

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



Plebis

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Volume III, Number 9

December 2012

Sandy in the City

By Larry Dwyer

When someone asks I usually say, "I live in Sandisfield, but Monday thru Friday, I work and sleep in NYC." When Hurricane Sandy arrived, I was in NYC at a power plant in the East Village in Manhattan. I work there.

I work in the Purchasing Department. On Monday and Tuesday, instead of buying the usual industrial pumps, motors, and valves, the company told me to buy food for everyone at work. We were going to be there awhile, because of the storm. I fed my co-workers breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Everybody was my friend. If you want to keep a New Yorker happy, just give 'em a bagel and a slice of pizza and they'll do anything for you.

I'm going to be voted "Employee of the Quarter." This is great. Now, besides telling my future grandchildren how I walked five miles to school every day, I'll also have documented proof how I single handedly saved NYC during the Hurricane of 2012. As Employee of the Quarter, I also get the grand prize. I get to park my car right at the front lobby for three months. The timing couldn't have been more perfect: Only two months ago I stopped driving to work and started taking the subway. *Cont'd p.3*

A Note from Jeff Gray, Selectman

I want folks to know I'm doing pretty good, and taking things slow. I have to believe what the doctors tell me, that I'm recovering well and should get most of my strength back, though it doesn't seem I'm doing that well to me. Getting better takes too long for me.



Photo: Bill Price

Truck Still Stuck In Store INSURERS IN NO HURRY

By Bill Price

By the time this issue of the Times is in your hands, the asphalt dump truck may have been removed from the side of the New Boston Store. Or it may still be there.

It would not take long to pull it out, says Ralph Morrison of A&M Auto, located just up Tolland Road from the store. He estimated it would be a job of a couple hours, though he couldn't guarantee how much of that side of the store would remain standing after the truck is removed.

Nearly two months after the accident on October 2, the insurance companies for the truck contractors have yet to agree on how to repair the damage or reclaim the truck.

"We're still at a standstill," said Pete Murray, proprietor of the New Boston Store. "Nothing going on since the last time I talked to you." The "last time" Pete was referring to was mid-November. *Cont'd p.6*

Everyone in town gave me and my family a lot of support and help while I was at BMC, and you still are now that I'm home. We appreciate it very much. I'll thank folks as I see you around town, but I'd like to thank everyone in this broader way. We're grateful for the generous help. Everyone's been awful good to us, and I appreciate it. 🍷

Grant Possibility Attracts Interest

Sandisfield competing with towns across the state

By Laura Rogers-Castro

More than 15 pre-applications were submitted by Sandisfield residents in the first step toward a potential Community Development Block Grant. If the Town is successful in receiving the grant, funding could provide some much needed local assistance with home repairs and other projects.

“If money is available, it might as well be coming to Sandisfield.”

There is competition from other Massachusetts towns and cities, however, and Sandisfield will need to meet certain criteria to qualify for the funding. Each grant that is submitted to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will be evaluated and scored based on several factors.


One necessary component is a “Community Development Strategy,” which will provide the Commonwealth a means to determine Sandisfield’s needs compared to other towns in the state.

Sandisfield resident Alice Boyd, who will submit the paperwork for the town through her community development firm Bailey Boyd Associates, hosted a public hearing on the strategy at the Town Hall Annex on November 12. Residents were invited to suggest ways Sandisfield could continue to make improvements to the town that would increase the value of the community.

For example, increased internet speed and accessibility might attract small businesses or people who can conduct their business from home. Another example might be to provide additional public recreation through hiking trails or access to cold water streams for fishing. Sandisfield’s rural character includes miles of roads that continue to need repairs. Community development might address the necessity to receive funding for road repairs.

The Community Development Block Grant submitted could fund a professional planner to help Sandisfield residents develop a detailed plan based on their ideas for the future. This plan can help Sandisfield qualify for additional assistance. I’m sure we can all agree that if money is available, it might as well be coming to Sandisfield!

So what’s next with this process? The grant needs to be submitted by early February (the deadline was pushed back from late December). Alice will be donating her time and effort in writing and compiling all the documents needed for a complete application. The State will then grade the grant. This can take several months.

It’s likely that only four or five grants will be funded statewide from the pool of funds that Sandisfield is eligible for, but if Sandisfield is not funded this time we can reapply next year. If you would like more information or have specific thoughts regarding any aspect of the grant, feel free to contact me (413-258-0200) or Alice (413-258-7100). 



Old Poems

If you stop and look awhile
There is poetry in everything.
You can take the tiniest imps of earth,
No more’n a toenail wide
And make them sing
A wonderful chorale
About mountains and valleys
And wide drunken rivers
That stagger across the land.

Look up at any tree that’s handy
And you’ll find a sonnet resting
On some dying leaves.
Or listen to those same leaves
Murmur in tongues as they fall.

I mean to do it tonight,
Walk to the edge of everything.
And find some old poems
That used to stay in books and trees
And never got to sing.

Val Coleman, Town Hill

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Newspaper**

**See letter from
Simon Winchester,
p. 15.**

RESULTS OF NOVEMBER 6 ELECTION

PRESIDENT:

Obama: 294
Romney: 154
Johnson: 4
Stein: 3

SENATE:

Warren: 265
Brown: 183

STATE HOUSE:

Pignatelli 335
Laugenour 78

GOVERNOR’S COUNCIL, DIST. 8

Albano 271
Franco 132

QUESTION 1: RIGHT TO REPAIR

Yes (winner statewide) 348
No 9

QUESTION 2: MEDICAL MARIJUANA:

Yes (winner statewide) 310
No 132

QUESTION 2: DEATH WITH DIGNITY:

Yes 310
No (winner statewide) 135

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Two Months and Counting

After two months the fact that the truck is still stuck in the store may not seem like front-page news. But whenever I call folks at insurance companies or truck outfits the people I speak to express surprise. Their answers range from “The truck is still there?” to “It’s still in the store?” So maybe it is news, at least to people who don’t drive past it every day.

Hurricane Sandy disasters in the Far Rockaways and the Jersey Shore, miles and miles of destroyed buildings, might be restored and/or removed before repairs will even be started on our wrecked New Boston Store. With a very large truck still imbedded in its side, the store stands with wooden props holding up one side, chain-link fencing across the front, and a very large blue tarp shielding the truck and the ripped building over the river.

