well, the porch of a country store. There are screen projections, technical effects, Lord Sandys in a regal robe, Knox dragging the cannons through town again, Harriet murdered during her wedding at the New Boston Inn, Mrs. Brewster goes missing and Dr. Zan Zan calls on the spirits to help find her. Four *yentas* rattle on about their lives in the 1930s, Sammy Spring and his fiddle come to life, and New Boston's opera singer takes the stage with Wagner. The Flood of '55 seems to occur on-stage. Early October, two more chances to see it or see it again.

Welcome home to *Times* designer, Tina Sotis. She's staying in Dalton temporarily and may move back to Sandisfield, maybe Lee. You'll recall that in June she moved to Utila off the coast of Honduras to teach scuba diving. Utila is a small island, but there are many scuba shops. Tina was there long enough to recognize that while it's a great place, it's not Sandisfield. She's moved back, and we're glad of it. ♣

Bill Price, West New Boston



celebrated its first anniversary. You may recall that the WiredWest Co-op was formed last August for the purpose of designing, building, and operating a fiber-optic network that would offer comprehensive, affordable and reliable internet/phone/video services to member town residents, businesses, and institutions.

Over the past 12 months, much has been accomplished. Twenty-two member towns have grown to thirty-eight and several more towns are expected to join. A number of significant milestones have been reached. A comprehensive business plan to enable financing of the project is nearing completion. The elements of that plan have been made possible by grants from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, and the Central Berkshire Fund - in addition to donations, cooperative membership fees, and a band of dedicated volunteers. They are not small tasks.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, WIREDWEST!

By Jean Atwater-Williams

WiredWest Communications Cooperative Corporation, of which Sandisfield is a member, has just

The first major component of the plan was creating a GIS map database of all utility poles, structures, and roads in WiredWest towns. Potential network distribution locations in each town were visited and evaluated. That work, which involved thousands of volunteer hours, was completed in April. At the same time WiredWest completed a comprehensive market survey, conducted by Market Street Research. The survey results indicate strong demand for the network and provide important information for WiredWest pricing and packaging decisions and subscription-rate estimates.

Recently WiredWest issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for high-level network design and cost estimation. After extensive review and due diligence, Wired West chose the Matrix Design Group to complete the contract. Matrix has designed and built fiber networks extensively in the Northeast, including Massachusetts, completing projects for private and public sector interests, in urban, suburban, and rural areas. The work by Matrix is scheduled to be completed in early October and will be used in WiredWest's business plan and for financing.

Last week WiredWest launched its Support Card, a request form for internet, phone and TV/video services from the future WiredWest network. To enable WiredWest to accurately demonstrate the demand for service in Sandisfield, it is critically important that as many residents and businesses as possible complete the cards online or in print by September 30th. Watch your mail over the next few weeks for the print version of the card. To complete the support card online, go to www.wiredwest.net or www.sandisfield.info. The link to the online form is on the upper right hand side of the page. Encourage your friends and neighbors to complete their cards as well. The results will support WiredWest's case for financing and to inform decisions relating to where and in what order towns will be wired. ♣

Jean Atwater-Williams (413-269-0012) is the chair of Sandisfield's Technology Committee and our town's WiredWest delegate.



BRIDGE WATCH: STOPLIGHTS, JERSEY BARRIERS AND A NEW TANNERY ROAD

Article and Photos by Sandy Parisky

Returning to town after a few days away, I was greeted by a brand new utility pole and straw covering a trench dug along the frontage of our place at the intersection of Routes 57 and 8, hard by the New Boston Bridge.

The new pole beside our driveway is linked with another across the road and with a third new pole at the Tolland Road intersection with Route 8. According to J. H. Maxymillian (JHM), which manages the bridge project for MassDOT, the utility poles support two synchronized stoplights that will soon control north and southbound bridge traffic.

Once the stoplights are in, traffic arriving at the bridge will be intermittently delayed. Concrete Jersey Barriers, 6-feet high, will be set in the southbound lane to funnel vehicles into the northbound lane. According to JHM, the initial demolition phase will include removing of the entire steel truss span near the Old Stone House. To accomplish this an 80-foot, load-bearing steel beam will be installed over the river to take over the loads carried by the current truss system. Construction workers will soon be jack hammering the northbound paved section of the bridge.

Tannery Road, the narrow unpaved road running between the west side of the New Boston Store and the river, is being upgraded and secured. Concrete is being poured in sections containing steel reinforcing along the existing 30-foot high stone retaining wall that supports the road. The rebuilt road will incorporate a curb wall and steel guardrail and will be partially cantilevered beyond the face of the retaining wall to maintain a 10-foot clearance next to the store. This section of Tannery will remain closed during the projected 2-year construction period.



Tannery Road gets a very necessary and improved shoring-up.

