

To Our Donors, Thank You SEE PAGE 17

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume III, Number 10 January/February 2013

3-1/2 Months and Counting

By Bill Price

Question: How long does it take to repair a wrecked building? Answer: We don't know, but our grandchildren may find out.

As for us, we might be driving over the Farmington on our brand new bridge before the blue tarp covering the southwest corner of the former New Boston Store comes down for good. The dump truck rammed into the store on October 2, 2012. It's still in there.

A crew arrived January 7, 2013. They took the tarp down for awhile and pried off the building's vinyl siding in a search for asbestos. Pete Murray, proprietor of the store, said they got down to the original clapboard shingles. Whether they found asbestos is unknown yet, but it doesn't seem likely. The building was put up and the

siding installed before the benefits of asbestos were understood and certainly before its dangers were known. But a search for asbestos seems to be the first step in repairing or dismantling an old building in Sandisfield. Step two may be testing for lead paint, which seems something inspectors shouldn't have to test for in a 150-year-old wooden building in New England. Does a chicken have feathers?

Pete said no one has spoken to him about the asbestos findings, nor does he expect anyone to. He doesn't know when the inspectors will return to start further work, nor if the insurance companies are agreeing about responsibility. Meanwhile, the truck remains stuck in the store, tucked in there snugly under the blue tarp. 🐔

AN OCCURRENCE AT THE CLAM RIVER BRIDGE

By Simon Winchester

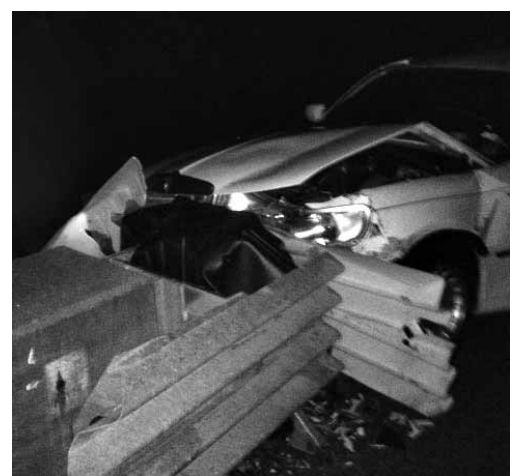


Photo: Mike Hanecak

"I could have hired the drunkest guy in town, and he'd have at least managed to get us four miles down the road."

So remarked Sandisfield's A. J. Riiska one Sunday night in early December, rueful and very, very sore.

For instead of getting a local inebriate as their chauffeur, he and four logger-chums had ordered a limo – a liveried driver with a swanky white stretch 10-passenger Lincoln.

Big mistake.

The men were all off to a party in nearby Granby, Conn. They were deliberately dressed as ridiculously as it is possible for loggers to dress; and they were well aware – hence the limo – that

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BUDGET REDUX

With budget time coming up again, I implore all residents to attend meetings regarding the process and become as informed as possible. The more residents who participate in a positive manner the better it will be for our town. Please check postings on the Town website www.sandisfield.info, Town bulletin boards, and the coverage provided by The Sandisfield Times.

Patrick Barrett, Selectman

Grant Submission Deadline Nears You can support this effort, but do it this month

By Laura Rogers-Castro

As the deadline to submit the Community Development Block Grant to fund home repairs nears, the final step of gathering supporting documents is underway. Why should Sandisfield be chosen above other towns to receive the funds? Is our “need” greater than other Massachusetts towns?


The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development doesn't think so. The DHCD compiles a “needs score” for each Massachusetts town, and so far Sandisfield's score indicates that there is not a high need here compared to many other towns, and only allows us to apply to a much smaller pool of funds.

It is likely that only four of these “lower need” towns will be funded, and we want Sandisfield to be one of those. We now know how many residents desperately need assistance to repair leaking roofs, replace drafty windows,

and bring homes up to code. In fact, many individuals we've spoken with find it comical that Sandisfield is listed as a “lower need” town compared to Great Barrington, New Marlborough, and Monterey.

To secure this grant we must convince DHCD Undersecretary Aaron Gornstein in Boston that our residents deserve help. Letters written by town residents that can provide insight on the town and its challenges would be very helpful. A letter of support can be written by anyone who feels strongly that Sandisfield would greatly benefit from assistance through this grant. If you would like to support the grant with a letter to secure the housing rehab and planning funds, contact me as soon as possible.

Ideally, all letters need to be completed and submitted to Alice Boyd of Bailey Boyd Associates by the end of January. I can provide assistance in getting your words on paper, if you are uncomfortable with the process. There is no need for the letter to be typewritten because handwritten letters are acceptable.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 413-258-0200. Letters of support can be mailed to: Alice Boyd, 12 South Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA 01255. 

Local Nurse Charged with Medicaid fraud

By Bill Price

A Sandisfield pediatric nurse accused of stealing more than \$25,000 from MassHealth, the state's Medicaid program, by falsifying reports was arraigned in Superior Court in Pittsfield on January 14.

Robin Annecharico, of Stump Road, who works as a pediatric care nurse at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital in Torrington, was charged with multiple counts of larceny and lying to investigators. From 2007-2009, state police and investigators from State Auditor Suzanne Bump's office say Annecharico falsified Medicaid-related documents while working as a private duty nurse caring for children in Massachusetts. She was indicted by a Berkshire County grand jury in December.


Annecharico, who did not speak at the arraignment, is represented by Pittsfield attorney Anthony Gianacopoulos who said his client has been falsely accused. Grand juries, he said, only hear one side. “She turned over six boxes of information,” he said after the hearing. The Commonwealth's claim that Annecharico double-booked her days is not unusual, he offered, and doesn't mean she lied about when

she provided care. Registering for a horse competition, he said, doesn't mean she appeared at the event.

Annecharico declined to return phone calls to The Sandisfield Times. She faces six counts of larceny of over \$250, six counts of filing false Medicaid claims, perjury by written attestation, and two counts of obstruction, all while working as a registered nurse in Massachusetts.

An investigation was launched in May of 2011 by the Bureau of Special Investigations of the Office of the State Auditor. Allegedly, Annecharico falsely billed MassHealth for services while in fact she was participating in barrel racing competitions in Mississippi, Virginia, and Georgia. Attorney General Martha Coakley's office claims Annecharico provided false treatment records both to investigators and the Berkshire County grand jury in response to a subpoena.

“Fraud committed against the Medicaid program is theft from taxpayers,” Coakley said. “These funds are supposed to be for our most vulnerable patients, not for those looking to abuse the system. Our office is focused on recovering this money for the Commonwealth.”

