

# THE SANDSFIELD TIMES

*Tribunus*



*Plebis*

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*Volume III, Number 8*

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## SELECTMAN STRICKEN UNPRECEDENTED DILEMMA FOR TOWN

*By Bill Price*

Selectman Jeff Gray had suffered a stroke on Saturday, October 20. He is currently at Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield where he is beginning what may be a difficult course of physical therapy. Everyone in Town wishes Jeff a total recovery and believes he will bounce back with his usual determination and humor.

In the meantime, the Town is in a dilemma. When Selectman Richard Campetti resigned in September the Town was left with two selectmen – Patrick Barrett and Jeff Gray. Now the Town is struggling to determine how to proceed with a one-person Board since two Selectmen are required for a quorum. A quorum is even required to call a Board meeting.

“We don’t have a script for this,” Town Counsel Jeremia Polard told Selectman Patrick Barrett.

At an informal gathering of a few concerned residents on Tuesday evening October 23, when the Board would have been meeting but could not because of the lack of a quorum, Patrick, as the last Selectman standing, explained that solutions were being sought at the local and state levels. “We are working on it,” he said. “I met with Town Counsel today, and Dolores

*Cont’d p.1*

## NEW BOSTON STORE STRUGGLES TO REMAIN STANDING

*By Bill Price*

A week after the asphalt truck crashed across the porch and into the New Boston Store, Pete Murray led me carefully through the side doorway into the storage room. It was the only way we could get into the building since the huge asphalt truck was still blocking the main entrance. With the electricity turned off for safety reasons, Pete showed me the way with a flashlight.

After running the store since 1977 Pete knew every inch of the place and didn’t need the light, but I’d never been in the store in the dark or from that entrance and it was a new place to me. We passed the table that stood in front of the glass-fronted freezer and coolers, all now empty and standing open, and then we were between the glass countertop and the shelves of potato chips. Now I knew where I was.

Standing in the store was disorienting. In place of the front counter and desk stood a plywood wall dividing the truck from the inside of the store. The wall was to protect the store from possible looters climbing under the blue tarp that covers the outside of the store and the truck. The wall also helped stabilize the ceiling and the second floor, which was now resting on the truck cab.

We couldn’t see except for the flashlight. The plywood wall was on the spot where Pete and Sue greeted customers, where they sold us bread and wine and newspapers and Coke or Pepsi, peeled off lottery tickets, gave directions to lost Con-

necticut folks, enjoyed stories with their neighbors, and said hello to the guys walking down from the nursing home. Behind the plywood wall was the truck with all the destruction still pinned under it.

The surviving wine and liquor bottles still stood on shelves to our right. Pete said that was where Sue, with Isabella, her small white dog, in her arms, headed when she saw the truck speeding toward the building blowing its horn. Pete said, “When the truck stopped, it was about 8 or 10 feet from the corner where Sue was trapped.” It had to be frightening in that

*Cont’d p.7*



*Photo: Setsuko Winchester*

### INSIDE

PAGE

Housing Assistance.....	2
Calling 911.....	4
Who is Joshua Smith?.....	6
New Boston Store.....	7-10
New Low for a Thief.....	13
Heroes Honored.....	16
Changing Owners.....	18

# A Little Assistance Grant could prove helpful to residents

By Laura Rogers-Castro

Sometimes we need a little assistance when times are rough. A leaky roof, sagging door frame, or drafty windows can all use repairs when we have a little extra cash. The problem is that extra cash in this economy is hard to come by.

Help could be on the way, however, if Sandisfield succeeds in acquiring a Community Development Block Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Sandisfield resident Alice Boyd, on behalf of the town, will apply for this block grant in January through her community development firm, Bailey Boyd Associates.

Free money sounds too good to be true. Residents must meet certain conditions to qualify for assistance under the block grant. The Community Development Block Grant focuses on helping people whose household income is within a certain range. The one-page pre-application has a simple chart showing the maximum income allowed (see sidebar). For example, a four-person household's income should be below \$65,000. A two-person household should be below \$52,000. If you

think you may qualify or know someone who does, read on.

If the grant is funded, over \$400,000 could be available to Sandisfield residents. Each household that applies could receive up to \$35,000 of home repairs. The repair costs are provided as a 0% deferred payment forgivable loan. In this case "deferred payment" means that you only pay back a portion of the loan if you sell the house during the 15-year term of the loan. "Forgivable" means that 1/15<sup>th</sup> of the loan is forgiven each year. So, if the house is sold after five years the owner needs to pay back two-thirds of the loan (five years is one-third of 15 for those readers rusty in math.)

Bottom line, there is 0% interest and no money comes from your pocket if you reside in or own the house for the next 15 years. Rental property also can qualify. In most cases, the property owner does not need to pay back a dime!

"The most common question I'm getting," said Alice Boyd, "is who will have access to an applicant's personal information? The fact is, I'm the only one. The pre-apps are reviewed by me alone, as president of the grant-writing firm, and I black out the names and address once the information is in my locked files. We use the information to prove need but without the homeowners name or address. No one else will see this personal information. Not even the Selectmen."

So how do you get a piece of this pie? Step #1 is to fill out the one-page pre-application form. Step #2 is for Alice to apply for the grant if there is enough interest. The final step requires residents to sit tight and wait to hear if the town receives the grant. There is a good chance that the town may not receive the grant the first time it is submitted because the grant is a competitive process. If the grant is not received, the returned grant application will provide insight on ways to reapply the following year. Alice Boyd has over twenty years experience writing this type of grant and has offered to apply at no cost to the town.


If we all keep our fingers crossed and the grant is received, those that have filled out the pre-application will get assistance in completing a more detailed form to obtain the specifics on the work that needs to be done. An additional benefit of this grant is that the repairs can be completed by local contractors willing to work on the home repairs.

If you are interested or curious about the grant, I will be at the Sandisfield Town Library on Saturday, November 10, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., and on Wednesday, November 14, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., to answer questions and help residents

Check this chart to see if you qualify for the Community Development Block Grant. Households earning less than the amount below are eligible.

1 person	\$45,500
2 people	\$52,000
3 people	\$58,500
4 people	\$65,000
5 people	\$70,200
6 people	\$75,400

with the short pre-application. Additional information also can be obtained by calling me at 413-258-0200 or Alice at 413-258-7100.

Laura Rogers-Castro, Town Hill Road, is the local outreach person for Bailey Boyd Associates, of which Alice Boyd is president. 



### Sandisfield Property Owners... Need Help With Home Repairs?

The Sandisfield Board of Selectmen working in conjunction with Bailey Boyd Associates is seeking grant monies for a housing rehabilitation program. This program would provide 0% interest deferred forgivable loans to make critical repairs to owner and tenant occupied homes. The loan is forgiven at the rate of 1/15<sup>th</sup> per year. Most homeowners never pay a penny back.

Examples of eligible projects include:

- Roof replacement
- New siding
- Replacing doors and windows
- Energy efficiency
- Septic systems
- Major plumbing and electrical work
- Handicap accessibility
- Foundations

Income eligible homeowners and all landlords are eligible for up to \$35,000 for home repairs. Please pick up a pre-application at Town Hall, the Senior Center or Library. The one page pre-application must be submitted by December 1<sup>st</sup> to be included in this grant.

For additional information contact:  
Laura Rogers-Castro at 413-258-0200  
or  
Alice Boyd at 413-258-7100

## PUBLIC HEARING: Community Development Strategy

The Town of Sandisfield will hold Public Hearing on Monday, November 12, 2012 at 7:00 PM at the Town Hall Annex to discuss the FY13 Community Development Strategy. All are invited and will be heard.



## Selectman Stricken

*Cont'd from P.1*

[Harasyko, Town Clerk] has spent two days trying to figure out a way to proceed. There may be a town in North County that this happened to when two Selectmen resigned, but we haven't found a precedent yet."

Patrick continued, "This is the busiest time of the year for the Board. There are many items coming up for discussion and approval. Budgets that require attention. The Special Town Meeting scheduled for November 27 may have to be postponed. But it's very important that we protect our businesses in town, and we'll find a way to do that."

Fortunately the Town Clerk can sign payroll checks for town employees in the absence of a Selectman quorum. However, several crucial items on the October 23 aborted agenda were

postponed, including liquor license transfer requests from MJ Tuckers and the SilverBrook Café. There was a special urgency in the liquor license requests, since papers must be filed during the month of November. If the Board cannot meet and extensions are not granted, the licenses may expire.

If it turns out that Jeff is unable to return to Board duties in the near term, a second Selectman will need to be appointed or elected. And since it may not be legal to appoint someone to fill an elected position, it may be necessary to hold a new election. "The state requires a 64-day period after a Special Election is called," said Dolores, "so it will be at least early January before we could hold an election."

Either Jeff will return to limited duties soon or the dilemma must be solved in another way so that the Town can move ahead.

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

**O**CTOBER was some month.

Good luck to Jeff in his recovery. It won't be fun, but he's used to hard work and he'll bring his slippery sense of humor to that job as he does with everything else.