Eight weeks have drifted by since the accident. A hurricane has come and gone. Snow has fallen and melted and fallen again. Apparently no one is in much hurry to start fixing the place or reclaiming the truck. Appointments have been made and changed and not remade. Phone calls have gone unanswered and/or never returned.

When and if the building is secured and the truck pulled out, we hope to get pictures of the event, if nothing else to prove that it happened.

On a more personal subject, The Sandisfield Times, a volunteer effort, needs cash from its readers. Subscriptions and our loyal advertisers don’t quite pay the bills – printing, paper, circulation. We depend on contributions from readers like you. Please respond to Simon Winchester’s letter on the inside of the back cover of this issue, and be as generous as you can be. Thanks very much from all of us, and good holidays to all. ♥

Bill Price, West New Boston

Sandy in the City

Cont’d from p.1

Monday, October 29, was the height of the storm. Four feet of water came into the power plant and the media reported a giant explosion across the street at a sub-station. All I saw was a giant green flash and heard a loud boom. What happened was a 345 kV (345,000 volts) electrical feeder flooded and shorted out. That’s when the lights went out. An explosion usually leaves a hole in the ground, but this was more like a bolt of lightning and a thunder clap. However, it provided a good cover for the executives to explain why it took so long for the lights to come back on.

On Wednesday all the gas stations in Queens closed before 9:00 pm. News reports said there was no gas shortage. They were right! There was no shortage, they just weren’t selling. The next day I found out I wasn’t the only person who couldn’t get gas. The conspiracy wasn’t only against me, it was against everyone.

On Thursday I formed a car pool with my Bangladeshi friends from work. They’re a young group in their early twenties and some of the most brilliant people I ever met. At the end of the day they finally let me hang out with them and we went to one young fellow’s apartment. Although they are Muslim, they weren’t offended when I picked up a six pack of Coronas to drink. They introduced me to hookah. I haven’t smoked since I was eighteen, but I tried the hookah which is a flavored tobacco smoked through a water pipe. I found it very soothing unlike traditional cigarettes. They reminded me of myself when I was young. They had the latest in electronic gadgets and fancy cars, but they live in the most Spartan of accommodations. When I got home, I told my wife where I had been. She got angry with me because she thought I was stuck in traffic for three hours. I should have called. Duh!

Friday morning, one of my coworkers told me that a lineman’s son was killed in Rye, NY. His son, thirteen years old, was killed with another boy, an eleven year old friend. Both were crushed and died instantly when a giant tree fell on them. At lunchtime, the station manager made the announcement and I as shop steward announced that we would take up a collection. One mechanic protested, “What about the rest of us who lost property!” Then he realized his mistake and recanted, “I know property can be replaced.” “We can’t help everyone,” I said, “It’s just the thought.” Later on without asking, people started donating money.

After work on Friday night, I took my wife out to dinner and we finally talked. Normally on Fridays, we drive to Sandisfield, but since gas wasn’t available anywhere, we had an Italian meal in Jackson Heights. Afterwards, we walked down to the Uruguayan neighborhood for a cappuccino and desert. My wife is no longer angry with me.

Saturday morning I went to work with my Bangladeshi car pool, but I had to take the F train part of the way. The train was packed. Near the 59th Street Bridge in Queens, one gas station was finally open and pumping gas. We drove to lower Manhattan and most of the lights were on. There was a sense of relief. The city was coming back to life, but there was still much work to do.

By the end of the week, I went from “Hero to Zero.” Someone brought a five-gallon can of gasoline and left it my boss’s office. When the can was filled it was cold, but after being in the warm office the gas began to expand and leak out of the filler top. When I came to work and smelled gasoline, I gave the gas can to someone else because it presented a serious fire hazard. Even though the can was refilled for my boss, he berated me for giving his gas away and so I yelled back at him and he wrote me up for insubordination. Cooler heads prevailed, and the incident was squashed. What a week. Thank god I live in Sandisfield. ♥



Sandisfield dodged Sandy for the most part, though Steve Harasyko reported that 40-45 trees and limbs were knocked across roads and powerlines, like this one on Cold Spring Road. Some residents lost power for three days. Photo: Jean Atwater-Williams

Heritage Markers Appear All Over Town


By Ron Bernard



You may have noticed that more venerable buildings are sporting handsome heritage markers, typically at the front entrance. The markers or plaques first appeared in 1984 on about thirty old houses as part of the Historical Society's efforts to raise awareness about Sandisfield heritage. Owners were encouraged to research the histories of their properties and unique plaques depicting the crest of the House of Sandys, designed by member Ruth Freeman, were awarded to participants.

Recently a long-forgotten carton of these sturdy cast aluminum plaques was discovered at Society headquarters. Since this was the 250th anniversary of the Town, the plaques were offered for sale to property owners of historic buildings whose places, for one reason or another, had not participated thirty years ago. More than forty owners jumped at the chance and now markers are showing up on many more buildings around town.

It is gratifying to see how so many owner-custodians of these special properties display the markers, thereby fostering both awareness of Sandisfield heritage and pride in our town. The sale also significantly improved the society's financial picture for which the Board is very grateful.

Approximately 30 more historic properties qualify for plaques, but only a few units are still available. These will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and once the inventory is depleted, no more will be manufactured. For information contact Josephine Freedman at (413) 258-4786 or Ron Bernard at (413) 269-0012. 

CURRENT HERITAGE MARKERS

NEW BOSTON

The New Boston Inn	c.1755
The Daniel Brown House	c.1760
The Joseph Denslow House	c.1769
The Twining House	c.1784
The Old Stone House	1843
The New Boston Store	c.1850
The Joseph Clark House	c.1850
The Elizur Deming Farm	---

WEST NEW BOSTON

The Russell Deming House	c.1794
The Ozias Deming House	c.1800
The Luke Deming House	c.1806
The Dennis O'Brien House	c.1839
The Orlow Burt House	c.1840
The West New Boston School	c.1841
The Hosea Hurlburt House	c.1845
The Fletcher Place	c.1848
The Berkshire Creamery	c.1852
The Calvert Cotton House	c.1855
The Osborn House	c.1857

MONTVILLE

The George Manley House	c.1765
The Stratton Place	c.1800s
The Joseph Fuller House	c.1837
The Joseph Calkins House	c.1842
The Montville Baptist Church	1842
The Levi Pease House	1843
The Oliver Bosworth House	1844
The Oliver Jones House	c.1850
The Edward Whitney House	c.1850