The case, to be prosecuted by Kriss Basil, assistant attorney general for the Medicaid fraud division of the Office of Attorney General, is expected to be heard by a trial jury later this year. A pretrial hearing has been set for May. 

Occurrence at Clam River Bridge

Cont'd from p.1

while partying, they were likely to have a drink or two.

But their decision to leave the driving to others turned out to be not to be as prudent nor as wise as they hoped.

For their driver managed to get not four miles down the road, but three – whereupon he crashed his mighty car into the Rte. 57 bridge and left his five passengers, all still dressed as bizarrely as possible, limping, swearing, all in various ways banged up and waiting in the cold for the ambulance.

Gary Pease, the most severely hurt, cracked four ribs. Scott Linkovich and A. J. Riiska were bruised and had sprained ankles, Lucas Riva and Mike Hanecak had badly hurt knees, and in the latter case, a badly bitten tongue. The driver, named by Sandisfield police as Abdulqaddir Tariq, had a bad gash in his head, was taken off on a gurney and in a neck brace, but refused treatment and discharged himself from the hospital.

Sandisfield Police said there would likely to be motor vehicle charges brought against him. His employer, Absolute Luxury Transportation of Chicopee, MA, said he was being fired from his job.

The Saturday evening, December 8, had begun serenely enough, with the five friends gathering at sunset at Mike Hanecak's house in Sandisfield Center. His sister, Heather Hanecak, was

Cont'd p.3



WILL SANDISFIELD REALLY GET BROADBAND?

Watch for Mailing Announcement Soon

By Jean Atwater-Williams

I bet you've heard that broadband internet is coming to our town. And it is, sort of. The MBI (Massachusetts Broadband Institute) has utilized state and federal funds to build a "middle mile" network to our town institutions such as the town hall, library, and the fire stations, which may be live as early as March. And that's great, but the MBI is NOT bringing broadband to your home or business. That's where WiredWest comes in, and that's where you can help.

WiredWest is a municipal cooperative of 42 towns working together to fund, build, and operate a regional fiber-optic network to provide state-of-the-art and affordable internet, phone, video, and other services to homes, businesses,

and institutions. This initiative is extremely important to the future of our town. It will create local jobs, improve education and healthcare, and support our regional economy, keeping millions of dollars right here in western Massachusetts.

WiredWest has nearly completed its business plan and they're about to go for funding. This is a complex and very expensive project – in the tens of millions – and yet there are some sources of money available for exactly these types of projects. But here's the catch: WiredWest needs to prove that it will be financially sustainable and a big part of that is demonstrating that folks in each of the WW towns really want high quality broadband service and that they intend to sign up when WiredWest is built.

Back in September, each household received a support card mailer. Many of you responded by return mail saying that you supported WiredWest. Still others filled the form online or at events. But it isn't nearly enough. Sandisfield's response rate to date is only 30%, while it should be twice that. The reality is that **towns that do not show adequate support may not get wired**, at least not in the first go-round. And if the money is not available to do all the towns, those towns with higher support numbers will go to the front of the line, possibly leaving Sandisfield in limbo.

But here's the good news: there's still a little time left and households who have not yet registered their support are getting a second chance. They'll be receiving another mailing in the coming weeks. Support cards are also available at Town Hall Annex, the Library, and the Post Office. It's also available online (links are posted on the Sandisfield and the WiredWest websites: www.Sandisfield.info and www.WiredWest.net).

For the good of our town and its future, if you haven't already done so, please complete a support card and mail it back today. Doing so does not obligate you to take the service when/if it becomes available. WiredWest's network, however, will be superior to anything now available, and your support will help ensure quality broadband accessibility to folks in town who currently have no high-speed internet at all.

If you have any questions, please contact Sandisfield's WiredWest delegate, Jean Atwater-Williams at 413-269-0012. 



Occurrence at Clam River Bridge

Cont'd from p.2

throwing an "ugly sweater" party – a newly fashionable kind of gathering in which all guests are supposed to dress as outlandishly and tackily in the worst and most vulgar clothing they can find in the backs of their closets.

And in this case all had complied, fully, with the instructions. "You should have seen us," said A. J. Riiska. "We looked truly bad. Tacky. Lots of snowflakes. Reindeer antlers. Fake beards. Bad sweaters were only the half of it."

Mr. Tariq, from Absolute Transportation (Why worry about drinking and driving as well as finding a place to park? asks the Absolute website. Sit back, relax and let our chauffeurs do the work for you) turned up on schedule, at 5.30 p.m. The men, perhaps slightly primed with an afternoon glass or two, piled into the back of his enormous white vehicle.

They were joshing among themselves, just as loggers like to do on their free time, as they headed down the Rte. 57 hill. Past the first cemetery, past the dump, past the Town Hall and the Post Office, past the second cemetery and down to the bridge. One of the passengers remarked that the driver seemed to be moving right along. But heck, they added, he was a professional, he knew what he was doing.

Spoken too soon.

"Suddenly we were sliding, the rear end was slipping, spinning around," said A.J. Riiska. "Then there came this great impact. A sudden big bang. We were thrown all over the place. Bouncing around inside the cab. No belts on, of course. One moment we were having fun – and then suddenly it wasn't funny any more."


Mike Hanecak's phone worked, and he called 911. It took ten minutes for the first ambulance to arrive, and then a succession of police, emergency

vehicles and first responders, until the scene resembled Armageddon. State police officers were called in to assist. While the car was totaled, the bridge was protected by the yellow-and-black striped impact attenuator, which took the brunt of the collision. No-one had to be extracted from the car – but a fleet of ambulances from Sandisfield and neighboring jurisdictions took the dazed and injured to Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington.

"The nurses there couldn't believe their eyes," said a witness. "The doors kept opening and middle-aged men in Santa outfits and psychedelic sweaters and wearing antlers kept limping in, with hurt knees and bad legs. It was like a bad movie, a sort of White Christmas meets Saving Private Ryan."

Everyone was discharged by 11 p.m., and managed to get home to anxious relatives. There are grumbling noises about lawsuits. And much questioning about the sense of having a designated driver, if he was to prove worse while driving sober than another who was knowingly DUI.

Annamarie Lauer, owner of Absolute Luxury Transportation, said that Mr. Tariq had been working for her for four years, but would now be dismissed "for failing to do his job properly". She remarked that Mr. Tariq "did not know the local roads," that it was dark and the roads were slick with rain, and that "these big limos have a tendency to fishtail when you put on the brakes hard."

And while few in the logging community are generally known for naïveté or Panglossian optimism, this event has made some of the group more hard-bitten than usual: "What the f***," remarked one, exasperated. "Finally we do something right – and we don't even get to go to the goddamn party." 