It's too early to write the end for the New Boston Store. But if we actually do lose the store the loss could be as significant to the town as the burning of the Sandisfield Congregational Church in 1908 that marked the end of Sandisfield Center as a village. Pete and Sue are waiting for the insurance adjustors, for the authorities to apportion blame and for either the rebuilding of the store or the dismantling of their long life of service to the town. We wish them good luck, too, and hope their new life in a rebuilt store or whatever they choose will be with success, some humor, and with a real sense of renewal. As for Pete, he temporarily has a new job finding all the invoices and receipts, the financial data and other stuff the insurance people will demand. Let's hope that job ends soon.

Bill Price, West New Boston 

## Liana Leaves Town A Very Good Neighbor

*By Susie Crofut*

Is it true? Liana Toscanini is leaving town?

The answer I'm afraid is yes and the only comfort is that she is not going very far. She has purchased a house on Route 57 in Hartsfield.

It is difficult for most of us to imagine Sandisfield without Liana and it is especially difficult for me.

Liana and Richard Migot came to #3 New Hartford Road in 1996 not too long before my husband Bill died in 1999. I cannot imagine those years before and after Bill's death without the warmth and support which Liana and Richard gave unstintingly. I would come home at the end of a long day and Liana would call across the street to me; "Come on over for some supper - it will be ready in an hour." It was understood that we'd share the meal and then go back to our respective evening tasks. Working late in the evening at our desks Liana and I would wave to each other across the street through our windows.


It is a special privilege to have perfect neighbors. For example, it is a lot easier to "shop" across the street than to drive into Great Barrington when some important ingredient is missing for a recipe. Out of cinnamon I could just walk across the street and get some out of Liana's cupboard. Or if Ben could not find a certain size of screw or nail he needed he knew he could rummage in Richard's shop and find it. Having a party, bring the extra chairs needed from our house to theirs or the other way around.

I had lived in Sandisfield since 1977, but it was Liana who introduced me and others to neighbors we had not known. It is not easy to meet people here, separated as we are tucked away in the woods. She and Richard had the most marvelous parties which welcomed a wonderful cross-section of townfolk.



*Richard Migot and Liana Toscanini.*

Liana brings people together. We have formed lasting friendships and been drawn along with her as she gave her considerable ability, energy, and enthusiasm to so many community projects. Whether it was the Sandisfield Arts Center, Yanner Park, the 250th Birthday celebration of our town, Liana roped us all in.

We will all miss her sense of fun, her energy and her commitment to Sandisfield. I imagine Hartsfield will become a popular destination in the coming years. 

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**VOTE!**  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**November 6, Tuesday, 7:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.**  
State and Presidential election at the Old Town Hall.

## Calling 911 - What Happens If You Do?

By Bill Price

You break a leg. If your phone is in your pocket, you can call 911.

Your father has what appears to be a heart attack, you can call 911.

If your mother, under a doctor's care, suddenly worsens at home, you can call 911.

A dispatch center answers your call and relays it almost instantly to the Sandisfield Ambulance Department. Volunteer EMTs, possibly your neighbors, are dispatched within minutes. Someone in Sandisfield is on call 24 hours a day, so you'll have help and soon

"We respond as soon as we get the call," said Fire Chief Ralph Morrison, who also heads the EMT service. "We provide preventive care and stabilize the person so there are fewer problems on the way to the emergency room." Certified and licensed by the state, Sandisfield EMTs are trained and re-trained to provide prehospital emergency medical services, known as Basic Life Support.

But there are limits to the help EMTs can give you. Those limits are determined by Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Emergency Medical Services. The rules regulating the services of EMTs are spelled out in an oversize 270-page book of detailed protocols, plus uncounted pages of sometimes weekly amendments and additional rules.

You might have help not only from Sandisfield. The town has mutual aid agreements with neighboring towns, and all emergency calls are monitored by the Office of Emergency Service Manage-

ment. A higher level of service might be dispatched at the same time as the local EMTs.

"The kind of response," said Ralph, "depends on the initial call." For a "simple" broken leg, EMTs will arrive alone, but if the broken leg is due to a fall from a ladder, for instance, or the call is for an apparent heart attack, paramedics licensed to provide a higher level of emergency care than EMTs are dispatched from Winsted or Pittsfield.

"Falling off a ladder," says Ralph, "can mean other injuries than just a broken leg. It helps us to know additional help is on the way. Paramedics from Winsted sometimes arrive so soon they follow us into the patient's driveway."

In certain cases, a Life Intermediate Team, another level above EMT, is dispatched out of Great Barrington. If a case is serious enough, Life Star Emergency Medical Services from Hartford, Albany, or Worcester can provide a helicopter ride out of Sandisfield.

So what help can you receive from your volunteer EMT service?

Your leg is broken? Sandisfield EMTs can treat you for shock, stabilize your leg, check your vital signs and take your history. They'll carry you to an ambulance and transport you to a hospital emergency room. They can't legally set your leg.

In the case of an apparent heart attack, Sandisfield EMTs may use a defibrillator if called for. The only medication they can administer is baby aspirin to ease blood flow. They can provide oxygen and monitor glucose levels. But paramedics, dispatched at the same time as local EMTs, will arrive soon or possibly intercept the ambulance on the way to Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington.

For a serious asthma attack, insect bites, or an allergic reaction causing difficulty breathing or sudden low blood pressure, Sandisfield EMTs can

inject a regulated dose of albuterol or epinephrine to stabilize a patient on the way to the emergency room. They can suction a blocked airway. And paramedics, as for a heart attack, will already have been dispatched and will arrive soon.

If your mother, under a doctor's care, suddenly worsens at home, Sandisfield EMTs can help stabilize her condition but cannot perform tasks that might interfere with a doctor's protocol. They cannot, for instance, administer your mother's medications or use an existing port for injections. Paramedics will have been dispatched and on arrival may be able to provide a higher level of care, but under the rules of Basic Life Support EMTs are limited to transporting your mother to an emergency room. Doctors there will communicate with your mother's doctor to determine her care.

Last month the Lee Ambulance Service was upgraded from EMT to paramedic status, which means a higher level of initial response now serves Lee, Tyringham, and Stockbridge. "In order to be certified for paramedic service," Chief Morrison said, "the town is required to have a certain number of calls per year, and we are not at that level. Besides, even though Sandisfield's first responders are volunteers, their training, equipment, and ambulance expenses are borne by the town, paid for out of real estate taxes. To upgrade to paramedic status would cost more in taxes than most of us would be willing to pay."

He added, "The training for firemen and EMTs, even after they're certified, is continuous. It's not like a driver's license, it's not an automatic renewal. You have to be tested and retested and constantly retrained in order to stay certified. Our system is substantially better than 10 years ago, with the availability of trained EMTs, paramedics, and 'Life Star' helicopters. It's not a perfect system, but for being in a rural environment it's a very good system." 🇺🇸

wm.

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your word, and your friend."*

Henry David Thoreau

Image: Tina Sotis ©2011



# BRIDGE WATCH: 81-FOOT BEAM REPLACES 82-YEAR-OLD TRUSS

By Sandy Parisky

Photos by Bill Price

Last month J. H. Maxymillian (JHM) had their work cut out for them. They removed the first of two steel trusses supporting the 82-year old span and the green, rusted side rail that is so familiar to us all.

Prior to removing the truss, a temporary "strong back-girder beam" was installed which required removal of existing steel, demolishing the bridge abutments sections, and pouring temporary foundations for the girder. Two crane pads were installed on either end of the span to set the girder in place. A 180-ton crane was placed on the east side and a 45-ton crane, on the west side.

Manufactured in Maine, the 6' tall, 2' wide, and 81' long steel beam weighing 51,000 lbs. was transported on a stretch trailer and installed by EMD Construction of Merrimac, Mass. Once in place, the existing floor beams under the bridge were connected to the girder which serves as a temporary truss.

In order to be removed, the south side of the old steel truss had to be cut into four sections because of its enormous weight, and the sections removed one at a time. Once they were gone, the green side rail was separated from its attachments on both sides of the river, lifted by the east-side crane, laid on its side in the existing traffic lane (holding up north-south-east-and-west traffic), unattached from the crane and then reattached, then lifted onto the stretch trailer that hauled it away.

JHM will install temporary earth support systems on both the east and west side of the span to continue bridge demolition and pour new concrete. ❧



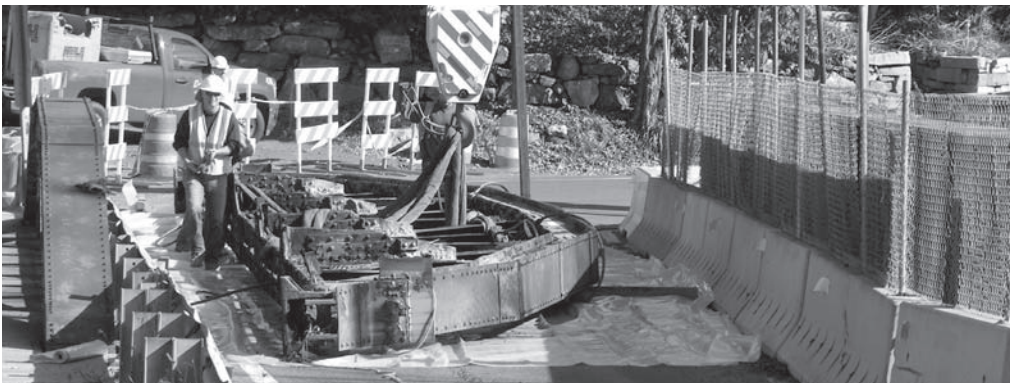
*One section of the truss is removed.*



*Lifting the green side rail up and over.*



*Still lifting the side rail.*



*The side rail resting on its side, waiting for the stretch trailer to carry it away.*



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# Who Is Joshua Smith

## And Why Is He Buried in the Sandisfield State Forest?

By Maxene Kupperman-Guiñals

I went with my friend Gail to consult with Chuck Nelson at Looking Glass Gardens on Dodd Road about the old foundation in front of my house. Afterwards, instead of turning right out of the Nelson's driveway towards Sandisfield Road, I turned left. My curiosity piqued. Where in Sandisfield would we end up?