SANDISFIELD CENTER

The Bosworth Taproom	c.1754
The Sears-Hawley House	c.1760
The Joseph Wolcott House	c.1765
The Jabez Bosworth Tavern	c.1798
The Dr. Erastus Beach House	1809
The Ansel Viets House	c.1830s
The John Whitney House	c.1850s
Sandisfield Center Parsonage	1852
The Henry Balch House	c.1859
Atwater Pond	1892

SOUTH SANDISFIELD

The Solomon Smith House	c.1764
The Dr. Amos Smith House	c.1773
The Sage-Rood House	c.1781
The Jacob Webster House	c.1784
The Benjamin Pierce Tavern	c.1785
The Elizur Spencer House	c.1790
The Philemon Sage House	c.1799
The Abner Webster House	c.1800
The Lyman Sanford House	c.1837
Congregational Meeting House	1909
The Charlesworth-Singer Gardens	---
The Riiska Farm	---

FREE QUARTER

The Benjamin Smith House	c.1780
The Elijah Crane House	c.1782
The Deubarties Denslow Homestead	c.1798
The Amos Belden House	c.1800s
The Harry Cowles House	c.1824
The Joseph Cone House	c.1835
The Horace White House	c.1839

TOWN HILL & NORTHWEST

The Samuel Merrill House	c.1775
The Abisha Rice House	c.1778
The West Street School	c.1780
The Elijah Deming House	c.1785
The John Jones House	c.1786
The Theophilus Hubbard House	c.1817
The Henry Abbey House	c.1818
The Hubbard-Brooks Farm	c.1834

BEECH PLAIN & SPECTACLE POND

The Amen Farm	c.1768
The Israel Jones House	c.1780
The Avery Hurlburt House	c.1780
The Thomas Waters House	c.1783
The Josiah Hulet House	c.1785
The Strickland Farm	c.1785
The Sylvester Barker House	c.1845
The John Stewart House	c.1849
The Erastus Adams House	c.1850

SANDISFIELD BACK IN BUSINESS

Sigh of Relief Heard as Far Away as Colebrook

By Bill Price


The Select Board reached a legal quorum of two on Monday, November 26, when Selectman Jeff Gray walked in the door at the Town Hall Annex, accompanied by his driver, the other Selectman, Patrick Barrett.

Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko said, "It was really nice to see Jeff come in the door on his own. The town can get back to work."

The Board had been stymied since October 20 when Jeff suffered a serious stroke which left only Selectman Patrick Barrett standing. In the absence of a quorum, Patrick couldn't even call a meeting. While the Town Clerk could sign payroll checks, crucial items scheduled for the October 23 Selectmen's Meeting had to be postponed, including legally required

liquor license transfer requests for MJ Tuckers and the SilverBrook Café which were at risk of expiring. Town business licenses needed to be renewed and budgets approved. Patrick explained that November was one of the busiest times of the year for the Board, yet the Town had to wait patiently while Jeff either recovered well enough to return to his duties or a special election was held, which under state law would have required at least two months to schedule.

So Monday night, November 26, Jeff came in the door. After nearly a month of recovery at Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield and a few days at home, he felt strong enough to attend a Selectmen's Meeting. With Patrick as his driver, Jeff walked in the door unaided, using neither a walker nor a cane. He was grinning.

The Board conducted town business, signed the licenses for Tuckers and the SilverBrook, rescheduled the Special Town Meeting that had been announced for November 27 but had to be cancelled with Jeff's illness, signed legal documents for the town, and agreed not to hold a special election to fill the third Selectman position. An All Boards Meeting was scheduled for December 10 at the Town Hall Annex to discuss and review town budgets. 

Special Town Meeting Rescheduled

A Special Town meeting will be held December 17, Monday, at 7 p.m. at the Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road.

ARTICLE 1: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$2,000 or any other sum for a New Computer System for the Treasurer's office and to meet that appropriation transfer \$2,000 or any other sum from Free Cash.


ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$2,500 or any other sum for the Treasurer's Tax Lien Expense and to meet that appropriation transfer \$2,500 or any other sum from Free Cash.

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$9,800 or any other sum for the New Hartford Road Repair Loan and to meet that appropriation transfer \$9,800 or any other sum from Free Cash.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$24,000 or any other sum for the Gas Account and to meet that appropriation transfer \$24,000 or any other sum from Free Cash.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$42,000 or any other sum for Storm Irene and to meet that appropriation transfer \$42,000 from Free Cash.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$160,000 or any other sum for a new ambulance and to meet that appropriation transfer \$160,000 or any other sum from the Ambulance Fee Revolving Account.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you are not already registered to vote, the last day to register to vote at the Special Town Meeting will be on December 6, Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., and from 6 to 7 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex. 

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7 Lower West St. SOLD for \$155,000 86 South Main St. SOLD for \$167,500
134 Sandisfield Rd. SOLD for \$255,000 3 New Hartford Rd. SOLD for \$300,000
89 South Main St. SOLD for \$319,000

ON THE MARKET IN SANDISFIELD

West St. 6.77 Acres with wide road frontage and two brooks \$55,000
West St. 6 Acres perc tested with home site cleared and brook \$59,000
Otis Wood Lands Premium Building Parcels all over 2 Acres! \$172,000 to \$178,000
Lower West St. Watch & hear the Buck River! 3 bedrooms on 8± acres \$225,000
Stump Road Country Colonial on 5 Acres . Hand-crafted kitchen, porch, 4 bedrooms \$275,000
South Main St. 3 Bedroom Cape w/In-law apt. 1+acre Frontage on the Farmington River \$285,000
Stone Bridge Farm: 4 bedroom colonial, classic red barn, 24 acres, 2 rivers \$647,000

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Truck Still Stuck in Store

Cont'd from p.1

"There was a date set in early November to do testing for asbestos and lead paint," said Pete. "They say they have to do that before they can start taking down that side of the building. But the testing was cancelled the day before they were to show up. I haven't heard from them since."

Pete and his wife, Sue Murray, are staying with Sue's sister, Bonnie Harbour, down Rt. 8 from the store, which is still covered with the large blue tarpaulin that was draped over it a few days after the crash. Under the tarp rests the dump truck. Tolland Mountain Builders, the firm that draped the tarp, propped up the corner of the building that looms over the truck.