Results of the Special Town Meeting


Go Ahead, Say Voters

At the Special Town Meeting, December 17, called to consider six budget items requiring the transfer of funds from Free Cash and one item requiring transfer of funds from the Revolving Ambulance Fee Account, the 24 voters present (out of 617 potential decision makers), everything passed.

Articles 1-3, involving a new computer and a tax lien expense for the treasurer's office and \$9,800 for the New Hartford Road repair loan, all passed unanimously.

Article 4, for the town to appropriate \$24,000 for the gas account, passed with a majority vote, one opposed.

Article 5, amended up from \$42,000 to \$75,000 for expenses related to Storm Irene, passed unanimously.

Article 6, amended up from \$160,000 to \$168,000 for a New Ambulance paid for from the Revolving Ambulance Fee Account, passed unanimously. 



By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

New hours for Thursday afternoon: 2:00-5:00.

Our next Genealogy Assistance Classes will be held January 30 and February 27 at 6:30 p.m. I can help with your research questions during library hours.

NEW BOOKS:

The Black Box/Michael Connelly
 Good Junk/Ed Kovacs
 Experiment in Murder/Donald Bain
 Footprints in the Sand/Mary Jane Clark
 Private Berlin/ James Patterson
 Easter Bunny Murder/Leslie Meier
 Shadow Creek/Joy Fielding
 The Rebellious Life of Rosa Parks/Jeanne Theoharis
 The Aviator's Wife/Melanie Benjamin
 Bad Blood/Dana Stabenow
 Shifting Sand/Anthea Fraser
 The Kashmiri Shawl/Rosie Thomas

THE GENEALOGY CORNER:

The Family Tree Problem Solver
 The Official Guide to Ancestry.com
 How to do Everything Genealogy
 The Complete Idiot's Guide to Genealogy
 A Ledger of Native Cobbler Daniel Sears, 1793-1853/
 Transcribed by Town Historian Robert Grigg, Colebrook

NEW DVDs:

Masterpiece Classic, "Downton Abbey," Seasons 1-2
 BBC, "Lark Rise to Candleford," Seasons 1-4

Town Budget Planning Underway

Boards and Committee

Packages Due Mid-February

By Debbie Harris with
 Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko

Sandisfield's FY2014 budget process was kicked off at an All Boards meeting on December 10, 2012. Members present were Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Stephan Harasyko, Dolores Harasyko, Ralph Morrison, Kathy Jacobs, Rhee Kasky, Robbin Campetti, Debbie Harris, Jean Atwater-Williams, Linda Riiska, John Skrip, Michael Morrison, John Burrows, Bonnie O'Brien, Christina O'Brien, Bethany Perry, Teresa DellaGiustina, Kathleen Segrin, and Kathie Burrows

First, Kathy Jacobs, chairperson of the Financial Committee, announced that the town is working toward having all boards and committees post their agendas and meeting minutes on the Sandisfield website. Initially this will be accomplished by boards and committees submitting these documents to Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko as usual. Kathy is working on templates so there will be consistency in format for agendas and minutes. Dolores will then ensure that the documents are posted on the website. Jean Atwater-Williams is willing to train a contact person and help work out procedures to allow appropriate board and committee representatives to post these documents themselves.

Second, Dolores distributed budget packages to each of the various boards and committees present at the meeting. These packages are due back to the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen by February 13. All budget submissions should include specifics as to how the requested monies are to be spent, and as much specific backup information as possible should be submitted in order to understand and verify the requested amounts. It is no longer acceptable to simply request an amount of money; requests must also include exactly how that money will be spent.

In discussing the budget process, Kathy suggested that boards keep costs under control during this very difficult economic environment. She requested that when budgets are submitted that there be more information included, i.e., a breakdown of salaries per person and an explanation of how expenses have been figured. After a discussion, Kathy said that budgets submitted without

explanations will be returned. The intent this year is to coordinate joint meetings between Finance and Selectmen, especially if boards are to be called in. This way the boards will have to attend only one meeting instead of one with Finance and another with Selectmen.

Kathy asked if any boards anticipate abnormal increases in the coming years' budget. Kathleen Segrin said she will seek more hours for the Board of Health and Planning Board.

Patrick acknowledged that everyone's job duties have increased and expressed appreciation on behalf of the Selectmen.

Bethany Perry of the Assessors' Office clarified that although the mil rate went up, this did not significantly affect the overall tax bill because assessed valuations went down. She also noted that much of the tax increase that was experienced this year was due both to people putting their land under conservation protection and the lack of economic growth in the town and was not due to increased spending on the part of town government.

Jean Atwater-Williams, chair of the Technology Committee, made a plea for increased response to the Wired West survey. Not only is this survey vital to Wired West for obtaining funding, but in case funding is not obtained for the entire project those towns with the best response rates will likely be the ones to receive high-speed internet services. Currently Sandisfield only has about a 30% response rate, so it is important for everyone to complete and return the survey. Selectman Patrick Barrett pointed out that the survey responses are not legally binding, so once details of the services are available, if they are not to your liking, you do not need to purchase any or all of the products you indicated interest in on the survey. Jean stressed that not having high-speed internet available has been shown to negatively affect property values by \$2,000 to \$5,000. She also noted that the best way to increase the economic base of the town (and thereby help keep taxes down), while still preserving the town's character, is to encourage technology-based business, and this is only possible by having reliable, high speed internet.

Patrick asked Bethany to present an informational letter regarding the effect of Chapter 61, non-profits, and state-owned land discounts. The tax rate was discussed. Bethany explained that many things factor into the tax rate, not just the annual budget. A large portion of the town is state-owned or discounted land. The lack of growth is also a contributor. Bethany agreed to work on an article for The Sandisfield Times and the website.



Sandisfield Historical Society Christmas Fair 2012

Photos: Ron Bernard

The 10th annual Christmas Craft Fair, sponsored by the Sandisfield Historical Society, was held at the Firehouse. The day's highlight was an appearance by "Santa" who distributed presents courtesy of the Sandisfield Recreation Committee.

Below: Santa with Ashley.



My Very Own Christmas, 2012

Well now ... Christmas.
As seen from the perigee of an old man
Circling, brushing the earth,
His mouth full of memories.

On the horizon is a cardiogram of church spires
On a snow- crisp morning
In a very small town.

And there is the boundlessly beautiful Carolyn
With her hair full of stars .

What a day it always was;
A comma from the Vulgate,
A blessed cesura, a proper pause
As if all of us had just been kissed.