Dodd Road continues for several hundred feet as an unpaved road but easy to navigate. Then no more houses, a lot of trees marked with yellow "No Hunting" signs, but no sign of human interference. The road gets a little lumpy and narrow, but hey, I live in Sandisfield. Which road doesn't have a few lumps and bumps?

Then it got rocky and very lumpy, but soon became grassy and felt like an old logging road. Gail kept making nervous sounds, wondering where we were and admonishing me to turn back. But there were no places wide enough for me to turn that didn't look precipitously like a roadside ditch.



Slowed down to two miles per hour as I drove over big rocks. Felt my heart in my throat. There HAS to be somewhere I could turn!

After maybe half a mile of this, we spied a tiny widening ahead about 20 feet. A part of me wondered if I really wanted to turn around and take my little Toyota Matrix back over those ugly rocks. This must come out somewhere ... after all, Dodd Road didn't have a DEAD END sign anywhere...

Looking at my cell phone, I was relieved that there was one bar. I could call Ralph Morrison and AAA if worse came to worst.

And then, in the tiny widening, we saw it on the right: four small United States flags at the corners of a 6-inch high square of white picket fence. In the center stood two gravestones. Actually relieved to stop for a moment so I could assay our situation, I got out of the car to inspect what was there.

I could barely see the writing on the stones. One was larger with more legible writing; the other was broken and more weathered, it seemed. Peering closely, I could make out that it was the gravestone of JOSHUA SMITH, died in 1793 of smallpox at the age of 49. Atop his gravestone, someone had left a small, once-white square button with the SMYTH coat of arms, but it was rusted under the laminate.

Who was he? And why is he buried in the middle of the forest? About 219 years have gone by. Sinisterly, I mused about others buried in other remote areas of Sandisfield, outside of our modern settlements.

Back in the car, I tried desperately not to total my car. The road improved, a little. We crept on, sometimes up to five miles per hour. Finally I saw it ahead! Another road intersected! What a relief.

On a tree facing the other road was a sign expressly forbidding motorized vehicles ("You got that right. Too bad it didn't mark that on the other end!") I thought.)

I turned right, onto this dirt road that looked vaguely familiar, as much as a dirt road in the forest can look familiar. In fact, it is actually the back road to York Lake in Sandisfield State Forest.

At home, we pondered what a mystery this is. The flags were new and fresh, as if they had been placed relatively recently. So who might be tending this remote grave? And why?

I might have been idly wondering forever if I hadn't mentioned this to my friend Jeff Voner, who lived in New Marlborough and is fascinated by local history. "You actually found the grave of Joshua Smith?" he exclaimed when I told him of our adventure. "He was a Revolutionary War hero!"

### Joshua's Tombstones

Joshua Smith has two side-by-side tombstones along Dodd Road. The older, original tombstone, nearly 220 years old, is a broken New England slab on which the words are illegible. You can still read, however:

.... lies interred the sleeping dust  
Of one who made the Lord his trust ....

The newer stone, in marble, is possibly 100 years old. Its words, in New England tombstone italics, were apparently copied from the older, now illegible stone:

Joshua Smith  
Died of smallpox  
Nov 18, 1793

Here lies interred the sleeping dust  
of one who made the Lord his trust  
who served our country thro-  
ugh the Revolutionary War  
Elected by his .....

The next words are illegible, covered with moss and disappear into the earth, like Joshua.

Joshua Smith, apparently, lived there long before it was the Sandisfield State Forest. And it is possible to see the foundation of his house, not far from his grave site. Jeff mentioned that I could Google Joshua Smith, but he didn't know who was keeping up the grave site.

Then one hot afternoon in August Joey Maliawco was sitting in my screen porch with me, having a glass of ice water and cooling down from a couple of hard hours mowing the lawn. I had made him sit for a while before he went to mow Fred and Cissy Kimberley's lawn.

Joey had once sent me on another wild goose chase on Idle Hour Road, which could have totaled my car, too. I was getting ready to lambaste him, when I idly brought up the "other end of Dodd Road" and the grave of Joshua Smith.

Joey smiled. "Oh, you saw the grave, huh?"

"Yeah. I don't know who is..."

"Me! I do it! I used to maintain it with Al Riiska for years, but then he died, and then I did it with Hank Zelek, but then he died, so now I do it myself. Just cleaned it up on Memorial Day, in fact. Yup. Every Memorial Day."

"Why?" I asked. "I mean, how did you find it to begin with?"

"Well, you know I go all over Sandisfield. There are some really interesting places here—you wouldn't believe it! I could take you places here ... it is really something! But you would need a 4x4 truck..."

Oh yeah, he had that right. I am not driving on any other rocky back roads in my little Matrix any more.

So if you know who Joshua Smith was, and you want to pay your respects one of these days, you just need to hike along Dodd Road, closer to the State Forest end.

Tell Joshua that Joey sent you. 🍷

## Who Was Joshua Smith?

Joshua Smith, born c.1744, a farmer in Sandisfield in the late 1700s, served with distinction in the Revolutionary War. The son of one of three Smith brothers from Cape Cod, original settlers here, Joshua owned a 300-acre farm in South Sandisfield. As his gravestone relates, he died of smallpox in 1793, possibly the reason for his isolated grave. Nina Carr relates legends she heard as a child that while Joshua was quarantined with the disease neighboring farmers left food for him near his farm house on Dodd Road, the cellar of which is still visible. Joshua and his wife, Freelove Kibbe, raised at least 11 children on their farmstead, one of whom, Ira, was the Yale-trained physician who achieved local notoriety for his attempts to invent and build a flying machine. You can read about Ira, his flying machine, and his father in *Sandisfield Then and Now*. page 173.

## NEW BOSTON STORE STRUGGLING TO REMAIN STANDING

*Cont'd from P.1*

corner right then, with groceries still falling off shelves, the building groaning and boards cracking, and the truck engine still running.

Pete has since removed all of the perishables and most of the remaining canned goods. "The state," he said, "requires that everything that might be contaminated be thrown away. I didn't even call them this time. I'd gone through it before and knew what I needed to do." The Antique Annex is dark and getting dusty. The package store shelves have been emptied of everything that wasn't broken.

Now the problem is to pull the truck out without pulling down the rest of the place. "Roughly a third of the building will have to come down," Pete estimated, "in order to remove the truck."

The engineers have told Pete that they'll have to cut the upper floor above where the bread used to be. They may be able to prop up part of the west side of the building but some of the building will definitely come down once the truck is no longer supporting it. "Once the truck is out," Pete said, "they'll determine if they can save the rest of the building."

The building was constructed about 170 years ago with thick crossbeams attached with mortise-and-tenon joints. "The truck hit with such force that it moved those beams and shifted the building off its foundation in two different directions. It buckled the second floor and even bent the frame of a metal bed. If we save the building now, who knows what structural damage we'll find three or four years from now."

Pete said there was a cellar under the front of the store, under us. "I'm surprised the truck didn't fall through and wind up down there." It was true. Standing beside the plywood wall, facing the darkened rest of the store, the heels of my boots were lower than the toes. It was as if I was standing uphill.

The insurance companies have asked for Pete's receipts, evidence of his business income and loss. "I can't give them a thing," he said. "The receipts are all under the truck, in the file cabinet I kept behind the counter. We can't even look for it."

A series of building inspectors and insurance agents have visited the building, but no final determination has been made as to the cause of the crash. As of press time, the damaged side of the building was scheduled to be removed and the truck pulled out during the week of October 29, though no specific date was given.

In the meantime, Pete and Sue are temporarily staying with her sister, Bonnie and her husband, Roger Harbour, near their store, the New Boston Crane & Sled. Pete and Sue's daughter Megan is staying with her cousin not far from the store.

Isabella, Sue's dog, is taking things one day at a time. 🍷



*Photo: Setsuko Winchester*

# Historic New Boston Store Severely Damaged in Morning Accident

By Simon Winchester

*Within hours of the crash, the Times distributed an EXTRA over its website. Founding editor and contributor Simon Winchester was in town and, with his wife, Setsuko, a photographer, headed straight for the scene. The Extra he filed early the next morning went, as the saying goes, viral (in a Sandisfield kind-of-way, with over 3,000 "hits" the first day).*

Sandisfield's centuries-old New Boston Store was half-demolished by a runaway asphalt truck on Tuesday in a spectacular early-morning crash – a brake-failure accident that authorities said could have been much, much worse.