As for moving forward, Pete can't get to the business records he needs to complete his applications for his homeowner's insurance since the steel cabinet holding his files is still buried under the front chassis of the truck. While his homeowner's insurance is paying some of Pete and Sue's living expenses, Pete's patience is wearing thin.

"Everybody is waiting," said Steve DellaGiustina of Tolland Mountain Builders. "We'd like to be able to help reconstruct the building, if that's what the decision is. But right now we're all in the same boat - waiting on the insurance companies. Issues like this can easily take a couple months to sort out."

Steve added that structural engineers have determined the safest way to move the truck is to take down that portion of the building first. "We don't have a lot of experience taking buildings down, and that job will probably be assigned to Associated Building Wreckers in Springfield."

On their website, Associated Wreckers state that "demolition is an engineered process of safely and efficiently removing structures." No one would deny that.

The accident came about during the recent repaving job on New Hartford Road. The town of Sandisfield contracted the job to Lane Construction of Westfield, which, with branches across

the country, is one of the largest construction firms in the United States. Lane has been building highways and bridges and dams for over a century. One of its specialties is asphalt paving.

Reached by phone, a manager for Lane's said that the truck that hit the store was hired for that specific job and was not a Lane truck. "As a hired truck," he said, "it's their responsibility to haul material from the pick-up site to the job site. They carry their own insurance."

The trucking contractor, Haulas Trucking in Springfield, reached by telephone, asked if a reporter could call back in order to get its insurer's information. The contractor hasn't been reachable since.

The accident, said Sandisfield's Police Chief Michael Morrison, is still under investigation. With the truck still buried in the building's debris, the state patrol has been unable to inspect the truck's brake systems and other possible causes of the accident.



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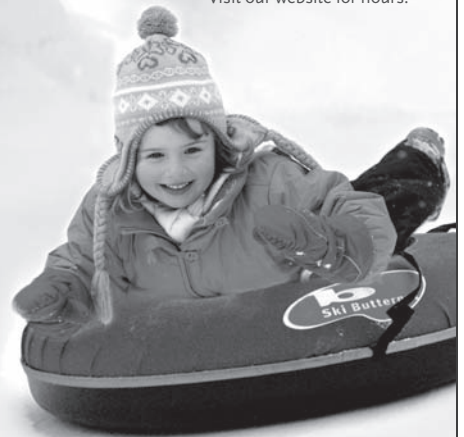
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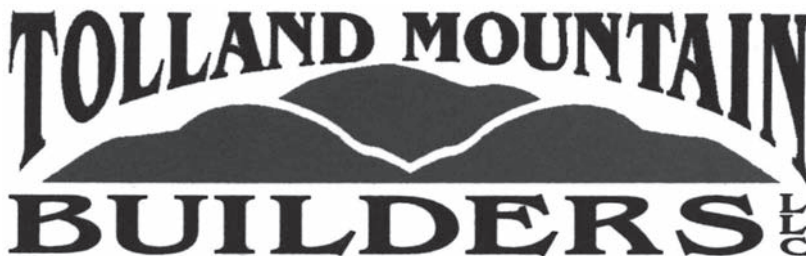
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Town Management Review Committee Up and Running

How Can You Help?


By Debbie Harris

The Sandisfield Town Management Review Committee, one of two committees formed by the Selectmen in response to a request at last May's annual town meeting, has begun the process of researching the need for and logistics of town management.

The committee has determined that some of the major issues facing Sandisfield are accountability of town boards and committees, transparency in all aspects of town government, and obtaining more citizen involvement in running our town.

Committee members John Skrip (chair), Debbie Harris (clerk), Teresa DellaGiustina, Rhee Kasky, Bill O'Brien, Kathleen Segrin, and Joe Zeller are busy contacting other municipalities in Berkshire County to determine if they have a town manager and, if so, what the position entails and what compensation they receive.

The committee is looking into ways to encourage citizen input into town decisions and ways in which our fellow townfolk can contribute to the town (either on a one-time basis, periodically, or as a regular member of a board or committee). With this in mind we plan to publish personnel needs of the town in each issue of the Sandisfield Times, beginning with the January/February issue with existing vacancies on various boards and committees.

At that time we will also present a formal mission statement of the committee. We will also keep you informed as we flesh out ideas as to how you can provide your input. We look forward to hearing from you. 

Town Management Review Committee Minutes

October 2, 2012, 7 p.m.

Present: Debbie Harris, Rhee Kasky, Bill O'Brien, John Skrip, Joe Zeller

Kathleen Segrin, a prospective member of the committee, was present and asked to join the discussion. All members agreed.

John Skrip volunteered to chair the committee, and Debbie Harris volunteered to be clerk. Unanimously agreed.


The issue of creating the position of Town Manager was discussed. John questioned if we actually need a Town Manager, given the financial costs involved. Rhee noted that accountability of all board and committee chairs is a big issue, and everyone agreed that if this could be accomplished, with or without a Town Manager, it would go a long way toward accomplishing the goal of streamlining town government.

It was noted that of all the small towns in the area, only Otis has a full time Town Manager. The question of whether we should pay a stipend to all board and committee chairs and, in return require higher accountability, was raised. It was further noted that of all board and committee chairs only the Highway Superintendent is required to be at Selectmen's meetings.

Tasks assigned for the next meeting:

1. Obtain a list of all town boards and committees – Bill
2. Obtain a copy of the Selectmen's Handbook – Rhee
3. Obtain a job description (if such exists) for all board and committee chairs – Rhee
4. Obtain information from Otis as to what their Town Manager actually does – John
5. Talk to Dolores about why she feels a Town Manager is necessary and what he/she should be doing – John
6. Obtain and complete the "Committee Form" and return it to Dolores – John

All present agreed that Kathleen Segrin, if she so wishes, should ask the Selectmen to officially appoint her to this committee. We also discussed the fact that Alice Boyd, a professional grant writer, is interested in joining the committee but is unavailable to attend meetings until mid-December. John suggested that we encourage anyone who prospectively might want to join the committee in order to bring our membership up to seven members, which was the number of members initially planned. A motion was made and unanimously approved that our minutes be published in the Sandisfield Times.