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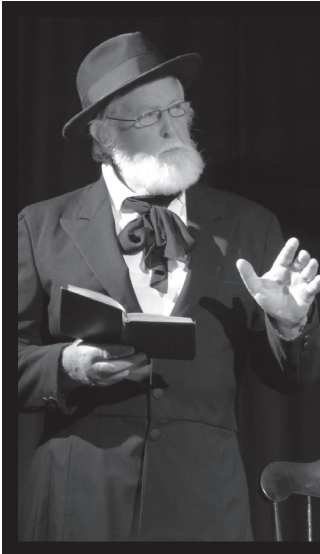
We earn the trust of our clients and customers;

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



Rascals & Others The Movie

Professionally edited video of the Sandisfield Arts Center original production of *Rascals & Others* (performed on July 27th for Sandisfield's 250th Anniversary Celebration)

SHOWING SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6TH AT 7:00 PM AND SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7TH AT 3:00 PM. SUGGESTED DONATION, \$5

If you were turned away at the door, sorry you missed it, or simply want to see it again, this is your chance to see *Rascals & Others* - the Real Story of Sandisfield!



SEPTEMBER 2012

This September instructs,
Wags its chilly finger,
And points at the door
At the far end of summer.

There's a lot to be done
Now that the summer's
Silly circus of flowers
Has blown away.

September's arms and legs,
And eyes and hands and more
Are there to help us tend the soldiers
Banging at the autumn door.


*Val Coleman
Sandisfield*

Another Bridge Watch, Maybe Next Year

A second Sandisfield bridge may soon be scheduled for replacement or repair. If it does proceed, the new project won't start until next year and in any case promises fewer traffic interruptions than the current Little Dig at New Boston.

This one is the Clark Road Bridge, the one-lane crossing over the West Branch of the Farmington at Roosterville, which has been listed for a "high priority of replacement" since 2008. On-site scoping was completed this summer, but the results are unknown yet.

As reported in the *Berkshire Eagle*, a federal transportation bill, signed in July, authorized \$1.2 billion in federal highway funds for Massachusetts over the next two years. The total replacement cost of the bridge is estimated at \$1,440,000, 80 percent funded by the Federal government, 20 percent by the state. Steve Harsyko, Road Superintendent, reported that no town funds would be involved.

Representative Smitty Pignatelli was optimistic the funding would be approved, though this particular bridge still has to be fitted into the larger picture of Berkshire County bridges. He was quoted in the *Eagle*: "If we don't do it, there's going to be some other state that's going to be more than happy to take those federal dollars." 



SEPTEMBER

THE SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER

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Saturday, September 8 7:30 PM

\$10 Adults, \$5 Children 14 and under



Kitchen Ceili in Concert

with Irish Step Dancers

Stan Scott (vocals, guitar, mandolin, and bodhran), **George Wilson** (fiddle and banjo) and **Dora Hast** (whistles and recorders)

Saturday, September 22 10:30 AM \$5

Mushroom Workshop



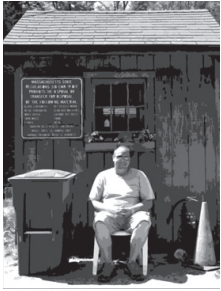
A mushroom walk and lecture will be led by well-known mushroom photographer and educator Dianna Smith. Meet at SArc at 10:30 am. Bring your lunch and water and wear comfortable clothes.

Saturday, September 29 10 AM \$5



Knit 1, Purl 2, a Knitting Workshop

Beginner or experienced...Long-time knitters Barbara Morrison and Sheila Liberman will provide instruction and help with your projects. Bring your knitting materials and your lunch (we'll provide a beverage)



TALES FROM THE DUMP

By Forrest Hull

REGULATIONS THAT BENEFIT US ALL

Recycling and properly disposing of your rubbish is everyone's responsibility. As we daily consume more of everything, we invariably increase the waste as well. It is our responsibility to recycle (not to mention, it's the law), and to properly dispose of our Municipal Solid Waste (MSW). What we do today could determine our children's and our grandchildren's quality of life.

Massachusetts is one of the few states in the nation that does not participate in the out-of-state sale of MSW. Any and all garbage/recyclables thrown away here stays here!

According to the Massachusetts website, "The United States is facing a huge solid waste disposal problem, especially in urban areas." It adds: "U.S. citizens produce more than four pounds of waste per person per day [*sic*], more waste than can be disposed of in an environmentally sound or economic local manner." (www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/actif.pdf)

For plastics disposal, Massachusetts recycles LDPEs (low-density polyethylene) labeled with the numbers 1,2,3,5,6, and 7, usually found on the bottom of the item. Items labeled 4 are usually thicker nontransparent plastics and bags and are not recyclable. An item only qualifies as recyclable if it has the emblem with one of the aforementioned numbers. If the item is marked "100% recycled" it does not qualify as recyclable as it has been made of previously recycled material and is now useless.

Glass, plastic, and cans should be clean, loose, and emptied out of all bags. If you bring it to the dump in a bag, empty the bag. Items disposed of *in bags* are rejected at the Recycling Center and sent to a landfill where they rot and release dioxins into the atmosphere. Massachusetts also stipulates that recyclable items should be free of food and residue. All "dirty" items are rejected and shipped to the landfill.