Though damage was extensive – the west end of the store was ripped wide open, and large quantities of debris were tipped into the Farmington River – no-one was hurt: not the truck driver, who was briefly buried in the ruin; not Sue Murray, who was preparing to open her family store for another day's trading and dived to safety on seeing the truck speeding right toward her; nor the store owner Pete Murray, who by chance was briefly away on a doctor's visit.

But as Sandisfield's fleet of emergency vehicles, joined by a flotilla of State police cars and a posse of first responders from neighboring towns, converged swiftly on the scene, the notorious bridge-junction took on the sudden appearance of a war-zone. And as news of the near-destruction of what is reckoned to be one of the country's oldest continuously-operating general stores rippled through town, so bleary-eyed locals emerged from the homes to gaze horror-struck at how fate, yet again, had struck deep into the heart of our community.

For this is not the first time the store has been hit. In 1977 the building was badly damaged twice in quick succession by speeding vehicles. At the time of the second accident Pete Murray commented ruefully: "Somebody doesn't like me," and wondered out loud if he deserved combat pay for working in so vulnerable a spot. Pete has lost track of how many times the building was struck by other cars and a few trucks over subsequent years. Maybe ten years ago, Pete recalled, an inebriated driver



Photo: Setsuko Winchester

heading north on 8, came to a stop in what was then the package store, now the Antique Annex.

The driver of Tuesday's dump-truck, Ken Langdon, 59, of Springfield, told the Times he was traveling westbound along Route 57 from Tolland, performing a routine morning asphalt haul for the ongoing repairs to the New Hartford Road. He had paid full regard to all the warning signs – the road here descends almost 400 feet, from the top of the 1,200 foot Tolland mountain into the Farmington Valley and the junction with the busy Route 8 in less than a mile; and runaway trucks, potentially incapable of pulling up before the Rte 8 stop sign, have long been a recognized hazard. But Langdon made it without incident down most of the long slope and past the emergency runaway truck exit that has been built two hundred yards above the junction.

It was then that, according to Langdon, things started to go wrong.

"Preparing for the stoplight I stepped on the brake - and the pedal went straight to the floor," he said. "I felt nothing. Just metal on metal. I pumped and pumped. The brakes had gone. Totally shot. I had twenty tons of asphalt in the back and I was heading straight for the lights on Route 8. There were men down there, working on the bridge. There were cars.

"There was nothing I could do. I just leaned on the horn, flashing my lights, making as much noise as I could. There was no time to do anything else. I thought it was the end. I really thought I was going to die.

"I kept going faster. I was passing the lights. I turned to the right, trying to get over the bridge. I was on two wheels now, going very fast, the truck leaning hard over. I couldn't keep on the roadway. The building was in front of me. I just couldn't avoid it. I plowed straight into it. There was a terrible noise. Dust. Screeching. Everything went dark. And when I finally came to a stop, all I could think was: who is trapped underneath me? Who have I hurt?"

But it turned out, he hadn't hurt anyone. Sue Murray had seen him coming, had grabbed her dog and dived for cover – and escaped. The bridge workers from Pittsfield's JH Maxymillian Company managed to avoid the oncoming vehicle too – and then as one, swarmed into the ruin, at great risk to themselves, and shouted for victims, pulling debris aside – but eventually finding no-one. And one of initial first responders on the scene, Andy Snyder of When Pigs Fly Farm, managed to extricate driver Langdon from his cab, calmed him down, and reassured him that no-one was trapped – that the incident had caused property damage only, and he need no longer worry.

E-subscribers received this article via email **ON THE DAY OF THE CRASH.** To be sure you do not miss breaking news, please sign up to receive Sandisfield Times emails at our website: [www.SandisfieldTimes.org](http://www.SandisfieldTimes.org)

A cavalcade of officials then began to arrive: the local police and fire chief, the state police and accident investigators, the electric company (to turn off the current and keep the live wires from falling either into the river or the metal bridge itself) and the insurance estimators. The truck was to remain in place overnight until surveyors from Tolland Mountain Builders could assess how best to stabilize the structure – wondering in particular whether the removal of the truck would cause the remainder of the store to cave in and bring down its undamaged eastern side.

But such matters – together with the question of the long-term future of a struggling general store – were all for later. The important thing to take away from the event was that mercifully no-one was hurt. There had just been dreadful damage, yet again, to a store first built more than two centuries ago, at a road and river junction that over the years has been notorious for accidents and floods and mayhem of one kind and another. 🍷





*Photo: Frank Verderber*



*Photo: Setsuko Winchester*



*Photo: Bill Price*

## THE NEW BOSTON STORE

I've a mind to tell you the story  
Of a store that beckoned everyone  
For the last two hundred years.  
In the old days it was filled  
With barrels of sorghum and barrels of nails,  
Hanging pots and pans and at the counter  
People were talking about Andrew Jackson  
And Abraham Lincoln.

It was, believe it or not,  
At one time or another,  
A post office, an Episcopal church  
And when somebody invented the automobile,  
A gas station.  
But mostly, it was a place to meet  
With its two-story porch  
Beautifully sketched and lifted  
With embroidered poles.

In recent years Pete and Sue Murray  
Have cherished the old store  
And we all have held forth  
Next to the same old counter  
Talking and gossiping  
And keeping the faith  
That this town is at America's heart  
And that this store was the heart of our town.

But so it is that I must tell you  
That for all these years  
The store sat at the end of a highway  
And at the bottom of a steep old hill  
And that early one October morning  
In the year of our Lord 2012  
As Sue prepared to open the store  
A great, black roaring goliath of a truck  
Came in the front door.  
Sue, thank God, grabbed her dog  
And got out of the way.

I know that everything in life is fragile,  
But couldn't this old store  
With its barrels of sorghum  
And the faint echo of ten thousand conversations  
Be spared?

*Val Coleman  
Sandisfield*

# Is There a Store in Our Future?

## What If the New Boston Store Doesn't Rebuild?

By Simon Winchester

The proprietor of the New Boston Inn, strategically located at the junction of our own Route 57 and the State's ever-busy Route 8, has said she is "open to the idea" of creating a brand-new Sandisfield General Store on her premises, to replace the neighboring business that was all-but destroyed in last month's catastrophic truck accident.

Barbara Colorio, who came from Worcester, Mass., to run the venerable hotel eight years ago, said she already had the location, the space, the car-park and all the necessary licenses. "If someone could just arrange the finance for such a project, then this is an idea that could very well work," she said to *The Times* in a telephone interview. "I can foresee that there might be some difficulty getting staff. But the location on Route 8 is the best, and frankly as well as offering a service to the community, and to travelers, I'd also see it as a way of perhaps directing more business to my hotel. So I would be very open to considering the idea."

Pete Murray, whose equally antique New Boston Store fell victim to a runaway asphalt truck on October 2nd, agreed about the location. While still pondering whether or not to try to rebuild his own store, he is now openly considering the alternatives if, as now seems probable, he decides to abandon the effort.

"Any store that replaces mine will have to be on Route 8 to succeed," he said. "You need the traffic passing through. Otherwise it'll be like the Montville Store or the Tolland Store. Neither of them survived. And aside from the fact that a truck ran into it, mine was at exactly the right spot."

The New Boston Inn is not the only possible location for a replacement store. Connie D'Andrea, owner of the SilverBrook Café, has long thought that essential goods could be stocked at her premises, "so that folks wouldn't have to drive out to Winsted or Great Barrington to get a quart of milk at ten o'clock at night."

However, Ms. D'Andrea is currently within an ace of selling her business. An Otis laundromat owner, Bruce Wall, recently had his bid accepted for the business and all was proceeding smoothly – until October 20th, when the town government was unexpectedly crippled by resignation and illness, and the necessary permitting process accompanying the transfer was thrown into tur-



*The Old New Boston Store with the truck parked inside. Photo: Bill Price*

moil. "I don't like to sound heartless," said an exasperated Ms. D'Andrea, "but town business has to go on regardless – and if we are to have the SilverBrook Café under new management, with the new owner maybe running a store on site as well, then the process has to be allowed to go on, even without all the Selectmen working."

A third option for the town would be to install a small grocery outlet in the vacant 400 square-foot space at the back of the Sandisfield Post Office, which has been empty for years. Karen Cooley, the postmistress, said recently that she would welcome a storekeeper as neighbor. "If people stopped by here for milk and beer and aspirin, it would do my business in the post office good too. It would be a win-win situation, frankly."

Common to all these three possibilities is the question of who would or could finance such a project? One possibility – assuming the absence of a financial 'angel' who would bankroll a new store – is that Sandisfield residents might agree to create a co-operative business. All interested potential customers could become members of the co-op, paying a one-time subscription which would help establish the business; as members they would then receive a discount on all of their purchases. But who would run the store?