*Val Coleman
Town Hill*

Otis/ Sandisfield Kiwanis Club Disbanding After 38 Years

By Roberta Myers


The Otis/Sandisfield Kiwanis Club has voted to disband. Chartered in 1975 as part of Kiwanis International, the club was a local part of the organization of community-minded service clubs who support young adults and children worldwide. A typical Kiwanis Club is a snapshot of its community with members from all walks of life. And we had a lot of fun working together.

The Otis/Sandisfield Kiwanis Club has been a proud part of Kiwanis initiatives over the years. Members came from Otis, Sandisfield, Becket and other nearby towns. Activities were funded by membership dues and club events such as our annual Summer Craft Fair in August, by raffles and by collecting and sorting deposit items. The

latter program was most recently handled by Jim Thomas. Kiwanis members and volunteers sorted cans and bottles donated by townspeople in a large metal container at the Otis Transfer Station.

All these efforts and ongoing community support generated around \$14,000 a year which supported many events and programs including: an annual scholarship given to a college-bound student from our area, support for the Southern Berkshire Literacy Network, an annual Bicycle Safety Rodeo initiated at local schools with free helmets and support from local police, an annual Halloween Trick or Treat Party, an annual Easter Egg Hunt, Toys for Tots with presents for needy children in our community at Christmas, support for the Monument Mountain Regional Sports Program, a Senior Valentine's Day Dinner, and monetary support for local activities including: Elder Services and Camp Sunshine, Hospice Care, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the Sandisfield Newsletter and the Otis Gazette, the Sandisfield Art Center and the New Boston Town Green, the Tolland Black Fly Day celebration, the Boy Scouts, summer Roadside Cleanup along Route 8 with Boy Scouts and others, and the Isaac Walton League.

A few outstanding Kiwanis leaders over the years were: Max Pyenson, George Bagnashi, Leon Cowell, Will Blanchette, and the Reverend Earl Heck, also known as "the thieving Parson," a name generated by his actions in traditional Kiwanis inter-club shenanigans. Before women were included in Kiwanis membership, there was an active auxiliary, the Kiwaniannes. Once women were Kiwanis members, this group phased out.

So why has the Club disbanded? The biggest cause was an aging and declining local membership. Perhaps in the future a new group of devoted community members will reinstate the Kiwanis in our community. We can hope so. Meanwhile, active Kiwanis clubs exist in Sheffield, Lee, and Pittsfield. One of the final projects for the club was supporting the Eliminate Project, which works to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus, a preventable tragedy which kills a newborn baby every 9 minutes. You may have seen or purchased wristbands saying, "I saved a life for \$1.80." This refers to the cost of the three vaccine doses of tetanus vaccine which give immunity from tetanus to a mother and her future children. Anyone interested in being a hero and donating to the Eliminate Project can contact me at 413-269-4928. 

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◆West St. 6 Acres perc tested with home site cleared and brook \$59,000

◆Otis Wood Lands Premium Building Parcels all 2+ Acres! \$172,000 to \$178,000

◆Lower West St. Ranch 3 bedrooms, large deck, 8 acres very private! Just \$225,000



◆Stump Road hand-crafted Colonial on 5 Acres. Cherry kitchen, Maple floors, porch, 4 bedrooms, private! \$275k

◆S. Main St. Renovated Cape move-in ready w/In-law apt. 1+acre on the Farmington River. Retail potential. Large garage \$285,000

◆Stone Bridge Farm: 4 bedroom colonial, classic red barn, 24 acres, 2 rivers \$647,000

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LOCAL MAN SENTENCED FOR ARSON

Norfolk spree costly to victims

By Bill Price

In Litchfield Superior Court last month, a Sandisfield resident, Kyle Majewski, 20, was sentenced to 10 years in prison and 5 years probation, along with his friend, Matthew Carey of Torrington, also 20. The two had earlier pled guilty to several acts of arson, burglary, and other charges during a December 2011 spree in Norfolk, Conn.

As reported in the Republican-American: "When the flames were extinguished, two homes, water supply valves, road signs, and an excavator were damaged or burned, and Norfolk's beloved 60-year-old 150-foot-long Curling Club was destroyed," nearly \$2 million in damage.

Their attorneys claimed the rampage was the result of the defendants' consumption of K2, a legal synthetic form of marijuana, and "two 23-ounce cans of Four Loko, an alcohol-and-caffeine-laced energy drink which was sold over the counter at the time." Judge James P. Ginocchio disagreed, saying that rather than drugs and alcohol their acts were due more to "the chemistry of their bond."

Majewski, a former employee of Norfolk's Infinity Hall, "was a promising machinist who used proceeds from his first job to buy the car he drove that night," reported the Republican-American. "Had he not crashed the car after the rampage, said County State's Attorney David Shepack, the damage would have continued."

The plan, Shepack said, was "to disarm the town's water system as part of a sophisticated plot to tamper with the valves and keep firefighters from dousing the fires. Carey's footprint was on the door of the pump house, across town from the area of the fires. An extinguisher taken from the Curling Club was found near Majewski's car. Stolen clippers cut lines on the excavator. Had it not been for a 600,000-gallon reserve water tank, they might have succeeded."

Majewski, quoted by the Republican-American, apologized before he was sentenced: "The sober me would not have done anything like this. I am not a violent person. It was as if someone else was in control. I don't know how long I will be in prison for, but I will use it to become a better person, and not live in a world of getting high and caring only about myself. I hope one day to be forgiven and look forward to a positive future."

This report is adapted from an article by Brigitte Ruthman, published in the Republican-American in Connecticut, December 13, 2012. Brigitte, the owner of Joshua's Farm in Sandisfield, is a reporter for the Waterbury daily newspaper.

Starting in February, Susan Galik has offered to teach a FREE computer class. She will be available, each Tuesday at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall Annex basement. This is a basic class – if you don't know a mouse from a download, come and find out. There will be no formal lessons. However, here is already your first homework assignment. Susan asks that you please be familiar with a keyboard – which is the same as a typewriter.

Council on Aging

TAI CHI AND FREE COMPUTER CLASSES

The Sandisfield COA just finished up classes on Balance and Movement. About a dozen participants graduated on December 12, after six weeks of gentle exercises. Many saw major improvement in their balance – and everyone was helped to some extent. The COA plans to incorporate the exercises into their regular meeting schedule.

Meanwhile – starting January 8 – Tai Chi classes will be held at Old Town Hall each Tuesday night at 6:00 p.m. for 3 weeks – Jan 8, 16, and 22 (since this announcement won't be published until Jan. 18, please attend on the 22nd and join in anyway). Cost is \$5 for anyone in town who has always wanted to try Tai Chi; seniors are asked to donate \$3. Everyone in town is welcome. Please call Linda at 258-4816.





Affordable family fun close to home!