Paper recycling has changed again. Items that qualify as recyclable are newspaper, shredded paper, magazines, and cardboard. Phone books, hard-cover books, and paperback are all recyclable when the front and back covers have been removed and disposed of with your solid waste. Pizza boxes, napkins, paper towels, and paper plates are NOT recyclable as they are often soiled with organic matter and cannot be recycled. All boxes large or small should be broken down prior to being placed in the container bin. By not doing so, you and solely you are wasting everyone's tax dollars, including your own.

TV's, VCR's/DVD players, refrigerators, freezers, A/C's, and microwaves are recycled at the Town Hall Annex during business hours. Video surveillance at the Town Hall Annex is on

24-hours a day and people who dispose of their electronics after hours will be contacted to pay the disposal fee.

At our transfer station, *my* volunteer effort to collect and transport your batteries and CFL's has been ongoing all summer. Bring them in, place them in the appropriate container, and I will do the rest.

Bulky waste, tires, battery and CFL collections will end October 1st. Any of those items brought to the dump after this date WILL NOT be accepted. Bulky waste and electronic collections will begin again Spring 2013.

I hope this article makes you think twice about your rubbish and helps make your visits to the Dump a little easier. If you have questions I will gladly answer or do my best to find the answer for you. Remember, we all have a stake in the future of our world. Our actions today affect tomorrow. 

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Local Student Wins Google Scholarship

Samantha Swartz of South Sandisfield, Salutatorian of her graduating class at Mt. Everett High School in Sheffield this year, won a Google Scholarship for four years of undergraduate college and attended a 3-week program at Google's California campus. The Times asked Samee how and why she was selected – and what happened out there.

A VERY GOOD START

By Samantha Swartz
Photos by Samee's friends



My family has been living in Sandisfield for 13 years. I started schooling in Southern Berkshire at New Marlborough Central, graduated into Undermountain and then to Mt. Everett High. I've been interested in computers for a long time and spent a lot of time

during my high school years working with Jane Burke and Flying Cloud Institute in New Marlborough, encouraging girls in elementary and high school to get involved in science, technology, engineering, and math fields, specifically in robotics.

Two years ago I applied for the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT)'s Award for Aspirations in Computing and won both the Massachusetts Affiliate and the national award.

With these awards came a close-knit network of female technology students. This group introduced me to a number of opportunities, including Google's Generation Scholarship and Computer Science Summer Institute (CSSI), both for high school seniors. I applied to both with high hopes and was selected as one of ten national winners for the first annual Generation Google Scholarship.


The Scholarship awards me \$10,000 annually for the duration of my undergraduate experience, as well as an automatic acceptance to the CSSI program at Google in Mountain View, California. The program hosted 60 students, split into two

sessions of 30 each. I was part of the first session, which started June 24, and spent three weeks in Mountain View learning Computer Science at Google's headquarters.

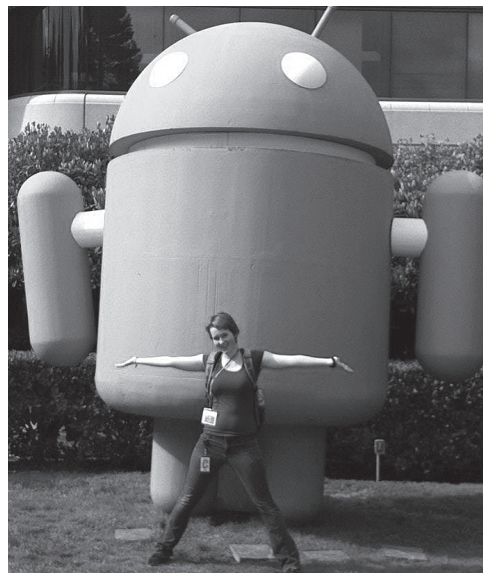
Why was a female resident of the rural town of Sandisfield chosen as a Google Scholar with the chance to attend CSSI? During the first workday of CSSI one of our instructors told the 30 of us that we were chosen for our interest and passion in computer science, and that Google strongly believes in supporting historically under-represented groups, particularly women and African-Americans.

Every weekday we took a bus from the dorms at Santa Clara University to Googleplex, spending from 9 in the morning until 7:30 at night on campus. For the first week and a half we learned different programming language each day, including AppInventor, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Python, and Google App Engine. We were taught by and spent our lunches and dinners talking with Google Engineers who were working on projects ranging from internal programming to self-driving cars to security.

During free time we wandered the Google campus and explored its many perks. Along with free food served in buffet-style restaurants with large windows, Google has brightly colored bikes strewn across the campus that anyone is free to ride, an indoor bowling alley, and arcade games and pool or ping-pong tables in the lobbies of almost every building.

This fall I will attend Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Mass., where I'll study Robotics Engineering. Next summer I hope to intern at Google as part of their Freshman Engineering Practicum program. 

Editor's note: Samee is featured in a short video at the website of the Berkshire Taconic Foundation: www.berkshiretaconic.org



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Sept 1 Bach's Musical Offering

Free pre-concert talk, 3:30 p.m.

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Sept 8 Daedalus String Quartet

Mendelssohn, Perle and Dvorák

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Sept 15 Boston Classical Trio

Free pre-concert talk, 4 p.m.