A motion was made and seconded and unanimously approved that we should aim to have a report ready to present by March 2013, and we should ask the Selectmen to schedule an All Boards meeting on March 25 in order to present our report. 

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Sandisfield Arts Center Looks Ahead

By Alice Boyd

The final concert of the 2012 Sandisfield Arts Center season will take place on December 8th at 5p.m. This holiday concert will include a performance by the Chorus Angelicus Training & Junior Choir comprised of children from age 6 to 12, an event guaranteed to make you smile and inject even the biggest Grinch with a dose of holiday spirit.

From Bach to blues, knitting to yoga, the Arts Center seeks to provide a variety of performances, workshops, and exhibits to tempt a wider audience. This season the Arts Center added a few new twists with "Rascals & Others," an original play to celebrate Sandisfield's 250th Anniversary, and a special event to honor Local Heroes who help safeguard our town.

On the first of December, the Programs Committee will meet at the Arts Center to begin planning our 18th season. Suggestions are welcome, as the 2013 season will be based upon community input and past attendance records. All are welcome to attend, listen, and contribute your ideas.

WHAT ELSE IS UP?


While attending my first performance at the Center I noticed a woman being carried up the winding staircase to the second-floor performance space. She was in a wheelchair and the three gentlemen carrying her struggled. I held my breath as they teetered around the corner and the chair started to tip. Thankfully, the men were of hardy stock and completely righted the chair, making it up the stairs without incident. I saw it repeated at virtually every performance – attendees hobbling up the stairs with canes, crutches, and injuries and a few parties who left once they discovered that this historic landmark was not ADA accessible.

Last spring we had an opportunity to submit a Massachusetts Cultural Council Facilities grant. Our little Arts Center competed against some giants including Harvard University, New England Aquarium, and the Berklee College of Music. As you can imagine, we were delighted when the Cultural Council announced its grant awards: the Sandisfield Arts Center received \$12,237 for a handicap lift and some lighting. The only problem – we need \$48,947 to complete the project. Over the past months a few of us have been quietly reaching out to people we know to ask for help. We have raised an additional \$17,000 to date but we're running out of resources and time.

In four months we lose the Cultural Council grant if we have not raised the matching funds. We need help. We need \$9,600 to install the lift; \$19,000 if we're to include the long-awaited vestibule that will make wheelchair access less unwieldy and keep folks out of the rain upon arrival. If you can give us a hand or if you know someone who can, would you let us know? It just doesn't seem right to discriminate against a segment of our population who are already greatly challenged. And you never know when you or someone you love might need that lift. Your gift is tax deductible and can make the difference now for years to come. Donations can be sent to SARc, PO Box 31, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

BOARD NEWS

A special thank you to Jean Atwater-Williams who is stepping down after two years as President. Susie Crofut and I have agreed to serve as Co-Presidents, and Jean will stay on as Vice-President. Eva Blachere will remain as Treasurer and Claudette Baril will continue as Secretary/Clerk. We are delighted to welcome three new board members: Steve German, Jane Hason, and Paul Van Sickle.

The Sandisfield Arts Center, operated by 100% volunteers, offers up to 35 different events each year with a small operating budget raised primarily through donations. The Center is open to all, and our building, a former Baptist Church and Jewish Synagogue, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It's a special place, and we rely on your continued support and welcome your comments. 



BRIDGE WATCH: EXCAVATION WORK ON CONCRETE FOOTINGS AND WING-WALLS

Article and Photo by Sandy Parisky



Motorists traveling daily over the Route 8 & 57 Bridge are probably unaware of the rather complicated structural work going on below the roadway.

Under the bridge, crews from J. H. Maxymillian (JHM), managers of the Bridge Replacement Project for Mass DOT, have built a temporary earth support system on either side in order to construct new bridge footings, abutments, and wing-walls.

The function of abutment footings is to displace the superstructure load of the bridge and vehicle loads to the ground beneath. These loads, soil characteristics, and structural engineering standards determine the size of the footings. The abutments are the concrete that the steel beams rest on for the bridge deck. Wing-walls serve two functions: first, to support the roadway for traffic and second, the top of the wing-wall serves as the curbing and foundation for the vehicular rail.

Demolition work on the west side was completed last month and abutment/wing-wall demo work on the east side is underway. Last month, new concrete abutment footings were poured on the west side and excavation for the southwest wing-wall footings for the west abutment. JHM expects that concrete pours will continue into January.



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Angelicus

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Choir** will perform traditional and contemporary
carols from around the world.

SANDISFIELD CULTURAL COUNCIL GRANTS

By John Skrip



The Sandisfield Cultural Council met in November to review 23 applications for 2013 grants totaling \$10,083.

We wish all applications could have been approved, but our State LLC Grant was only for \$3,870.00. Letters of refusal will go out the week of Nov 18, 2012. Following notification of refusal we plan to send letters of approval, which should be received on or before Dec 31, 2012.


The November meeting also resulted in an approval of the Sandisfield Cultural Mission Statement:

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Sandisfield Cultural Council is to broaden and enhance the cultural life available to the town of Sandisfield and its residents. The council will encourage and promote all forms of cultural activities. The council will act as a bridge between the arts, business, government, and educational institutions and help support communication and cooperation in our community.

Vision Statement

The Cultural Council will serve as an advocate for the public by encouraging efforts within the local community and educating policy makers about the benefits of the arts.

Council members are: John Skrip, Connie Canty, Peter Levine, Clare English, and Anina Carr. The council is looking for interested individuals to serve as council members. Please call John Skrip (413-258-4788) or speak to any member about serving on the council. 



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By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

Our thank you to the Sandisfield Arts Center for a donation of the DVD version of the local play, "Rascals & Others," performed during the Town's 250th Anniversary Celebration. And another thank you to Ron Bernard for donating the original Sandisfield Taxpayer's Association minutes of meetings from 1947-1969. Both gifts are greatly appreciated.

No Genealogy assistance class will be held on December 26. The next class will be January 30, 2013, Wednesday, at 6:30 p.m.