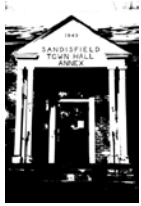


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TOWN BUSINESS

Submitted by Dolores Harasyko, Town Clerk

Edited by Bill Price

Selectmen's Meeting October 9, 2012

Present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray,
Stephan Harasyko

Tax Classification hearing called to order. Assessors present were Bethany Perry, Kathie Burrows, and Asst. Jackie Bitso. The Public Hearing was posted in the Berkshire Eagle. Bethany reviewed the questions. All agreed to remain as is, no changes in the tax classification. The rate will be \$12.60 per thousand dollars of valuation, up from \$10.10. Most property values went down. Paperwork reviewed and signed.

Steve presented Highway Dept. updates. Reviewed and signed Chapter 90 paperwork. Patrick commended the highway department for culvert work. Paving will begin tomorrow. Grading of the roads continues.

Steve has administered driving tests to the truck driver applicants for truck driver position. All are good applicants. Steve recommended Tim O'Neil. Pending reference checks Tuesday, both Selectmen agree with Steve's decision. Motion by Patrick, second by Jeffrey, to hire Tim O'Neil as the new Truck Driver.

Ronald and Elizabeth Pachulski in to discuss issues with neighbor George Munson. George is present. Issues are a rubbish pile, two business signs (one by the mailbox and another on a van), and other personal and property issues. Discussions continued for a significant amount of time. Patrick responded

that some of the issues are not under Town jurisdiction, but that others are. Town bylaws state that there can be no external evidence of a business unless a special permit has been issued, which is not the case with Mr. Munson, and only one sign is allowed. After further discussion, George was asked to remove one of his signs and work-related items. A large brush pile near the property line was discussed, and George responded that it was exactly that, a brush pile, and that everyone has brush piles while waiting for the burning season. The Pachulski's are considering selling their property and feel the Munson property devalues theirs. Patrick and Jeff reiterated to George to remove all business-related items and either remove the business sign or park the van, which carries the second sign, out of sight.

Cemetery rules were discussed.

Selectmen's Meeting October 15, 2012

Present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray,
Dolores Harasyko

Motion by Patrick, seconded by Jeff, to enter into Executive Session for the express purpose of discussing the Sandisfield Ambulance Service and to resume the regular Selectmen's meeting afterwards. The purpose of the Executive Session is due to HIPA confidentiality regulations.

At the following regular meeting, Treasurer Teresa DellaGiustina in to discuss the loan payment for Storm Irene, due in November. We took only \$200,000 of the \$400,000 loan. We are over the \$200,000 by approximately \$25,000. We have spent \$412,000 on storm repairs. We can transfer by vote at a Special Town Meeting from stabilization funds or free cash. Teresa suggests free cash, if it has been certified by the time we can hold a Special Town Meeting.

Reviewed and signed Chapter 90 reimbursement paperwork.

Reviewed and signed the warrant for the Presidential and State Election.

Selectmen's Meetings were suspended during the next five weeks due to the absence of a quorum because of Jeff Gray's illness.

Selectmen's Meeting November 26, 2012

Present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray,
Dolores Harasyko

We welcome Jeff Gray back.

Reviewed and voted on a warrant for holding a Special Town Meeting on December 17, 2012, regarding five items that would require transferring funds from Free Cash and one item that would require transferring funds from the Revolving Ambulance Fee Account:

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.

Article 2: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$2,500 or any other sum for the Treasurer's Tax Lien Expense.

Article 3: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$9,800 or any other sum for the New Hartford Road Repair Loan.

Article 4: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$24,000 or any other sum for the Gas Account.

Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$42,000 or any other sum for Storm Irene.

Article 6: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$160,000 or any other sum for a New Ambulance.

See results in Special Town Meeting, page 4.

Reviewed and signed Alcohol License Renewals.

Reviewed and signed Annual Business Licenses.

Reviewed FY2014 budget submission packet. Kathy Jacobs will present the packet to the Fincom at their next meeting for review and signature. Discussed more detailed breakouts for budgets submissions.

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Discussed having more dialogue between Financial Committee and Selectmen.

Discussed an All Boards meeting to be held Monday, December 10, 2012. Items on the agenda will be Website Postings, discuss the FY2014 budget process, discussed the updated ethics testing.

Discussed the 250th Celebration sculpture that was placed at the top of the hill at Route 57 and New Hartford Road. The artist is considering donating the sculpture to the town but would like the town to maintain the property around it and provide a plaque. Patrick will follow up with the artist.

Jean Atwater-Williams contacted Patrick regarding using the reverse 911 system to contact all households about Wired West. Sandisfield is at risk of not having enough households interested in the program and could be adversely affected.

Discussed whether to hold a Special Town Election to fill the vacancy on the Selectboard. Both Selectmen agreed to not have an election at this time, but to wait until the annual Town election in May 2013.

Discussed a follow-up on a complaint received from Jane Hason regarding the condition of Joe and Karen Zeller's property. Patrick has not had a call back from the Zellers. Joe was planning to work on the property once he retired in October. Jeff will follow up with Joe.

**Selectmen's Meeting
December 3, 2012**

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

Public hearing was called to order for MJ Tuckers. Present was Marty Cormier and legal counsel Richard Dohoney seeking permission for an all-alcohol beverage license. No questions were asked by the public. Based on the respectable prior operation of this business by Marty, motion was made by Patrick to approve the new license application, second by Jeff.

Public hearing was called to order for the SilverBrook Café. Present were Bruce Wall and manager Kristen Brown, and current owner Connie D'Andrea. Mr. Wall reviewed his extensive background in business. His plans for the SilverBrook are to concentrate on the restaurant more than the bar side, and to provide quality affordable meals. He plans to be open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., and as the license provides. Entertainment plans were discussed. All employees are TIP certified. Kathleen Segrin from the Board of Health present, stating that an inspection would be conducted. Patrick suggested the SilverBrook continue having good relations with the neighborhood. Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff, to approved the all-alcohol transfer.

Steve discussed the position open on the Highway Department due to Joe Zeller's retirement as equipment operator. The position was posted within the

department, and both Bill Perry and David McCuin are interested. Steve would like to promote both since they are equally qualified. Patrick suggested promoting one, and asked to review job descriptions. The requirement of having a hoister's license was discussed. Steve explained how he came up with his recommendation, that he would like two equipment operators and two truck drivers. Patrick would like time to consider, and further research would be done.

Discussed property on South Beech Plain Road where a stone wall has been built into the Town right-of-way. Steve has attempted to contact owners with no response. It will be very difficult to plow the road this winter. Steve will place chevron signs (arrows) in front of the wall for now to protect the public.