Susanna Ogata, violin; Guy Fishman, cello; Ian Watson, fortepiano

Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert

Sept 22 Brahms and Mendelssohn

Free pre-concert talk, 3:30 p.m.

Robert Levin, piano • Daniel Stepner, violin

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At the Meeting House on the Village Green,
Rt. 57 in the center of New Marlborough, MA

Making Hay

Photos by Billie Pachulski and Bill Price

Cont'd from p. 1



Begun in the 1800s, the barns are still "works in process."

It's possible that Valley View has been farmed since the town was settled. Described as the Elizur Deming Farm in *Sandisfield Then and Now*, it was first deeded in 1787.

The current owner/operators, Eric and Dawn Pachulski, bought the place two centuries later, in 1979, from Dawn's father and mother, Maurice "Tuffy" Campetti and his wife Joyce who had bought it from Tuffy's father, Dominic, in 1948. Now their son, Matt, and his wife, Billie, plan to continue the family farm. Like most small farmers today, they all make their living elsewhere.

You can get a look at the farm from the end of Roosterville Road. Park at the rail fence that closes the road at Eric and Dawn's home and, looking downriver, trace the remains of Old Rt. 8 along the tree line. The acres of hayfields stretch so far ahead of you that you can't see where they end.

To your left beyond the house is a barn complex that was painted barn red on one side and never painted on the other. The complex, begun sometime in the 1800s, looks about like it must have in the 1950s and the 1920s. Built for hay storage and dairy farming, the complex, which has been added to and adapted over many years, was electrified in 1905 and is now used to store firewood and tractors and haying equipment. Grooves in the thick wide-plank floors testify to days and nights of trailing cows in and out twice a day for milking and tons of hay being hauled into and out of the mows and corn in and out of the silo.

A newspaper report of the farm in 1906 says that its new owner, Rudolph Voight, "built on extensive stables to his barn, built a new silo ... All his buildings are shingled with the Watter shingles, all galvanized ... Mr. Voight plans to make this farm one of the finest farms in these parts, if money and good management will do it."

Despite Voigt's improvements – or because of them – he sold the farm in 1906 to Joseph Lipsitz, who named the place Valley View Farm. The property went through a series of owners until Dominic Campetti bought it during World War I and held onto it. One of his sons, known throughout Sandisfield as Tuffy, worked the dairy farm with his father and in a few decades bought the place.

Now Dominic's granddaughter and Tuffy's daughter, Dawn Pachulski, owns the property with her husband, Eric. The ground is still producing. Their son, Matt, said "My dad actually started haying by helping Tuffy starting in 1973. I started helping my dad when I was old enough to walk in the early



Eric, Dawn, Billie, and Matt Pachulski



Dawn driving the tractor, Eric and Matt tossing bales.

'80s. So those fields have definitely been hayed every year since 1946, and I'm sure it was done ever since it was settled as farm land way back when."

At one time Eric and Dawn raised market lambs, beef, goats, and pigs. Now, nearing retirement from their day-jobs, Eric said they may get back into beef cattle, maybe a few goats and lambs. But for now they grow hay.

Their first cutting this year produced 92 round bales and 500 square. Each round bale consists of 500-600 pounds of hay, about 15 square bales. Eric said, "Before we went to round bales, we would get 2,400 square bales in the first cutting, 1,200 in the second. We sold all our hay this year to Bob Tarasuk at Snow Farm."

"We start the first cutting around the middle of June," Matt said, "and are usually done early to mid-July, depending on weather. Early to mid-September we do the second cutting."

Matt's great-grandfather Dominic cut the hay with scythes and horse-drawn mowers, pitchforked it onto horse-drawn wagons and then pitchforked it again into the barn. Tuffy improved on that method when he bought a brand new Farmall M tractor in 1949, the largest Farmall made at the time. Then Eric improved on that. Matt said, "We used to cut by sicklebar until Dad bought a haybine for cutting. He was the first farmer in town to buy one, and we were the first to buy a round baler."



Making round bales: Easier than square bales

Matt explained that round bales require far less labor than square ones "When we do round bales, Dad and I can do it all without help. Cut the hay, let it dry a day and rake and bale it the following day. We can leave the bales in the field. For square baling you cut the hay and let it dry a day and rake it the same way, but you need one person driving and then two or three others to help on the wagon and stack it in the barn or on trailers and trucks for delivery."

The farm has seen its share of fires and destructive floods and was nearly lost at least twice, once during the 1938 hurricane and again in the 1955 flood. Just before the latter, Tuffy had freshly seeded the fields with alfalfa, every bit of which washed downriver to Colebrook. The house Dawn and Eric live in now, severely damaged in the '38 hurricane, was moved across the road and set onto the cellar hole from the original Deming house that had burned sometime in the early 1900s.