OUR NEW BOOKS:

Open Heart, by Elie Wiesel
Two Graves, by Douglas Preston
Burying the Past, by Fran Harman
The Child's Child, by Barbara Vine
Dead in Water, by Dana Stabenow
Extra Credit, Maggie Barbieri
Good Junk, by James St.Cliff
Shiver, by Karen Robards
Shadow Woman, by Linda Howard
The Forgotten, by David Baldacci
Private London, by James Patterson 

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Set Up Your Own Portable Sawmill

By Tom Ryan

In late October, Sandisfield was host to a Portable Sawmill Workshop. Organized by the Northeast State Foresters Association as part of a series held throughout New England and New York, the day-long event was held locally at TerMar Triangle Farm in South Sandisfield on Sandy Brook Turnpike (Rt. 183). The

footprint for local wood products. It is a sad fact that currently 98% of the wood consumed in Massachusetts is imported from outside the state even though we live in the 8th most-forested state in the nation as reported in a 2010 assessment of Massachusetts forest resources. Massachusetts residents literally live in the woods, but buy most of their wood products from elsewhere; and that elsewhere could literally be the other side of the world.

Professor Cassens started off with an overview of what it takes to create a portable sawmill business with a cost-benefit analysis and sizing

by knots, stains, or insect damage. The day was concluded with pointers on marketing and value-added strategies like kiln drying, planing, or molding.

It's worth noting that Massachusetts has a native lumber law which allows for the use of native ungraded wood from a registered native lumber producer in the construction of single and two-story structures for farm or residential use. You can get a directory of registered native lumber producers from www.mass.gov/dps. The next time you find yourself in need of some lumber consider supporting a local wood producer like James Nash and Terry Ignace who offer the following services: custom sawing, planing, molding, kiln drying as well as producing large-diameter structural timbers and firewood.

Terry Ignace gave me some sage advice to pass along to the consumer based on his years of experience: set aside instant gratification because a little patience and planning ahead will be rewarded. The more time he has to fill an order the better the quality and the less expensive the finished product will be for the consumer. ♣



Inspecting fresh-cut board Photo: Tom Ryan

seminar portion was held across the road at the Sandisfield Historical Society building.

The workshop was well attended by many locals including mill owners, landowners, loggers, and foresters. Pickups and other vehicles were parked along both sides of the turnpike for several hundred yards. The workshop leader was Dan Cassens, Professor at Purdue University, and author of a book titled, "Manufacturing and Marketing Eastern Hardwood Lumber."

The training was particularly timely for our area with a recent uptick of public awareness for buying local agricultural products including wood products. Portable saw mill businesses are responding to an increased demand for affordable high-quality building materials especially from environmentally aware consumers.

Compare the quality and price of lumber you can purchase at big box stores with the quality and price of the lumber you can get from a local mill. Chances are you will find a higher quality product locally at a competitive price. There is also the added benefit of a reduced carbon

the saw mill to the desired rate of production. In his experience, Cassen said, the most productive and economically stable models are for either a one-worker, one-mill operation, essentially as small as you can get, or a bigger business with multiple workers paired to a high-production mill equating to a large-scale operation. In between, the cost/benefits do not fare so well. This was followed by an analysis of the various aspects of wood quality with a particular focus on the characteristics for local tree species, as well as an overview of log scaling, sawing patterns, and how to maximize for the best grade of lumber.

A sawing demonstration was conducted by James Nash of Nash/Winn Milling, who is taking steps toward taking over the mill business from Terry Ignace of TerMar Triangle Farm. The logs used for the sawing demonstration included black walnut and red oak logs. Observers experienced firsthand what it takes to transform a raw log into rough-sawn boards and get an appreciation for the skills of the sawyer. This led into explanations of grading defects caused

Tom Ryan, a DCR Service Forester for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, can be reached at: tom.ryan@state.ma.us or 413-784-1828 ext. 123.

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KNOX TRAIL WINE

By Ron Bernard

We cannot let this 250th anniversary year pass into history without one last nod to the fabled Knox Trail which passes through northern Sandisfield. The tribute is thanks to Joe and Sally Salzano of Mount Vernon, N.Y., whose early American home on Perry Road is near a segment of the old trail. An avid reader of American history, Joe has been intrigued with the legend of the trail since he first learned of it when the family acquired their place in 1969.

Home-made wine is a Salzano family tradition extending back many years to ancestral roots in Italy. Joe takes wine making seriously and in 2005 he was inspired to call his very pleasing zinfandel varietal, "Knox Trail Wine." It was his way of acknowledging those long-ago patriots who probably passed by his house in early January 1776 with captured British cannons for a besieged General Washington in Boston. Their courageous and improbable feat may have changed the course of the Revolution. "I thought it would be nice way to honor this great achievement," Joe said.

This year Joe intended to add a local component by using his own Beech Plain grapes. But there was a problem. "Everything looked good and I was all set," he said, "until a bear ate my grapes." Joe may try again next year, keeping an eye out for the bear. Meanwhile, the Salzanos and their friends and neighbors will have to toast Knox and his teamsters with another excellent vintage, albeit one made from California grapes. Colonel Knox, we're sure, would be amused. ♣

Old Route 8

Take a Drive Through the Colebrook Reservoir

Photos by Jean Atwater-Williams, Larry Dwyer, and Bill Price

Although the road closes during winter and the reservoir is rising, you may still be able to take a pleasant and unusual drive through the Colebrook Reservoir. Drive south on Rt. 8, turn left just past Tuckers but before you cross the Farmington River Bridge. You'll be on the old Rt. 8 roadway.

Signs warn "Dead End" and "Road Ends in Water," but if you brave the road anyway you'll be able to drive along what used to be the highway between Colebrook and Sandisfield. You can exit, if the gate is open and it usually is for now, at the boat launch on Rt. 8. The pavement is rough in places, but the view is worth the drive. You might see a few fishermen, a few boaters, but not many tourists and no trucks. Because of recent rains the reservoir is rising again, and the old bridge is disappearing once again.



You can even continue further south by taking the other exit at the southern end of the boat launch, if that gate is open. The road, still paved, passes along the side of a cliff and curls around the reservoir, providing unusual views of the back of Colebrook Dam. A portion of this road is dirt and looks rough but is fairly smooth and takes you up and away from the reservoir to emerge on Rt. 8, and back into the world of today. ♣



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HI EVERYONE!

Thank you for your get well wishes. I am doing well even though my pace is much slower. I have to keep remembering "slow and steady wins the race." Merry Christmas. See you in February.

Karen Cooley, Postmaster
St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital,
Memphis, Tennessee

GET IT RIGHT!!

Dear Editor:

I would like to comment on three articles in the Nov. issue.