Discussed and signed FY2014 budget letter. We will keep the same wording.

Discussed an application for underground fuel storage tanks on Rt. 8. Application was signed by the Fire Chief in September; the Board received the application on December 3. We contacted the firm and explained the special permit process, instructing them to contact the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, and the Building Inspector. A special permit packet has been mailed to the firm.

Clare English submitted a letter of resignation from the Conservation Commission, effective January 3, 2013. She will remain as secretary. Motion by Patrick to regretfully accept her letter, second by Jeff.

**Selectmen's Minutes of the
All Boards Meeting
December 10, 2012**

See Town Budget Planning Underway, page 4.

There were no Selectmen's Meetings due to Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. The next meeting was January 7, 2013.

**Sandisfield
Historical
Society**



By Jo Freedman

The Annual Christmas Fair on December 1, held at the Fire House, was well attended. 23 vendors sold Christmas gifts, maple syrup, jewelry, and hand-knit, and hand-crafted items. The SHS 50/50 raffle was won by longtime Society member Cora Roraback and the revolving Christmas Tree, donated by Norton Fletcher, was won by Pat Hamilton. As usual the Congregational Church sold wonderful soups and chili for the hungry participants and vendors as well as yummy baked goods. The Council on Aging raffled off a super-sized basket of cheer along with their homemade baked goods. Santa arrived at about noon and distributed gifts to the children. It was truly a great day for the community to meet their neighbors.

There was just a dusting of snow at the Fair this year, not like the snow storms of prior years. The light snow made everything beautiful and white, and we were fortunate to have a good turnout.

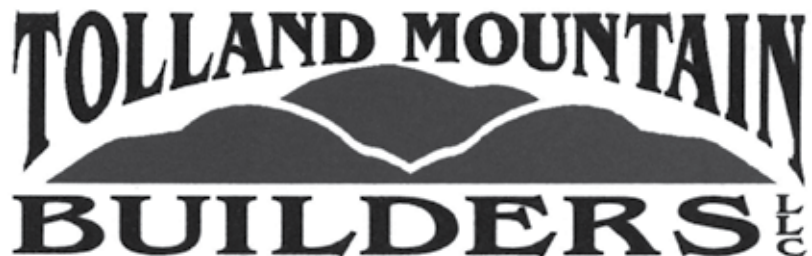
Thanks to the Sandisfield Fire Department for the use of the building for the fair, and Gary Bottum who moved the fire trucks in and out of the building, as well as his help setting up the tables.

Thank you, John Field, for cutting and moving the limb from the front of the meeting house this past fall. John's generous contribution of time and effort is greatly appreciated by the Society.

The last meeting of the year was held Saturday, December 8. We had an especially delicious holiday lunch supplied by the members, including those delicious Hungarian Apple Chunk Bars. Everyone who has tasted them really love them. The recipe can be found in the Memoir/Cookbook, "Sandisfield Eats." We still have copies for sale for \$15 at Villa Mia or you can contact Jo Freedman at 258-4786, email: freedmj1@aol.com.

We will meet again in the spring, either March or April. We hope to see you then.

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Town Management Committee Minutes

November 13, 2012

Present: Teresa DellaGiustina, Debbie Harris, Rhee Kasky, Bill O'Brien, Kathleen Segrin, John Skrip, Joe Zeller

The committee welcomed two new members, Teresa DellaGiustina and Kathleen Segrin.

John presented a draft of a mission statement for the committee. After much discussion it was agreed that the statement would be revised and approved at our next meeting.

Bill distributed a list of town committees and boards. The committee noted that several vacancies exist on these governmental bodies.

Rhee reviewed the Selectmen's Handbook published by the State and distributed three pages to the committee members, including a list of Composite Responsibilities of Town Managers and Town Administrators. Rhee also distributed job descriptions for the Secretary to the Board of Selectmen, the Town Secretary, and the Highway Superintendent.

Rhee contacted the Town of New Marlboro and obtained a document proposing their requirements for a Town Manager. New Marlboro is proposing to pay up to \$60,000/year for someone to fill this position. John learned from the Town of Otis that their Town Manager is paid about \$40,000/year plus medical benefits. John noted that currently Otis is not completely happy with its Town Manager; similar comments were made about Town Managers in Great Barrington and Lee.

The committee questioned the need for a Town Manager in Sandisfield and put forth the idea of a part-time administrator who could help to ensure committee and board accountability and transparency and increase citizen involvement in the town. It was also suggested that The Sandisfield Times should include a monthly column highlighting existing vacancies on town boards and committees.

The idea of a "suggestion box" on the website was also considered; such a feature on the website would allow citizens to make suggestions to the selectmen and the committee, with the proviso that individual suggestions would not be answered. It was suggested that perhaps monitoring such a website feature could be a job as part of the senior tax write-off program.

Seven specific tasks were assigned to committee members for action between now and the next meeting, scheduled for December 11.

December 11, 2012

Present: Teresa DellaGiustina, Debbie Harris, Rhee Kasky, Bill O'Brien, Kathleen Segrin, John Skrip, Joe Zeller

John noted that all committees and boards within the town have problems getting volunteers to serve.

Kathleen reported that she had been in touch with New Marlboro, which for many years has had a full-time administrative assistant that they are very happy with. However, discussion then clarified the difference between an administrative assistant (a clerical position) and a town administrator (a managerial position). According to Rhee New Marlboro is looking into adding the position of town administrator.

John stated that he has talked with several people throughout the town, all of whom seem amenable to a part-time town administrator to help coordinate board and committee activities and to improve board and committee accountability. John noted that Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko had asked for an informal brainstorming meeting with anyone in town interested in attending in order to get suggestions about creating the position of town manager/administrator.

Teresa noted that she and Dolores are making plans to have the position of Town Clerk covered on a full-time basis.

Teresa reported that she discussed the idea of an anonymous suggestion box in the town website with Jean Atwater-Williams, who found the idea quite "doable." Jean suggested including a brief statement about it on the home page with a link to the suggestion box itself. John volunteered to be the email contact for the suggestion box.

Tasks for next meeting, scheduled for January 15, 2013, were to coordinate with Jean in order to get the suggestion box up and running, for Debbie to write the home-page blurb and an article for The Sandisfield Times, and for John to begin work on the committee report to present to the Selectmen in March.

Town Management Review Committee minutes for December and January will appear in the March issue of The Sandisfield Times. 

Do You Have an Opinion about Town Government?

The Town Management Committee Wants to Hear It.