If Pete decides not to rebuild, *The Sandisfield Times* plans to air and discuss these and other possibilities in our next issues. It is to be hoped that there will be a lively exchange of views, since

most residents surely agree that our remote and geographically isolated community does need what the October accident so savagely took away from us: a thriving and well-stocked general store.

*Moments after the crash.  
Photos by Frank Verderber*



# The New Boston Store: A Tribute To An Old Friend

By Ron Bernard



New Boston Store, c.1910s. (DeMarsImages.com)

Since the founding of the town, the New Boston Store has defined the character of the Village. More than a country store, it has served as a post office, a rendezvous place, a drug store, a bar, a dance hall, an ambulance garage and more. It is both the earliest and last survivor among Sandisfield's cherished general stores.

Built in two stages, the larger west side section was probably erected before 1850 by Joseph Norton while the east wing was attached later. Almost certainly Norton replaced one or more retail structures likely dating back to the earliest days and the founding Brown family.

The storekeeper's residence has always been upstairs, over the store. The east wing appears to have been moved whole from another location and tucked snugly into place probably around 1880. Its ground floor provided additional storage and inventory space for a growing business while the upper level was apparently originally designed for public meetings. Featuring a cur-

vilinear wood paneled ceiling, the room could accommodate a substantial group. According to legend, the structure may once have been the old Episcopal Meeting House moved from around the corner after the parish closed about 1874.

The village post office was here between 1853 and 1895 and was re-established on site in 1927. Steve Campetti assumed the roles of storekeeper and postmaster from 1940 to 1977 when Pete Murray and his wife, Sue Campetti took over. The store's role as post office ended in 1980 when a new dedicated USPS building opened on Sandisfield Road.

Through two and one-half centuries, throughout American national experience, in hard times and good, the venerable New Boston Store has been a dependable provider of essential products as well as a friendly meeting place. A Sandisfield icon, it is also a national treasure, and I believe it to be the oldest continuously operated store of its kind in the country.

See a more comprehensive historical account in *Sandisfield Then And Now*, pp.194-6.



New Boston Store, 2010.



Store Front Demolished

Pickup truck, right, is extricated from front of New Boston Store in New Boston, Mass., early today as payloader helps support building's second floor. Truck smashed into building at about 12:30 a.m. during thunderstorm; driver was charged with operating under the influence. (Fisher/Photo)

## Truck Smashes Front Of New Boston Store

NEW BOSTON, Mass. — A 37-year-old Plainville, Conn., man was charged with driving under the influence early today after his pickup truck smashed through the front wall of the New Boston Store about half-hour after midnight during a thunderstorm. State Police in Lee said they arrested Eugene A. Laird III of 40 Betsy Rd., Plainville, Conn., after the front wall of the liquor store section on the ground floor, shattering numerous bottles. The store serves as a gasoline station, liquor outlet, general store and post office for the village of New Boston. Store owner Pete Murray said he and his family, asleep upstairs, were awakened not by the crash but by the sounding of the store's burglar alarm immediately afterward. While the badly damaged truck was pulled out with a local contracting firm was used to hold up the unsupported corner of the second floor of the building. Murray, members of his family, and volunteers cleaned up the debris, stacking liquor bottles in milk cases and a shopping cart. The shattered wall eventually was boarded up and the smell of alcohol lingered in the air. The Sandisfield Fire Department's ambulance was called to the scene. Murray said the section of his store is the scene of frequent accidents, occurring four or five times per year. The road leads left by the store, crosses a bridge and then curves back to the right. Cars usually hit the posts at the front of the store, instead of the building itself, Murray said. He said he has no idea of the dollar amount of damage caused by the pickup truck.

Newspaper clippings from 1977.

## Sandisfield store suffers damage in 2nd accident

SANDISFIELD — The owner of the New Boston Store, in the midst of repairing damages resulting when a pickup truck smashed into the store less than a year ago, said today that the store's liquor shelves, which were damaged in the last crash. "Somebody doesn't like me," Murray said. "Somebody asked me if I got combat pay."



Pete Murray.

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# A SANDISFIELDER'S PILGRIMAGE TO FORT TICONDEROGA

## PAYING A VISIT TO "OUR" CANNON

By Ron Bernard

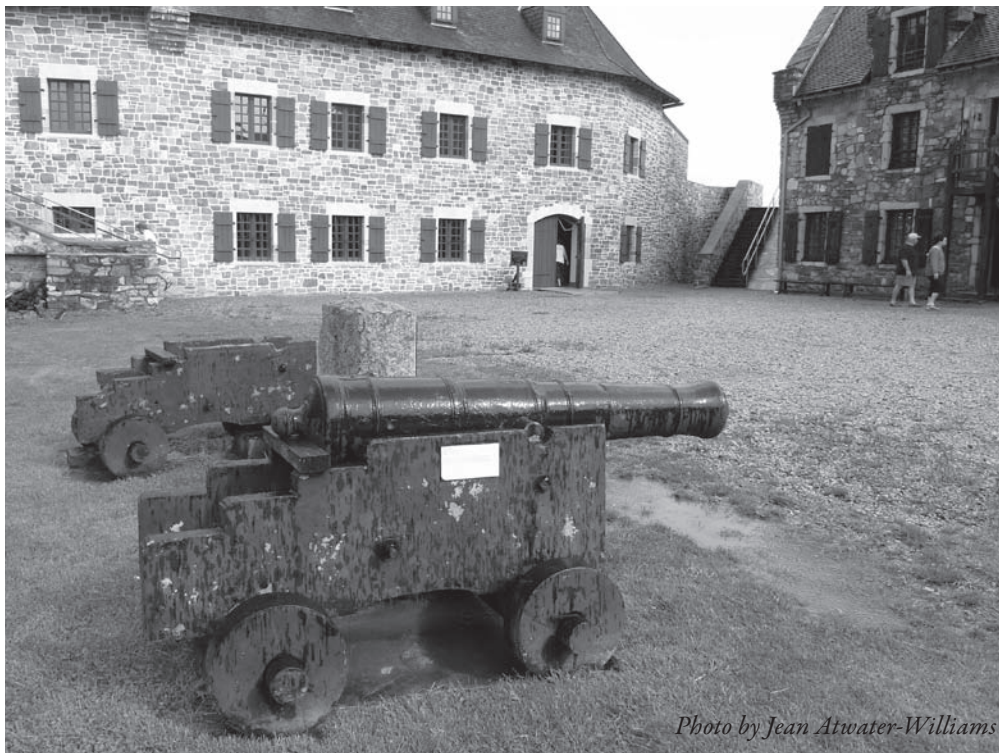


Photo by Jean Atwater-Williams

The occasion of our 250th anniversary as a town certainly raised awareness about Sandisfield's extraordinary heritage. The most historically significant event to occur here is the 1775-76 passage of Col. Henry Knox and his motley group

of New York teamsters with captured British cannons meant for the besieged General Washington encamped at Cambridge.

Knox led an artillery train of 80 men with sleds and oxen and horses hauling some 60 tons of

cannon and cannonballs and other equipment 300 grueling miles through the wilderness. The most arduous portion of the trek, easterly through the Berkshires from near Great Barrington to Blandford, has become known as "the Knox Trail." Then little more than a horse path through the woods, the trail passed through northern Sandisfield.

Knox's group bivouacked in the Beech Plain section on January 12, 1776. They were extended hospitality by grateful and patriotic residents, particularly at Henry Spring's Continental Tavern which sat at "the nose" between the two Spectacle ponds.

Knox reached Boston two weeks later and the cannons were trained on the harbor. Surprised and shocked, the British admiral realized that he was licked, and his ships and the redcoat army departed. Ironically, in an incident that may well have set the course and eventually determined the outcome of the Revolution, the Americans fired not a shot.

Later the cannons were dispersed among units of the American army and their fates are lost to history, except for two, both of which eventually found their way back to Fort Ticonderoga. They're still there. From time to time one or another of the surviving cannons is loaned to museums or for commemorative events in the region.

Only one of the two cannons was on view this August when Jean and I visited this superb setting in the shadow of the Adirondacks. This cannon may have been one that passed through Beech Plain nearly 240 years ago. We thought we'd return the visit.

Ticonderoga is deservedly called "America's Fort," now a beautifully restored living museum. What a delight! High above the strategic junction of lakes Champlain and George, the fort was built by the French in 1755, captured by the British in 1759, and American patriots in 1775. A visit to Fort Ticonderoga ought to be included in every American's "bucket list" of special places to visit. 🇺🇸



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**ELECTION DAY**

**November 6, Tuesday, 7:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.**  
 State and Presidential election at  
 the Old Town Hall.

# Sandisfield Historical Society News



By Josephine Freedman

The Annual Wine and Cheese open house will be held on November 4, Sunday, from 2 to 4 p.m., South Sandisfield Meeting House, 113 Sandy Brook Turnpike (Rte. 183). The public is invited.

This year's gathering features a very special program. Besides a final tribute to 2012, our town's 250th anniversary, the Society will recognize local resident/historian Ron Bernard and the History Book Committee for preparing the commemorative history, *Sandisfield Then and Now 1762-2012*. We hope that a large gathering will join board members to appreciate all that happened this year and to thank Ron and the committee for their exceptional efforts.