1. Joshua Smith. The Sandisfield American Legion Post 456 has been placing flags on his grave for many many years. When Ed Riiska was road superintendant he kept that part of Dodd Rd. passable. Since he retired, it is more like a "logging type road." A Legion member walks down from York Lake Rd. every Memorial Day to place flags.

2. New Boston store. The Montville store did not close for lack of business. It was closed to make three apartments for my two daughters and me.

3. Changing Owners. As mentioned above: The "store "as converted to apartments by me and sold to the Hubers as such. Prior to that, MUCH work had been done. New septic, plumbing, wiring, gas pumps, porches, steps, painting, metal roof, 3-bay garage, new well and landscaping. Plus much more on the interior. I put a lot of work into that building and it should not be stated that "nothing had changed."

Nice reporting but get the facts right.

Maria Domato, Sandisfield...1950-present

Sandisfield Historical Society News

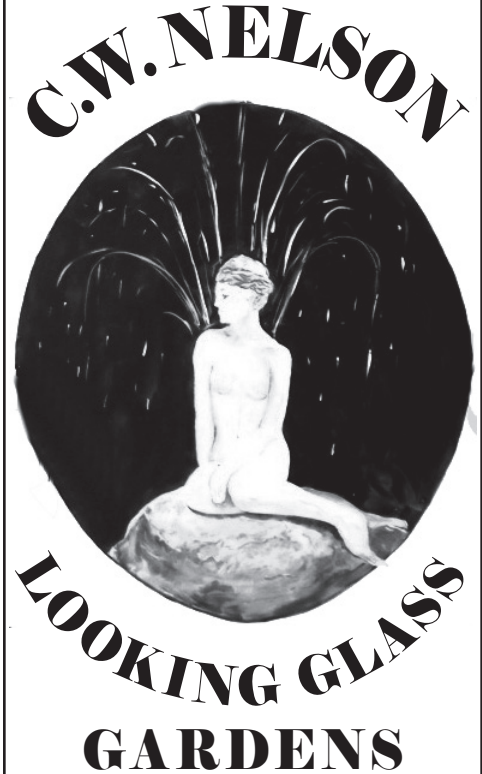


"Thank You" to Sandisfield's Historian/ Author

At the Sandisfield Historical Society's year-end gathering on November 4, which nearly filled the meeting house on Sandy Brook Turnpike, local historian Ron Bernard and the Book Project Committee accepted a recognition award from Society President Norton Fletcher on behalf of their work on *Sandisfield Then And Now: 1762-2012*. In response, Ron spoke about the two-year process of researching, writing, and designing the book and expressed appreciation to the committee and contributors and to all the townspeople for their enthusiastic cooperation.

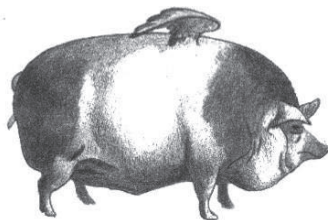
In addition, Norton reported that 2012 was a banner year for heritage events and for celebrating Sandisfield's history. He expressed gratitude to all who participated and especially to supporters who helped put the Society on better financial footing.

Christmas is Coming LIGHTING OF THE GARDENS Starts the 1st of December



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TREES, WREATHS, UNIQUE ORNAMENTS, AND LOCAL CRAFTERS...

Comings and Goings

DR. RONALD E. MYERS

1933-2012



Ron Myers died at home in Sandisfield, November 14. Four days later about 200 people attended a graveside service at the Sandisfield Cemetery. The Reverend Don Peet, an Episcopalian priest, spoke briefly, and Boaz Kauffman led a recitation of the Kaddish. Afterwards a large group stopped at the Sandisfield Arts Center where friends and family spoke about Ron, "this lovely, unusual man," said his widow, Roberta, "whom they all adored." The event included stories that caused a lot of laughter, even from Roberta. As she said later, "That was the way it was."

Born May 3, 1933 in Plainfield, New Jersey, Ron grew up in a thriving, multicultural community with a diverse group of friends who provided him with a rich view of the world. He developed a strong sense of cross-cultural communication and a lifelong interest in history and international affairs. He attended Tufts University and became a dentist, joining his father's practice in Plainfield.

With his first wife, Joan Shoolman Myers, he had three children. Following a divorce, he met and married Roberta Baxter, who brought her own four young children to the marriage. After 17 years as a dentist in New Jersey, the family moved to Sandisfield, where he practiced dentistry another 24 years with an office in Lee.

A devoted husband, father, and grandfather, Dr. Myers had eclectic interests plus the capacity to speak and listen to almost anyone. He bailed hay, raised sheep, repaired tractors, sang

in community choruses, saved both houses and teeth, and collected clocks. He was very active in Sandisfield, a town he loved. A founding member of the Sandisfield Board of Health, he served on various town committees, including the Finance Committee. He was a member and former president of the Lee and Otis/Sandisfield Kiwanis Clubs, was active in the Sandisfield Historical Society and Taxpayers' Association, and was an early president of the Sandisfield Arts Center.

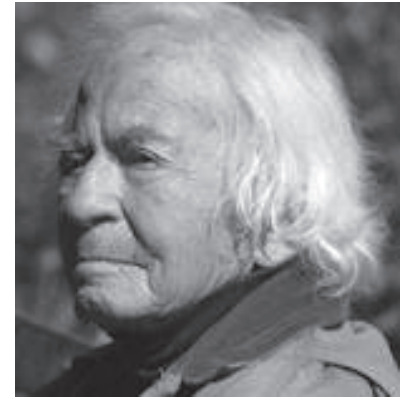
Dr. Myers is survived by his wife of 41 years, Roberta, and seven children: David Myers of Highland Park, NJ and his wife, Miriam Lefkowitz; Dr. Mark Myers of Spencer, WV and his former wife, Norma Myers; Dr. William Baxter, of Manhattan and his wife, Martha Drayton; Ronald Baxter of Monterey, CA and his wife, Robin Winfield; Dr. Leslie Myers of Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada and her wife, Sue Williams; Susan Baxter of Appleton, WI and her husband, Nathan Wright; and Gail Baxter, also of Appleton; six grandchildren and two great grandsons; his brother, Dr. Neil Myers of Santa Rosa, CA and his wife, Lorna Myers, as well as a large extended family.