The family enjoys their time on the farm. "Time slows down here. It's

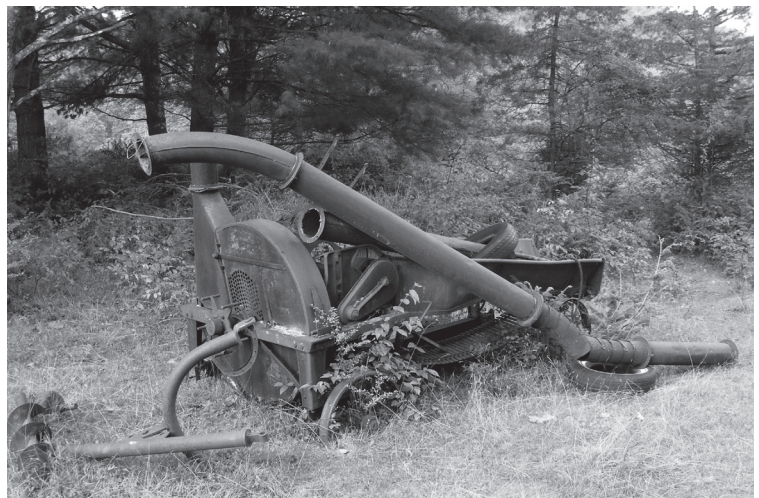


Tuffy's 1949 Farmall M, his great-grandson aboard.

another world," said Billie.

Dawn's hope is to keep the farm in the family. "We all pitch in during haying time," she said. "Nieces, nephews, whoever has the urge to help out. Grandchildren are starting to help, especially Joshua, Billie and Matt's 5-year-old son. With their new baby coming, we expect another helping hand on the place as soon as he or she can walk."

They'll need the help. Eric has started a project of painting the galvanized Water shingles that are still on the barn roof. It's going to take a long time. ♡



Never used now, but still at home in the field.

To keep farming in 2012, everybody works somewhere else: Eric is a CNC Programmer at Sterling Engineering in Winsted and captain in the Sandisfield Fire Dept.; Dawn works at Southern Berkshire Registry of Deeds in Great Barrington; Matt is at the Berkshire County Sheriff's Office in Pittsfield as a 911 Dispatcher (fire/EMS/police for 24 towns including Sandisfield) and a lieutenant in the Sandisfield Fire Dept.; Billie is an In-Home Therapist for the Child and Adolescent Division of the Brien Center in Pittsfield.

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THE SANDISFIELD LIBRARY NEWS

By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

The Sandisfield Library had a successful Summer Reading Program. Our four top readers were:

- Will Green with 97 hours
- Alex Green with 80 hours
- Madison and Brooke DellaGiustina both reading 35 hours
- Mykenzie Hall reading 10 hours

The children made ice cream sundaes and enjoyed their prizes! A special thank you to The Sandisfield Cultural Council for the generous grant supporting the program.

The next Genealogy Assistance class will be Sept. 26, Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. The Library now has access to INTERNATIONAL ancestry.com.

New Books for September:

Winter of the World by Ken Follett

The Midwife of Hope River by Patricia Harman

The Orchardist by Amanda Coplin

Return to Willow Lake by Susan Wiggs

Bones are Forever by Kathy Reichs

Frozen Heat by Richard Castle

A Sunless Sea by Anne Perry

The Roots of the Olive Tree by Courney Miller Santo

The Timekeeper by Mitch Albom

Low Pressure by Sandra Brown

Severe Clear by Stuart Woods

Writing on the Wall by W.D. Wetherell

Wilderness by Lance Weller 

Sandisfield Historical Society News



By Norton Fletcher and Josephine Freedman

At our annual election, August 11, all current officers were unanimously re-elected.


Thanks to the wonderful people who have bought the "Sandisfield Eats" cookbook and the antique-house plaques we will hopefully get our water system assembled and working.

Memoir/Cookbook sales have been excellent. Word has gotten out that "Sandisfield Eats" is more than just a cookbook. The short memoirs and histories included with the recipes make the book interesting to read. Many people are purchasing second and third copies for gifts. We have sold about 250 books to date and ordered a second printing in July. We currently have about 120 books left at \$15 each. You can purchase one at Villa Mia, (258-4236), Pete's New Boston Store (258-4522), or call Jo Freedman (258-4786). If you would prefer to have a copy mailed to you, send a check for \$18.50 (\$15 + \$3.50 for shipping) to The Sandisfield Historical Society, PO Box 513, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

The Historical Society will host its Fall Apple Fest on October 6th from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the South Sandisfield Meeting House, Sandy Brook Turnpike (Rt. 183). We will have a number of vendors participating, a tag sale table, 50-50 chance raffle, and our usual Fall goodies: apples, pumpkins, mums, and delicious homemade baked goods. Lunch will also be available.

The Annual Wine and Cheese Party will be held on Sunday, November 4th for 2-4 p.m. at the Meeting House. Everyone is welcome to this free event.

Our Annual Christmas Fair will be held on Saturday, December 1, at Firehouse #2 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Be sure to mark your calendar with these dates. 

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Another Timber Frame Home!

Article and Photos by Tom Christopher

The account of Don Turek's timber frame house in the May *Sandisfield Times* took me back to the construction of our own timber frame house on Sears Road in 2004-5. Initially, we adopted a far less self-sufficient approach. Our house was designed by noted timber frame architect Jack Sobon and the frame was built by two master craftsmen in Cummington, Mass., Dave Bowman and Neil Godden.