Also this year Mr. Bernard organized the sale and distribution of dozens of special permanent exterior plaques to historic properties that had not received them when the program was introduced by the Society in 1984. Besides promoting Sandisfield's heritage, the sale of the markers produced over \$4,000 for the Society's building preservation fund, a very significant, unplanned, and much-needed contribution. We are very grateful to all who participated.

We especially hope that antique home owners and recipe contributors to our popular 2012 cookbook, *Sandisfield Eats*, will attend. Some dishes based on recipes from the cookbook will be served. Copies of *Sandisfield Then and Now* and *Sandisfield Eats*, both wonderful holiday gift ideas, will be available for purchase.

On October 16, 33 individuals attended the day-long Portable Sawmill Workshop. The lecture portion of the workshop was held at the Society's meeting house while demonstrations took place across the street at the TerMar Triangle Farm saw mill. Attendees were not only from Sandisfield but came from Otis, Monterey, Colebrook, and New York State. Terry Ignace, owner of TerMar Triangle Farm, said that while he was familiar with much that was discussed, he learned some new things about saw mills and found information provided and the interaction between attendees to be of great value. The meeting house, which is maintained by the Society, was rented for the day by the North-East State Forester's Association. We hope that other groups might find our building a good place to rent for their events.

The Annual Christmas Fair will be held at Fire House #2 on Saturday, December 1st, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Vendors with gifts and Christmas items, baked goods and lunch will be available. If you want to participate as a vendor, call Marcia Ignace at 413-258-2898. Table fee is \$15. Attending or participating in this event will help the Society, local businesses, and charities.

For more information contact Jo Freedman at 258-4786 or email freedmj1@aol.com. 

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## Thief Reaches a New Low

### *Flower Theft at Villa Mia*

By Staff Reporters

Who would do that? Nobody we know, we hope.


One day early last month, Dia Klenja enjoyed a long discussion with a visitor about the hundreds of flowers she plants, nurtures, and grows around the front and side of Villa Mia, her restaurant on Rte. 8 just south of New Boston. The visitor wanted to know all about her arrangements, fertilizers she uses, how to make and grow cuttings. They talked for 20 minutes or so.

When Dia arrived at the restaurant the next morning, six of her large dahlia plants – flowers, pots, frames, and all – were missing. Stolen. A thief in the night.

And this only days before Dia dismantled her flowers for the winter.

Dia suspects the flower conversationalist from the day before. "He especially wanted to know about the dahlias. And those were the ones he took. One of each color."

She was especially upset because she told the flower lover she would be happy to give him cuttings and seedlings if he returned in the spring. "He could have grown his own."

The suspect was driving a black SUV with Connecticut license plates. Dia says, "I hope he gave them to his wife, and I hope she reads *The Sandisfield Times*. She'll find out where he got them. Maybe she'll make him bring them back. And apologize." 



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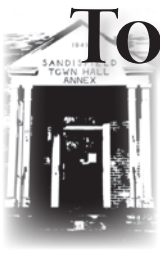
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## TOWN BUSINESS

Submitted by Dolores Harasyko,  
Town Clerk

Edited by Bill Price

### Selectmen's Meetings

September 24, 2012

**Members present:** Patrick Barrett,  
Jeffrey Gray, Road Superintendent  
Stephan Harasyko, Dolores Harasyko

Bids for winter snow work, advertised in the Berkshire Record for two consecutive weeks, were opened. Winter Road Sand: O'Connor Brothers, Meehan Construction, and Donovan & Son. Gravel: Tonlino, Mountain Top, Tryon Construction, and Land Construction. Heavy equipment rental: Tryon Construction. Snow plowing: A&M Auto, C.W. Nelson, Annecharico Construction, Bogart Muller. Steve will review bids and make recommendations to the Selectmen at next meeting.

Chapter 90 reimbursement paperwork was reviewed and signed for blacktop, New Hartford Road culvert, and dump body.

Steve provided highway department updates. New Hartford Road will be closed for two days for culvert replacement. Paving will begin next week. Road grading continues. Preliminary assessment regarding the Road Survey has been completed by Berkshire Regional Planning.

Steve reviewed the work on New Hartford Road. The worse four areas are approximately 1¼ miles, cost of which is estimated at \$700,000. Jeff asked about West Hubbard Road. Steve has replaced a large culvert and plans to blacktop next week, simultaneously with New Hartford Road blacktopping.

Four resumes for Highway Department truck driver position were presented. Interviews will be conducted at the next Selectmen's meeting, and no other items will be on the agenda for that time.

The Selectmen discussed the vacancy on the Selectboard. Other towns in similar situations waited until the regularly scheduled annual town Election to fill the vacancy. The cost to the town for a special election would be approximately \$3,000. Town Counsel suggested that if we had a dysfunctional board we should proceed with a special election. Since that is not the case we will wait until the Annual Town Meeting.

Discussed the purchase of a new ambulance. Ralph Morrison is still researching cost, and will need to go out to bid. A special town meeting will have to be held to move the money from the ambulance receipts account.

Leigh Tryon is donating time and equipment to bulldoze at the cemetery and at Yanner Park. Clare English is appointed to the Cultural Council and Paul Van Sickle to the Future Planning Committee.

Reviewed and signed cemetery deed for Levenson. Review and signed hunting permission slip for Yanner Park for Frank Zuidema. Reviewed and signed a dog restraining order for the Hoffman's dog.

Discussed fees for annual business licenses and dump stickers. We will keep the fees the same as last year.

Discussed Cemetery Commissioner. Ben Campetti will be unavailable for the winter months and Richard Campetti asked to be appointed Assistant Cemetery commissioner. Motion made and so seconded.

Motion made and seconded to allow Alice Boyd to donate her time to write the FY2013 Community Development Block Grant.

October 1, 2012

**Members present:** Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Road Superintendent Stephan Harasyko, Dolores Harasyko

Interview for truck driver position were conducted in open session. The following were interviewed in the order their applications were received: Timothy O'Neil, David Krupa, Freeman McCaw, Jr.

Steve set up driving tests for each applicant. Once the test is complete he will make a recommendation to the Selectmen.

The Road Superintendent recommended awarding winter road/snow removal bids, and the Selectmen approved, as follows:

- Winter sand: Donovan & Son
- Heavy equipment rental: Tryon Construction
- Snow plowing: A&M Auto
- Gravel: Tonlino. ♣



## Selectmen's Letter

By Patrick Barrett

Submitted prior to October 20 (Jeff's illness)

Our thoughts go out to Pete and Sue Murray over the truck accident that destroyed their historic business and home. Pete and Sue's store has been the central gathering spot for Sandisfield residents for years. We are grateful they were not hurt in the accident, and they will be in our minds in the days to come.

Our 250th Anniversary renewed a sense of appreciation for the numerous historical buildings in town. If we lose this quintessential New England general store it will leave a void in Sandisfield for years to come.

The Sandisfield Board of Assessors set the tax rate for the coming year at \$12.60, a \$2.50 cent increase from last years rate of \$10.10. There are a number of factors for this increase such as the continuing drop in house values, more property being put into various Chapter programs, re-payment of the loan for fixing New Hartford Road, and the increase in our town operating budget. Since 2010, the value of homes Sandisfield has dropped substantially. Indicative of the trend for homes throughout Sandisfield, the value on my own home has depreciated by \$54,600. In order to offset the decline in house values, the tax rate had to increase so that we can pay for this year's budget. In these tough economic times this kind of increase is difficult to stomach. Hopefully the new year will bring us a better economy, more growth in town, and increases in State funding.

Tim O'Neal of Otis was hired to fill the vacancy on the Sandisfield Highway Department created by the retirement of Joe Zeller. Tim has the licenses needed to fulfill the job requirements of the Sandisfield Highway Department and extensive experience working with heavy equipment. He also has experience working on cars and machinery. Tim began work on October 22, and we welcome him to our crew. Steve Harasyko and Billy Perry spearheaded the hiring process, and Ralph Morrison and Gary Bottoms attended the interviews and contributed to the process.

The Tryon Construction Company did wonderful work replacing the culvert at the intersection of New Hartford and South Sandisfield Roads, which should make this section of New Hartford Road safer. I'd also like to recognize the resurfacing work by Lane Construction on New Hartford and South Sandisfield Roads. Hopefully we can continue work on New Hartford Road next year. Grading is nearly completed on our dirt roads as the highway department transitions into winter mode.