Memorial donations in Dr. Myers' name may be made through the Birches Roy Funeral Home in Great Barrington to the charity of choice or to one of the following: HospiceCare in the Berkshires, Habitat for Humanity, Fairview Hospital, The Lahey Clinic, NAMI, The Sandisfield Arts Center, the Stockbridge Festival Chorus, the Berkshire Lyric Theatre, or the Litchfield County Choral Union.



GABE LEVENSEN

1914 - 2012



Gabe Levenson died August 23 in Great Barrington. A resident of Sandisfield's Silverbrook Road, he split his time between here and New York for over 40 years. He was 98.

Along with occasional articles for the Sandisfield Newsletter, Gabe was travel writer for The New York Jewish Week. In a tribute published in September, The Jewish Week wrote that Gabe's "prose style was idiosyncratic to the core, a mixture of wit, old-fashioned phrases that hearkened back to an earlier time and literary allusions that often sent copy editors scrambling for the dictionary and the poetry anthology."

Gabe celebrated a special event in Sandisfield in an August 2006 article in the Newsletter: a Historical Society reenactment of an early 19th century wedding held at an authentic Beech Plain farmstead on Cold Spring Road. Gabe wrote that the event was held on "the lawn of the very home at which the original wedding could have been held." He wrote how much he enjoyed everything, "The wedding ceremony, the food, the music, the dancing, and the feeling of festivity on a pleasant summer afternoon."

The Jewish Week reported that Gabe is survived by "his wife, Fran, a former teacher and guidance counselor in the New York City public schools, two sons, Tim, a translator and interpreter living in Paris, and Miyan, a traffic/news anchor on various radio stations and photographer, a daughter, Deborah Levenson-Estrada, a professor of Latin American studies at Boston College, and four grandchildren."

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.

December Events

December 1, Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Historical Society's Annual Christmas Fair to be held at Fire House #2. 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.

December 1, Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The Monterey Makers Studio Tour. Monterey has a wonderful variety of artists, crafts people and artisanal product producers. You can visit them all in their studios and workspaces on December 1 when these artists open their individual studios and small businesses for a special holiday showing and sale. The Studio Tour is the premier town-wide event, sponsored by the volunteers at the Monterey Cultural Council. You can download a map locating each site you may want to visit at www.montereymacc.org Or you can stop at our Town Library, the Bidwell House Museum, Monterey General Store, or Roadside Cafe for a copy of the map.

December 8, Saturday, 5:00 p.m., The Sandisfield Arts Center is sponsoring the Chorus Angelicus Training and Junior Choir which will entertain us with traditional and contemporary carols from around the world. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 14 and under.

Ongoing Events

Sandisfield Historical Society, second Saturday of the month, 11:00 a.m., Sandy Brook Turnpike (Rt. 183). [Closed for the winter months.]

Selectmen, every Monday at 7:00 p.m., Town Hall Annex. [See posted meeting notices for current meetings.]

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.

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December 2012

Dear Reader:

This year we who live in Sandisfield gave ourselves good reason to feel proud again. Our town turned 250 years old – we're older than our country, would you believe! – and we threw ourselves a wonderful party. There was a play – so popular that people were turned away, the first time ever. There were stunning fireworks; and all the grandees of the state came and cheered us on. Ever since those days in July we have walked a little taller, with a little spring in our step. There's no doubt about it; we're here, we're staying, we're proud – and we like ourselves a lot.

And though life has thrown us some curve balls in the months since – a truck wiped out our only store, a stroke felled a fine Selectman, and Sandy made a lame attempt to smash us to pieces – we on your newspaper have faithfully recorded it all, month in, month out. And you, our readers, have responded loyally to our now being an established part of your lives.

We all want it to stay that way. Which is why, in what must now seem a year-end tradition, I'm asking you to reach for your checkbooks and help us out again, to keep us going for another year, at least.

Those of us who write, illustrate, edit, and distribute the paper give of our time and labor for free – and happily so. Our designer and printers, however, do not; nor does the Postal Service; nor the paper-makers. We have a few advertisers, for whom we are grateful – but they do not pay much of our costs. And I suspect few of you would like us to become so filled with ads, like some nearby papers, that the editorial matter gets herded into the corner, unread. We are proud of the quality of what is written here.

No – the central pillar of our existence has always had to be the funding that generous readers like you have been ready to contribute. Without you there would be, quite simply, no newspaper.

And so to be able to continue, we need your help. We always welcome volunteers and articles. But what we really need right now is good, old-fashioned money. We need checks, made out to The Sandisfield Times, sent the old-fashioned way through the U.S. Post Office to the address above. (This also keeps Karen and her post office in business.)

To make matters a little easier, it does look as though we will at long last be granted 501.c.3 status. When granted, the status will be retroactive, so that contributions today are potentially tax-deductible and any you have made to us in the past 24 months will be deductible as well.

So thank you all, most sincerely, for whatever you feel able to do. We hope you have a wonderful and peaceful holiday season. And that you will help us continue to be a proud beacon, illuminating the life of our proud little Berkshire town.

Simon Winchester
Founding Editor

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



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The Sandisfield Times depends on your contributions. It is written and produced by local volunteers, but printing, design, U.S. postage, website fees, and other costs come due every month. We're close to being granted 501.C.3 status. Deductions will then be tax deductible. Status will be retroactive, so that contributions from the prior two years will be deductible. So don't wait for our 501.C.3.

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.

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, MJ 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, the Farmington River Deli. and Terranova's Market. Other locations include The Roadstore Café and the Monterey General Store in Monterey and the Southfield Store in New Marlborough.

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Editor: Bill Price

Production, Distribution, Advertising: Ron Bernard

Graphic Design: Tina Sotis

Founding Editor: Simon Winchester

The Sandisfield Town and The Sandisfield Times websites: Jean Atwater-Williams

Contributors this issue: Ron Bernard, Alice Boyd, Val Coleman, Larry Dwyer, Debbie Harris, Laura Rogers-Castro, Tom Ryan, John Skrip, Sandy Parisky

Columnists: Laurie Foulke-Green, Josephine Freedman

How to Contact Us

Letters to the editor:.....letters@sandisfieldtimes.org

News, ideas, tips & photos:.....editor@sandisfieldtimes.org

Advertising questions:advertising@sandisfieldtimes.org

Entries for calendar of events:calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org

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