Soon after we erected the frame – in a traditional raising that brought friends and family together in our patch of Sandisfield forest – we discovered that the out-of-town contractor we had hired to finish the house was substituting inferior materials and not building to code. I, who had never undertaken any project more complicated than the construction of a chicken house, had to take over as general contractor.


An architect-builder from Nebraska, a friend of friends, and his younger associate, a contractor who was fascinated by timber frames but had little chance to build them in that tree-less prairie state, came east to help, and we were adopted by local Berkshire craftsmen Leigh Tryon of Monterey and Ray Cormier of Sandisfield. I found there was no need for competitive bids because these men all worked to the highest standards for a fair price. Because they all knew each other, their work went extraordinarily smoothly – our architect friend from Nebraska told me he had never known sub-contractors to work so seamlessly together. My son Matthew (who was 13 when the construction began) and I provided grunt labor, though Matt soon became a specialist in window installation. I never quite adjusted to the sight of him attacking a wall with a Sawzall.

We had decided a couple of years previously to make the floors and trim from cherry trees we harvested on our own property. A sawyer had reduced the logs to lumber and air-dried the resulting stacks for a year. It fell to me, however, to get the 6,000 board feet to a kiln in Stephentown, New York, for the final drying and then to a mill in Pittsfield for the transformation into flooring. I did this all with a trailer and a 4-cylinder Toyota truck. Fortunately, I didn't realize until the process was nearly over just how over-taxed that poor truck had been (eventually, the clutch did burn out).

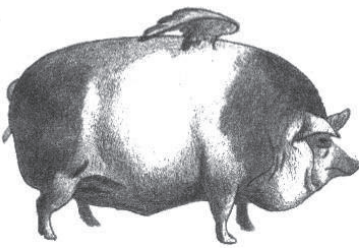
My family's personal involvement in the construction of the house made the result a truer reflection of who we are. Sobon, who consults on the restoration of historic timber frame houses, had envisioned our house as a little bit of Americana. My wife Suzanne, however, rejected the thought of cooking and eating in an 18th century environment. She redesigned that part of the house with our Nebraskan friends' help as an open-plan space with a minimalist modern aesthetic that perfectly accents the rugged beauty of the timbers.



When introducing visitors to the house, I make a point of highlighting not only my wife's Italian light fixtures (they look like moons that have come to rest among the timbers) and my son's windows, but also the four posts that Neil Godden and Dave Bowman quartered from a single length of a massive white pine trunk. These flank the living room area and are the only planed posts in the house – the rest have a hewn surface. Neil and Dave planed these four posts to accent their figure; if you stand in the middle of the room and look outward at them, you notice that all of the grains matches and you feel as if you are standing at the heart of that venerable pine.

For me, that encapsulates the greatest and intangible virtue of timber framing. There is the close and direct connection to the surrounding forest which roots the structure into the regional landscape. And everywhere there is evidence of the craftsman's hand – a timber frame house is a document on which is written the talents and vision of every person who helped build it. 





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The Red Squirrel

By Larry Dwyer

It's been a tough week where everything seems to go wrong. It's time like these when you reach out to friends for answers. I'm lucky that I have people that I can confide in. After conversing with a friend through the Internet, I was finally able to get a good night's sleep.

The morning comes and I am in a somber mood and go outside and look up at the sky. This is not something I normally do, because life is too busy for idle time. The sun was rising, and there were wispy clouds floating by. In the clouds was a focal point where the sun shone into the clouds and colors gathered into a circle. The circle was not defined, and the colors were not bright, but if you looked carefully you could see the colors of a rainbow, very faint and far.

As I write these words, I hear a buzzing sound and a yellow jacket lands on my forehead. I'm not sure what it is when it lands. Is it a bee or a wasp I wonder? I stay still and hope that whatever it is, it will not sting me. The yellow jacket loses interest and glides away. I now see what it was.

In the woods I can hear what sounds like the chirping of a bird, but I think it is not a bird, but the chirping of a red squirrel. Red squirrels are very hard to see and are very wary and reclusive. The only time I was able to see a red squirrel was many years ago when I was building my house. I had cut down a patch of trees in the forest to make a clearing where my house would stand. As the trees fell and the rays of the sun brightened the ground where no sun had shined for more than a hundred years, I heard a constant chirping. At first I thought it was a bird, and then I could see a red squirrel standing on a dead and fallen tree. He must have been saying to me, "You are destroying my house and my property! Why are you doing this to me?" Of course I did not hear his words but I could see his concern and only hoped he would find a new home. There was a slight guilt for what I was doing to the red squirrel, but not enough to stop me from cutting down more trees. I was only concerned with building my house and how much money I had invested into my project.

I hear a similar chirping again, almost twenty-five years hence. Is it the descendants of the red squirrel whose home I destroyed? I would like to think so, but who knows. I cannot see into the forest.



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

MJ Tuckers Watch for the Sign

It won't be long now. Marty Cormier and Jeff Blacker postponed the opening of their bar/restaurant as they continued to refurbish the building. Their initial "quick" renovation turned into something a little grander. As everyone who has ever fixed anything in a house knows, whatever you fix is attached to something else and suddenly that something needs fixing too. It was that kind of deal.