Our next Regional Selectmen's meeting on November 19, at 7:00 p.m. at the Otis Town Hall. Members of the public are welcome to attend. ♣

# The York Lake Loop Trail

By Larry Dwyer

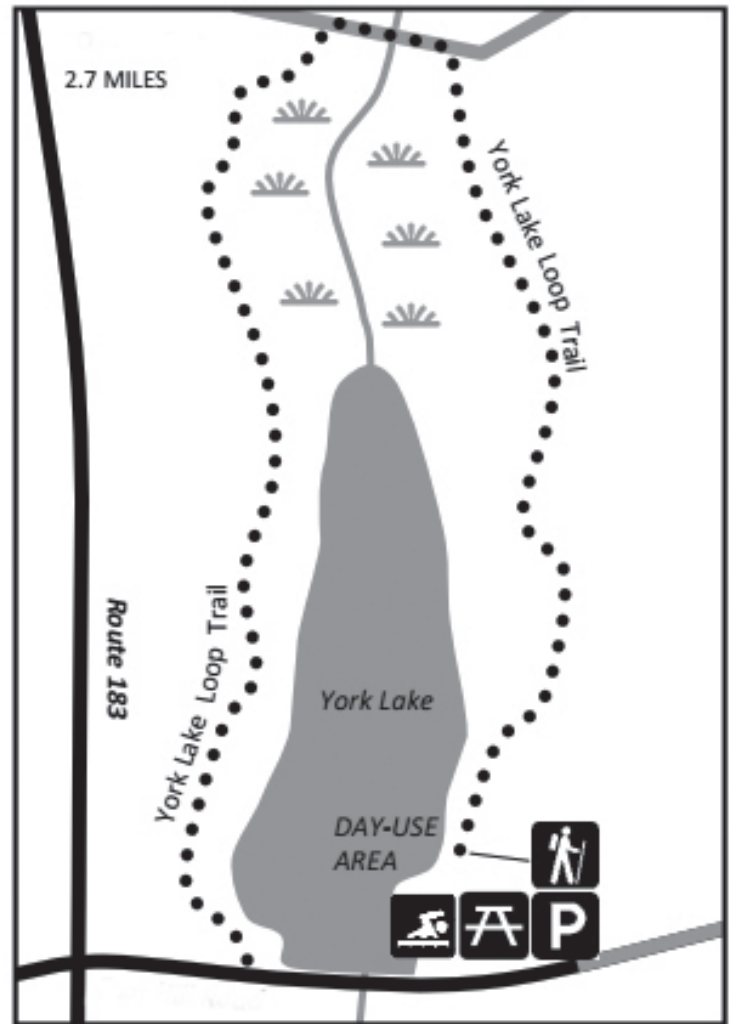
Taking advice from Laurie Wilkinson, whom my wife and I often meet on the West Lake Trail, Jane and I finally hiked the York Lake Loop Trail. It is a very pretty, all-woods trail that loops around York Lake. The trail is 2.7 miles, and the average time to hike the trail is 1 hour and 15 minutes. However, Jane and I were able to finish the trail in 55 minutes, walking at a brisk pace.

The trail starts near the picnic tables at York Lake and is well marked with blue blazes. It's not a strenuous walk, but the ground is uneven and I found it to be a little tough on my feet. Jane didn't find it to be a problem. There are many roots and stones to walk over and a few streams to traverse, so I would recommend a hiking stick to maintain balance.

As you walk into the woods, the first mile is a hemlock forest, which soon changes into a deciduous forest. At the halfway mark you will hit an old logging road and then the trail goes back into the woods ending at Forest Road just west of the York Lake dam. If you were to turn right onto the logging road at the halfway mark this will take you to Forest Road that leads to York Lake or Route 57. If you turn left at the logging road, this will take you to Route 183. We didn't have time to walk the logging road, so I'm not sure of the conditions. A walk in either direction on the logging road could make for a nice excursion off the trail, but take extra water.

I drink a lot of water whenever I hike, and a ½ liter was sufficient for me this time. Try to avoid soda or energy drinks when hiking. If you need electrolytes for energy bring some trail mix. I make my own trail mix of raisins, peanuts, almonds, and other assorted nuts.

The day before we hiked the trail, a hard downpour soaked the ground which remained very damp. It wasn't muddy, but since the trail crosses many streams it can get soggy. Bog boards have been placed over most of the very wet areas. Fall season is probably the best time to hike the trail as I imagine that in the spring the trail would be even muddier. It's a nice trail so get out there before the snow gets too deep.



Courtesy of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MDCR)

Additional information about York Lake can be found at the following web site: [www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/trails/sandyork.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/trails/sandyork.pdf).



## THE SANDISFIELD LIBRARY NEWS

By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

A special thank you to Ron Bernard for his donation of archival materials to the Sandisfield Library including::

- The Sandisfield Newsletter, issues 1978-2001
- Sandisfield Vital Records, compiled by Town Clerk Flora Briggs Rhodes.
- Back issues of The Sandisfield Times.

The Library is developing a Genealogy Section for our Patrons. Our next Genealogy class will be November 29 at 6:30-8:30pm.

Our new books:

- The Mayo Clinic Breast Cancer Book
- Gluten Free Cooking, by Donna Korn
- The Secret Keeper, by Kate Morton
- The Right Hand, by Derek Haas
- The Black Box, by Michael Connelly
- Last To Die, by Tess Gerritsen
- Merry Christmas, Alex Cross, by James Patterson
- The Christmas Wedding, by James Patterson
- The Buzzard Table, by Margaret Maron
- Notorious Nineteen, by Janet Evanovich
- Experiment in Murder, by Margaret Truman
- Last Scene Alive, by Charlaine Harris
- Looking For Yesterday, by Sharon McCone

# SANDISFIELD'S HEROES HONORED

By Staff Reporters




*Future Heroes to Be Honored in the 2030s: from left, Brandon Messina, Larissa Sanchez, Shane Messina, and Alec Morrison.*

A special, long overdue ceremony took place at SArc on October 20. Sponsored by the Sandisfield Arts Center, "Local Heroes" recognized the volunteers among us who serve as fire fighters, police, emergency medical specialists, and our military veterans. A lively crowd of honoree family members as well as current and former residents enjoyed the sometimes emotional tribute to those who ensure the public's safety.

Their voluntary contributions, often at personal risk and never comfortable or convenient, might be taken for granted...until they are needed. These are the dedicated, trained men and women and our neighbors who are ready to help and keep us safe at a moment's notice.

After a crowded reception, the honorees and guests moved upstairs to the auditorium where a slide presentation of past ceremonies, volunteer personnel, and images of training activities and actual emergencies was shown on a screen at the side of the stage. Maria Domato, Commander, American Legion Post 456, opened the ceremonies by acknowledging long-time resident and veteran Norton Fletcher for his years of service to the country and the Legion. Chief of Police Mike Morrison presented certificates of appreciation to his small but dedicated force. He was followed by Fire Chief Ralph Morrison who bestowed outstanding service awards to seven former and current members of his team of volunteer fire fighters and EMS volunteers. Selectman Patrick Barrett closed the ceremonies.

Arts Center president, Jean Atwater-Williams, said, "The Arts Center was delighted and honored to host this special and important tribute." 

## AWARDEES

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Norton Fletcher  | 35 years of Meritorious Service to American Legion Post 456                           |
| Steve McCuin     | 10 years as police officer & chief (retired)  |
| Nazario Sanchez  | 14 years as police officer & 16 years as constable (active)                           |
| Ralph Morrison   | 34 years as police officer & Assistant Chief (active)                                 |
| Rosario Messina  | 10 years as police officer (active)   |
| Shirley McArthur | 23 years of service, Sandisfield Fire Department                                      |
| Nancy Kries      | 23 years of service, Sandisfield Fire Department                                      |
| Rico Sanchez     | 16 years of service, Sandisfield Fire Department                                      |
| Zoe Nelson       | 23 years of service, Sandisfield Fire Department                                      |
| Tom Dawson       | 27 years of service, Sandisfield Fire Department (retired)                            |
| Gene Riiska      | 29 years of service, Sandisfield Fire Department                                      |
| Michael Morrison | 39 years of service, Sandisfield Fire Department                                      |
| Ronnie Morrison  | 25 years of service, Sandisfield Fire Department (posthumously awarded to his family) |



*From left: Police Chief Michael Morrison, his son Alec, Fire Chief Ralph Morrison. Photo: Larry Dwyer*



# Comings and Goings

## SCOTT STRINGHAM, SR. 1961-2012

Scott A. Stringham Sr., 51, of Sandisfield Road passed away on October 21, 2012 at Hartford Hospital in Hartford.

Born on September 9, 1961, in Mineola, N.Y., the son of Edgar and Eileen Arthur Stringham, he graduated from Southwick High School. Scott entered the Navy in 1980 and was honorably discharged in 1983 after service on the *USS Miller* as a Radio Operator.

After the Navy he became a carpenter. As a self-employed contractor, he owned Hammer Time Builders. He also worked for Nickerson Construction Company in Torrington, Conn., and was a member of the Carpenter's Union Local 210.

Scott was an outdoorsman and enjoyed fishing, hunting, boating, and snowmobiling and was an avid Giants and Yankees fan. He was a wonderful and loving husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and friend. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

He leaves behind his wife, the former Helen Madden, whom he married on January 11, 1983. He leaves his two daughters: Aja Ostrander and her husband Irving of Lee, and Cassie Brancato and her husband Geoff of Sandisfield; a son, Scott A. Stringham, Jr. of Sandisfield. He is survived by four grandchildren: Courtney, Olivia, and Bethany Ostrander and Lillian Brancato; five sisters: Karen Deegan of North Carolina, Nancy Skeels of Massachusetts, Judy Bender and her husband Jerry of Massachusetts, Terri Zurawik and her husband Paul of Massachusetts, and Janet Prisco and her husband Emil of Tennessee, along with several nieces and nephews.