By Debbie Harris

MISSION STATEMENT


Sandisfield is an attractive rural community with a permanent population of approximately 700. The Town Management Review Committee, with input from the residents and taxpayers of Sandisfield, will present to the selectmen a plan that will address the issue of town management. The goal is to increase accountability and transparency of both elected and appointed town committees and boards, and to encourage increased citizen involvement in town government.

The committee would like to start increasing citizen involvement right now.

With that goal in mind, the committee is working with Jean Atwater-Williams to create a "Sandisfield Suggestion Box Blog." The committee will then review all suggestions and post/or forward them to an appropriate town officer, committee, or board. We hope to have this feature of the town website up and running by early February. We invite and encourage all comments and suggestions that are compatible with the goals of our mission.

Most of all we will be looking for comments and suggestions about how to increase citizen involvement in our town. We all pay taxes and therefore we all need to have a say in what is happening. We are also working with Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko to set up an informal brainstorming session for anyone who would like to attend and offer their ideas.

One of the ideas the committee is talking about is hiring a part-time town administrator (perhaps a retired or semi-retired person) to help coordinate board and committee activities and to ensure accountability of all town boards and committees. What do you think about this?

Please see elsewhere on this page for minutes of our meetings. And look for our "suggestion box" on the website and watch The Sandisfield Times for further developments. We need your input! 

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Sandisfield Police Blotter

| October | November | December |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| 10/2 Truck Accident S Main St | 11/3 Investigation Dodd Rd | 12/1 Suspicious Activity S. Main St |
| 10/4 House Alarm Sandisfield Rd | 11/3 Investigation Sandisfield Rd | 12/3 Medical Assist S.Sandisfield Rd |
| 10/5 Medical Assist Stump Rd | 11/4 Lost Hiker Norfolk Rd | 12/4 Medical Assist S.Beech Plain Rd |
| 10/6 Wires Down Sandisfield Rd | 11/8 Missing Person Clark Rd | 12/4 Strange Vehicle Bosworth Rd |
| 10/6 Wires Down N Main St | 11/9 Stolen Items Sandy Brook Trpk | 12/7 Suspicious Activity Rest Area N.Main St |
| 10/6 Noise Complaint Hammertown Rd | 11/12 DMV Tolland Rd | 12/7 Abandoned 911 Perry Rd |
| 10/6 MV Accident N Main St | 11/15 Erratic MV Operation N Main St | 12/8 Trespassing Complaint Clark Rd |
| 10/8 Traffic Assist Otis | 11/16 Truck Accident N Main St | 12/8 MV Accident Sandisfield Rd |
| 10/8 Domestic Complaint S Main St | 11/18 B&E N Beech Plain Rd | 12/8 Medical Assist Sandisfield Rd |
| 10/8 Strange Person S Main St | 11/22 Erratic MV Operation S Main St | 12/10 B&E West St |
| 10/10 Theft of Items S Main St | 11/22 MV Accident S Main/Tolland Rd | 12/15 MV Accident Town Hill Rd |
| 10/11 Theft of Items N Main St | 11/25 House Alarm Stump Rd | 12/16 Multi-Vehicle Accident S.Main St |
| 10/13 Abandoned 911 Call Beech Plain Rd | 11/25 B&E S Main St | 12/16 MV Accident Sandisfield Rd |
| 10/18 Domestic Disturbance Hammertown Rd | 11/25 Investigation Shade Rd | 12/16 MV Accident Sandy Brook Trpk |
| 10/19 Suspicious Activity Rest Area S Main St | 11/30 Medical Assist S Main St | 12/19 Tree Down Sandisfield Rd. |
| 10/21 MV Accident Sandy Brook Trpk | 11/30 Serve Court Papers Clark Rd | 12/22 MV Accident Sandy Brook Trpk |
| 10/26 Suicide York Lake Rd | 11/30 Cell Phone/Text Harassment | 12/22 MV Accident Sandy Brook Trpk |
| 10/26 Erratic MV Operation S Main St | Complaint S Main St | 12/22 MV Accident Sandy Brook Trpk |
| 10/29 Trees and Wires Down Due to Storm | | 12/24 DMV S.Main St |
| 10/29 Missing Person Town Hill | | 12/29 MV Accident Sandy Brook Trpk |
| 10/31 Welfare Check Sandisfield Rd | | 12/30 MV Accident Sandy Brook Trpk |
| 10/31 House Alarm Hammertown Rd | | 12/31 Medical Assist Sandisfield Rd |
| 10/31 Traffic Assist Otis | | 12/31 Abandoned 911 Town Hill Rd |

| EMS & FIRE DEPARTMENT |  | EMS | | | Fire Dept. | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------|------|------|------------|------------------|------|---|---|
| | | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | Oct. | Nov. | Dec. | | |
| | | Medical | 7 | 6 | 10 | Fire | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| | | False alarm | 0 | 0 | 1 | Power lines down | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| | | | | | | Brush fire | 0 | 1 | |

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Cora Campbell Barrett, one day past her 3rd birthday, on her way to her first day at preschool.

Photo: Cora's mother.

My Daughter and CHD

A Sandisfield mother's 3-year journey

By Hannah Barrett

My daughter has a special heart; ask her about it, and, with clumsy fists, she will grasp her shirt and pull it awkwardly until she can reach no further, letting her swollen belly protrude in an innocent way that only a three-year-old could. Ask her about it, and she'll answer rhetorically: "Who made that special heart?" Between her beaming and giggling, she'll tell you, "Dr. Pigula made it." And then she tosses her head back as if it is the most hilarious thing she could ever imagine—a fitting response to the profundity of her journey in life thus far.

My daughter has a special heart; in clinical terms, she has a single ventricle anomaly: the left ventricle never formed in utero, and she has required three palliative open-heart surgeries to intervene upon her condition.

On the day my third daughter was born, a terribly unremarkable photo was snapped of her but moments old, sporting a hospital issue knit cap, and screaming: What is terribly remarkable about the photo is that her chest is pink and supple, the skin smooth and perfect. In those first moments of life, on a bright and chilly afternoon in December, there was no visible indication of

the journey that has come to define much of her early life. The photo was taken by a NICU nurse who knew the value of snapshots when a new mother and her baby were about to be separated. And so began my journey, as the mother of a hypoplast, of learning to let go of all that was out of my control, the least of which is Cora's "zipper," as her sisters affectionately call it, a pale silvery scar running the length of her tiny sternum, which reminds us all, albeit implicitly, of how her journey—our collective journey, really—has been affected by CHD.