Instead of guessing at a new date for the reopening of MJ Tuckers, Marty says, "Watch for the sign. When the sign goes up, we're open."



Submitted by Dolores Harasyko,
Town Clerk

Edited by Bill Price

Selectmen's Meeting

July 16, 2012

Present: Patrick Barrett, Richard Campetti, Jeffrey Gray,
Stephan Harasyko, Dolores Harasyko

Reviewed and signed Chapter 90 reimbursement paperwork for Rt. 57 culvert replacement. Reviewed and signed Berkshire County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Discussed two committees formed to help govern the Town: town management and long-term planning for town buildings. Received a request from Kathy Jacobs to join the long-term planning committee. Three people are interested in the town management review committee and four for future planning. We have run an ad for two months on the town's website and been reported on twice in *The Sandisfield Times*. We will review committee programs following the 250th Celebration.

Discussed the invoice for the new fuel system. Patrick will contact departments that use the system to divide the bill between the accounts.

Marvin Sandler in to review concerns. He would like the broken headstones at the cemeteries repaired. He would like a bylaw regarding what can be planted at the cemeteries. He does not like artificial plants, or statues and other items, and would prefer only natural items be allowed. He would like all the trees removed in front of the Sandisfield Cemetery so the cemetery is more visible from Rt. 57. He would like the road at that cemetery be improved. Richard responded that the cutting of the trees would have to be referred to the Conservation Commission. Marvin would like Yanner Park mowed before the 250th Celebration. Patrick said that could be done. Since these items had not been placed on the Meeting agenda they will be reviewed and addressed at a future meeting.

The Town Clerk explained that she has not yet received required documents from the Planning Board to submit bylaws to the Attorney General's office. We have not had minutes from the Planning Board since February.

The Sandisfield Cultural Council donated two copies of *Sandisfield Then and Now* to the Town.

Bid process for New Hartford Road repair has begun. Bid opening will be August 13 at 7 p.m. 



THANKS, SANDISFIELD


Ellen Croibier of New Boston maintains a receptacle in the post office for collecting old and used cell phones that benefit the Elizabeth Freeman Center in Pittsfield. The center donates the proceeds for support of victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Ellen forwarded a "thank you" from the Center that reads:

"Dear Ms. Croibier and Residents of Sandisfield:

"On behalf of all of us at the Elizabeth Freeman Center, I want to thank the residents of Sandisfield for the years of continued support to our Hopeline project. Your awareness around the issues of domestic violence and show of commitment to our work is important to us. With your support, our work can continue. Thank you so much!

"Sincerely,

"Linda Strassell, Administrative Assistant" 




TOWN COMMITTEES GET UNDERWAY

Two volunteer committees organized by the Selectmen will hold their initial meeting on September 10 at 6 p.m. Set up to help the Selectmen with issues of Town Management and Long-Term Planning for Town Buildings, the Committees will be charged with making serious recommendations to the Selectmen.

There is still time to add your name to the list. Selectman Patrick Barrett said, "We were hoping to get seven individuals for Town Management and nine for Long-Term Planning. We would really like more people to step forward. Both committees are facing real issues and will be doing real work."

The Town Management Committee will look at the management structure of the town and analyze the way things are done and decisions made, look at what other towns are doing, and explore the concept of town manager. Committee members so far are Debbie Harris, Rhee Kasky, Bill O'Brien, John Skrip, and Joe Zeller.

The Long-Term Planning for Town Buildings Committee will look at town buildings and facilities and put in place long-term plans for fixing current structures or working toward decisions about a new municipal building. The members so far are Patrick Barrett, Jeff Grey, Kathy Jacobs, Mike Lutinsky, and John Skrip.

Anyone willing to help with these issues and be involved in the solutions should write to Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko at PO Box 90, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield MA 01255, or through the town website at www.sandisfield.info/contact/, or call her at 258-4711. 

The Forums

Picking Fights at the Arts Center

By Margaret O'Clair

Sponsored by SArc, two separate forums were held last month in the blissfully cool basement of the Art Center. The forums provided opportunities for local authors or academics – or anybody else, for that matter – to give an informal talk on a subject they found interesting in the hopes that an audience would share their interest – or maybe not. The speakers were not disappointed, given the lively Q&A following each talk.

The first week, Val Coleman discussed “Persons of Conscience” – five historical figures who at a moment in their lives took stock of what was going on around them and said to themselves, to quote Val, “Wait a minute.”

St. Francis of Assisi was the surprise opener. While on one of the Crusades St. Francis took it upon himself to enter the Muslim camp where he negotiated a peace treaty favorable to the Christian cause. Church leaders rejected the treaty and the Crusades continued another 400 years with consequences felt today. The ancient philosopher Socrates, perhaps the original “wait a minute” guy, questioned everything: the authorities, the Delphi Oracle, even himself.

Little known in this country, yet enormously important was the English political pamphleteer John Lilbourn (1615-57), whose publications got him into hot water at home but whose ideas were incorporated years later into the American constitution. George Orwell’s “wait a minute” moment came when, fighting fascists in the Spanish Civil War, he realized that what goes around comes around – that the left can be equally as awful as the right.