Scott's funeral was held Friday, October 26, at the Kelly Funeral Home in Lee with the Rev. Bill Neil, pastor of The First Congregational Church in Lee, officiating. Burial followed in the Sandisfield Center Cemetery. In lieu of flowers donations may be made in his memory to the Scott A. Stringham Jr. College Fund, in care of the Kelly Funeral Home, 3 Main Street, Lee, MA, 01238. ❧

## Special Town Meeting

A special Town Meeting will be held Tuesday, November 27, at 6:45 p.m., at Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road.

Article 1: Appropriate \$225,000 from the Stabilization Account to repay a loan incurred for Storm Irene damage.

Article 2: Appropriate \$12,500 from the Stabilization Account to pay gas and diesel accounts for all town departments.

Article 3: Transfer an amount from ambulance receipts to purchase a new ambulance, sum to be announced.

If there are other articles to be voted on at the Town Meeting, they will be posted on the town website and other locations in Sandisfield prior to November 27. ❧

## Terranova's Closes

Another beloved and iconic local general store has closed for good. Terranova's, an Otis center mainstay since the 19th century, once known as Sears & Pickett, closed its doors last month, a victim of the recession. Operated by the family for decades, proprietor Mike Terranova told the Times, "The electric bills and this economy finally got us. We can't make ends meet." The Terranova's are considering reopening as a café and we wish them well. Still, so many folks in nearby Beech Plain and in West Otis are sad to see this old friend go. ❧

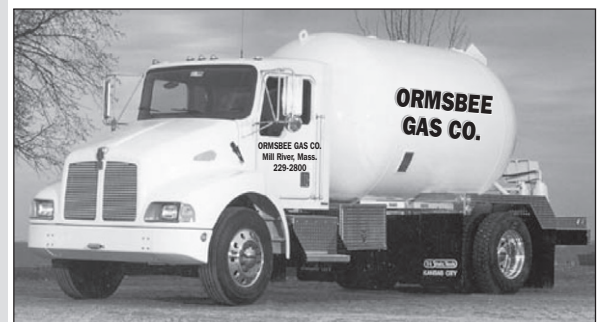
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# Changing Owners

## Welcome To New Owners of Three Special Properties

By Ron Bernard

Older homes in Sandisfield turn over infrequently so it's notable when three venerable properties change owners in a space of weeks. When one of them is very likely the oldest structure in town and the other two are former Montville general stores across the road from each other, the event becomes even more notable.



3 New Hartford Road

No. 3 New Hartford Road was recently sold by Liana Toscanini. The house is believed to date to 1754 and the founding of Sandisfield Center by pioneer Nathaniel Bosworth. It was likely the family's first dwelling built upon their arrival and probably is the earliest surviving building in Sandisfield and among the oldest in Berkshire County. The Bosworths were tavern (inn) keepers, and they surely used this house as part of the operation. According to legend, it was a stagecoach stop. The famous Bosworth taproom may have been here for a period. In the early 1830s the place served as Stephen Bosworth's hatters shop. Between 1906 and 1986 the extended Atwater and Doty families of New York State enjoyed the home as part of their group of seasonal retreats at the Center.

Liana, a native of New Rochelle, N.Y., has called this quaint, warm place home since 1996. Gracious and generous, Liana has been a leader in important community projects including the Arts Center, Yanner Park and as a key member of the History Book and 250th Celebration committees. She and her long-time partner, talented photographer Richard Migot, will be sorely missed by their neighbors and many friends.

Liana is moving to the New Marlborough hamlet of Hartsville, to be closer to her Great Barrington job. She said, "I will miss this great house and the good times we had there. But I am also looking forward to the adventure of my 'new' (circa 1900) place ...and its level floors!"

Incoming owners are Brooklynites freelance photographer Peter Baimonte and his wife, Midori Nakamura, a book designer. They look forward to relaxing weekends in their special new-old house.

One of the homes that was a former Montville general store is 147 Sandisfield Road. Built about 1846, perhaps in association with a nearby saw mill established years before, it is best known as the James Merrill General Store that operated between 1864 and 1899. The entrepreneurial Merrill was prominent in civic affairs and was Montville's longest-serving postmaster. In 1907, the Town converted the old store to a library branch which operated for about 20 years until the Linder family took title (38 years). Since 1970 Daniel and Rosalyn Kronenfeld of New York have enjoyed their weekend riverside retreat, though less frequently in recent years. New owner Terry Sponholz, a Pittsfield native



147 Sandisfield Road

currently of Baltimore, intends to move up permanently. Meanwhile, her son-in-law, Dylan Blom, is making much-needed renovations to this familiar place in Montville Center.

Directly across the street is No. 122. A true Sandisfield landmark, it was built in 1853 by



122 Sandisfield Road

William Langdon of Tyringham in late Greek Revival-style, as Montville's first general store as well as first post office. The Montville Store served the fast-growing community with only a few interruptions for about a century-and-a-half until it closed in the late 1990s by the last proprietor, Maria Domato. Little changed to that point, it was reconfigured for rental by the next owner, John Huber. Last month this venerable building commenced a new chapter when Laurel Fuller of Springfield purchased it as a full-time residence for herself and her son and grandson, Nicholas, 13. "I looked for two years for a suitable place in the country and this was it. Perfect," she said.

Farewell to old friends and welcome new friends!

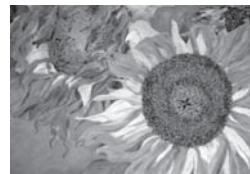


Complete histories including old photographs of these places may be found in *Sandisfield Then And Now*

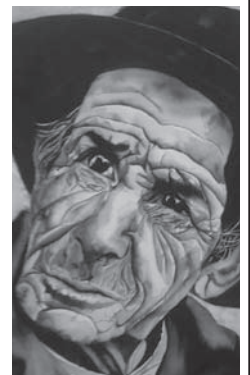
## Three Generations



Recent Artwork by  
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**Erika Crofut**  
**Robin Crofut Brittingham**



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# NOW HEAR THIS!

*If you have an event that you would like to see listed here, please email [calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org). We reserve space for 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](mailto:susanvansickle@yahoo.com).*

**October 31, Wednesday, Halloween.** Leave your lights on if you have treats for trick or treaters.

**November 4, Sunday, 2:00-4:00 p.m.,** Annual Wine and Cheese Party at the Historical Society Meeting House, 113 Sandy Brook Turnpike (Route 183). Special recognition for local historian, Ron Bernard, and the Sandisfield Then and Now Committee. For information, call Jo Freedman at 413-258-4786 or email at [freedmj1@aol.com](mailto:freedmj1@aol.com)

**November 6, Tuesday, 7:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m., ELECTION DAY.** State and Presidential election at the Old Town Hall.

**November 6, Tuesday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.** Wellness Fair, at Tolland Safety Complex Building, on Rt. 57. Free walk-in hearing tests and flu injections. By appointment, foot care (\$20), schedule with Jean Armitage (413-258-4105). Lots more.

**November 10, Saturday, 7:00 p.m.,** The Sandisfield Arts Center is sponsoring a Harvest Dinner at 49 New Hartford Road in South Sandisfield. Come enjoy the bounty of our local farms and support SARc. Tickets are \$75 for one and \$130 for two. Reservations are limited. Call Rhee Kasky at 413-258-4498 for reservations.

**November 12, Monday, 7 p.m.,** Town Hall Annex. Public hearing to discuss the FY13 Community Development Strategy. All are invited and will be heard.

**November 27, Tuesday, 6:45 p.m.,** Old Town Hall. Special Town Meeting, to vote on appropriating funds from Stabilization and Ambulance Funds for particular expenses.

**November 28, Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m.** Search your ancestry with assistance from Laurie Foulke-Green at the Sandisfield Library. Search the records to find your family using the world edition of Ancestry.com

**December 1, Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.,** Historical Society's Annual Christmas Fair. Vendors with gifts and Christmas items, baked goods. Lunch will be available. To participate as a vendor, call Marcia Ignace at 413-258-2898. Table fee is \$15. Attending or participating in the event will help the Society, local businesses, and charities.



## Ongoing Events

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. Public welcome.

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

The Children's Health Program Play Group, now every Tuesday when school is in session, 9:30-11 a.m., Farmington River Elementary


School music room. Led by Laura Messina. 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. Cost \$2.00.

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



## Post Office News

Postmaster Karen Cooley is on leave-of-absence from the Post Office. She will return mid-February. Her temporary replacement is Koren Ahlen, on loan to our post office from the Richmond PO. 

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### Farm to Table Harvest Dinner

to benefit the  
SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER

Saturday, November 10 at 7 P.M.  
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Please send a check to The Sandisfield Times, PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

*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.

**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](http://www.sandisfieldtimes.org).

Copies of *The Sandisfield Times* are available in Sandisfield at A&M Auto, the Dump, Post Office, the New Boston Inn, the SilverBrook Café, Villa Mia M.J. Tuckers, 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 Elementary School and the Farmington River Deli. Other locations include (in Monterey) the The Roadstore Cafe, the Monterey General Store and the Southfield Store.

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

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