The last figure, and closest to Val’s heart, was James Farmer, founder of CORE and a man for whom Val worked many years. Farmer, said Val, was a man of courage and ideas and a man of action. “Farmer got things done.” While James Farmer may not have boulevards, high schools, or a national holiday named for him, he was the soul of the non-violent Civil Rights movement.

Val delivered his talk in an impeccable white shirt, his hair combed, and with his usual humor and élan.

The following week Bill Cohn gave a talk on “The Cultural Impact on the 2012 Election.” A cultural historian, Bill noted that contrary to what most of us think, people do not vote their own economic interests but rather their cultural and social preferences and prejudices. It may not be logical, he said, but it happens more often than not.


Opposition to big government spending and big government programs did not begin with FDR and the New Deal, but already had a firm foothold in the Republican Party. After FDR this opposition became a core value for the party. The 1948 election, following World War II, was as nasty a campaign as ever known.

The importance of the images created by Norman Rockwell and used as covers for *The Saturday Evening Post* have had and continue to have a pro-

found influence on how America imagines itself. In the 1950s, America was on top of the world, the most powerful nation with the largest economy. The soldiers and sailors of WWII were having families, suburbs were being built, and consumer goods were coming on line faster than could be consumed. All of this was reflected in the everyday lives of everyday people depicted on the Rockwell covers.

Bill addressed this nostalgia for the past that Republicans talked about during this year’s primaries, a wish to go “back to when America was strong,” “back to when America was great.”

Of course, that assumes that Republicans want the country to go back to a world where middle-class white men ruled the roost, which brought Bill around to the 600-lb gorilla in the room – race. Bill had no doubt that the ferocity of attacks on Obama during his tenure in office – which will increase during the campaign – is due to his race.

Bill delivered his talk with scholarly precision, complete with a hand-out of all the publications from which he quoted. Very impressive. 



Comings and Goings

FRANZ LEIMEISTER

1934 - 2012

Franz Leimeister of Sandisfield Road died on August 3, 2012 at Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington. Franz and his wife Renate retired to Sandisfield in 1998. He cherished time fishing with his grandchildren at York Lake and West Lake. The simple pleasure of sitting on his back porch enjoying the beauty of the woods reminded Franz of his boyhood in Germany.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years and his children, Frank, Peter, Eric, and Liz and by his beloved grandchildren, Marissa., Kevin, Tyler, Alexa, Brooke, Frankie, Matthew, Brian, and Kyle. Services were held August 5 at the Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home in Great Barrington.



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.

Of Interest

September 8, Saturday, 7:30 p.m. Kitchen Ceili at SArC, \$10 adults and \$5. children 14 and under. An evening of traditional Irish music and dance with Stan Scott, George Wilson, and Dora Hast who will be joined by a group of champion Irish step dancers.

September 22, Saturday, 10:30 a.m. A mushroom walk and lecture at SArC, \$5. Meet mushroom photographer and educator Dianna Smith at SArC. Bring your lunch and a drink and wear comfortable clothing.

September 29, Saturday, 10 a.m. Knitting workshop at SArC, \$5. Long-time knitters Barbara Morrison and Sheila Liberman will provide instruction and help with your projects. Bring lunch. A beverage will be provided.

September Events

STATE PRIMARY, Thursday, September 6, 7 a.m.-8 p.m. NOTE: This event is normally held on a Tuesday, but Thursday this year.

ELECTION NOTE: October 17, Wednesday, is the last day to register to vote for the State and Presidential election. Register at Town Hall Annex from 2-4 p.m. and 7-8 p.m.

September 12. Blood Pressure Clinic. Blood pressure and health counseling sponsored by Porchlight VNA, formerly Lee Regional Visiting Nurse Association, and the Otis Board of Health, at the Otis Senior Center, 12:30 to 1:30 pm.

September 26. Blood Pressure Clinic. Blood pressure and health counseling sponsored by Porchlight VNA, formerly Lee Regional Visiting Nurse Association, and the Sandisfield Board of Health, at the Sandisfield Senior Center, 11 a.m.- noon.

September 26, Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m., Climb Your Family Tree, Laurie Foulke-Green. The Library now has the World Edition of ancestry.com.

October 6, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Fall Apple Fest with the Sandisfield Historical Society, Sandy Brook Turnpike (Rt. 183). Vendors, tag sale, 50-50 chance raffle, and our usual Fall goodies: apples, pumpkins, mums, and delicious homemade baked goods. Lunch will also be available.

Ongoing Events

Sandisfield Historical Society, second Saturday of the month, 11:00 a.m., Sandy Brook Turnpike.

Selectmen, every Monday at 7:00 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

Farmington River Regional School District, first Monday of the month, 7 p.m., Farmington River Regional School, Rt. 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, 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. Open to the public.

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

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 Ext. 1159.

Senior Lunch Program, every Tuesday when school is in session, 12:15 p.m., Farmington River Regional School. For more information or reservations call Lynette at 413-269-4466. Coat \$2.00.

Sandisfield Public Library Hours: Monday and Tuesday 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Wednesday 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m., Thursday 2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. Call ahead at 258-4966.

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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.

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