There are more than 36 different types of Congenital Heart Defects, making it the most prevalent of all birth defects. One in 100 babies born will be affected by CHD. My husband and I had heard of heart murmurs and holes, some of which resolve without intervention, but we were thoroughly unprepared for the diagnosis we received at a Level II ultrasound in August of 2009: our as-yet-to-be-born daughter had Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome, a severe CHD that caused her left ventricle, the chamber designed to pump oxygen rich blood out to her body, to be rendered so underdeveloped it would be useless.

On that stifling August day at Baystate Hospital we were shuttled from ultrasound room to perinatologist consult to amniocentesis to the genetic counselor where we were left in a tiny, airless room with no windows to make a decision: terminate the pregnancy, or give birth to a baby who, in the first three years of her life, would require three open-heart surgeries to establish what is called Fontan circulation, in the absence of a working left ventricle.


I remember that August day as being oppressive—not only due to the late summer wave of humidity that gripped the Berkshires, but also for the enormity of what we were facing, namely the uncertainty. I remember returning to Sandisfield on the ever twisting and turning Route 57, meandering through exquisite countryside so vibrant and alive it was breathtaking. Inside the car, however, we contemplated the horrific dilemma into which we had been thrust, and failed to find much clarity. Little did I know at the time that my daughter and I would come to tread down this well-worn path between Sandisfield and Springfield more than 75 times in the next three years.

Our daughter, Cora Campbell Barrett, arrived in the world on a bright and chilly Boston day facing much uncertainty. She underwent her first open-heart surgery at a mere two days old and recovered so beautifully that we were setting out for home on the day she turned two weeks old, just in time to celebrate Christmas with her two older sisters. Her second open-heart surgery came when Cora was four months old, and she spent a miraculous six days recovering in Boston before coming home to a well-established routine including daily Early Intervention that ran the gamut from physical and occupational therapy to work with a developmental specialist

and a speech/language pathologist.

Last January, at a mere 25 months of age, Cora underwent her third and final open-heart surgery. Her hospitalization, 17 days this time around, proved challenging in that for the first time we had a toddler on our hands—much more difficult to swaddle and pop in a crib—who did not want to be confined to a hospital room where she was routinely poked and prodded.

I have learned much in this journey with my daughter: today I know that CHD is the most common birth defect, affecting 1 in 100 babies born. Today I know that the obstacles to be faced when giving birth to and raising a child with a CHD are surmountable. Today I am the mother of a child who delights me with her captivating spirit, her wonder at the world around her, her infectious grin and compassion for others—each is enough to make my heart melt, and all together they put me over the moon. Today I know that there is hope for children with CHD.

After three wild years fraught with boundless uncertainty, in December I waved goodbye to my littlest one as she departed for the first time in the pre-school van.....no tears here, just pure excitement at the next phase of her journey. 

Facts about CHD

CHD Awareness Month, February, is an annual effort to help educate the public about congenital heart defects – a birth defect that affects approximately one in every 125 babies every year in the United States. Twice as many children will die this year from CHDs as childhood cancer.

Congenital heart defects (CHDs) occur when a baby's heart fails to form properly during early pregnancy. Although some babies are diagnosed at birth, newborns are not routinely screened for CHDs – and pregnant women are not routinely tested for CHDs. Consequently, the defects can go undetected until sometime after birth and in some cases are detected too late.

In the last 25 years, advances in the treatment of heart defects have enabled half a million children in the U.S. with serious CHDs to survive into a safe and productive adulthood.

Many cases of sudden cardiac death in young athletes are caused by undiagnosed CHDs and childhood-onset heart disease. Early detection is critical to successful treatment. Some heart defects can be detected by a routine ultrasound – but the most effective prenatal test is an echocardiogram performed by a pediatric cardiologist.

Credit: Little Hearts, Inc., Cromwell, Conn.



Nero likes it outside. Photo: Brigitte Ruthman

SUBZERO NERO

Sandisfield rooster thrives in the cold

By Brigitte Ruthman

Winters are hard on chickens. Hardy to a point and well equipped with fluffy down as a buffer against sub-zero temperatures outside of wind and weather, they don't like being "cooped up."

Roosters that put up with each other at best when raised in the same flock have a particularly hard time of it.

Nero was one of four or five Bantam roosters raised out of chicks whose sex couldn't be determined as sex links are by color. This year brought a high number of roosters.

The prettier ones were given away as pets, one or two ended up in the pot, and another two or three were taken by a particularly bold, dark-colored coyote brought to the yard by the rooster's rousing dinner crow.

Nero kept to himself, preferring the fringe of the coop and eventually the underside of the porch to roost. He refused, as temperatures dipped, to move inside where he was low on the pecking order.

I stopped worrying about him after he proved he could thrive in cold and wet weather. He found a dry place under the barn during Sandy and

emerged dry. He wanders in the snow during the day, defiantly protecting his imagined harem against predators, alerting chickens in the window to duck when hawks swing low – even when they happen to be planes approaching Bradley airport. He stands erect on one foot, conserving his energy and preserving the one part of his body most likely to freeze. Surely, I think, one day he will not fly fast enough to escape a coyote's jaw or, worse, a raccoon finding him at night while he sleeps in the rafters of the barn. For now, he is too busy being proud in iridescent green and brown plumage, tail feathers as his crown, to worry about his own demise.

He is at the door most mornings, somehow understanding exactly which colored bucket holds the chicken pellets. He gets first peck

When this feisty little male winds up to crow it's like watching a tiny trumpet player. And can he play those raspy vocal chords.

On one of the last days of deer hunting season this year, I wandered far in the snow, deep into the state forest. A half hour of walking and I reached a beautiful brook that runs north of the farm. It's a quiet place distant from any road or home. Maine author and farmer E.B. White might have found it a place, like the comfort of an old barn, where nothing bad can seem to happen in the world.

In the silence of that crystal palace, broken only by the soft gurgling of water running below the ice, I heard Nero's distant voice chiming in.

Editor's note: If you stand very still anywhere in Sandisfield when the wind isn't blowing, you're sure to hear a rooster crowing from somewhere.



FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BULLETIN

By Tara Beardsley



Farmington River Elementary is proud to announce the First Trimester Honor Roll

Grade 3

Mia Ciccotelli
Catherine Consolati
Kelly Couch
Braxton Crandall

Grade 4

Makenna Albee
Joseph Beardsley
Dylan DeCelle
Carlos Giraldo
Hanna Hall
Sophia Howard
Jessica Kopiec
Cole Margraf
Konstantin Stanmeyer
Amber Stearns

Grade 5

Mykenzie Hall
Evan King
Isabelle McNair
Collin O'Brien
Gracie O'Brien
Maxwell Packie
Nathan Reynolds
Isabella Saporito
Rosemary Snyder

Grade 6

Haley Couch
Michael Diskin
Amanda Gadaire
Kyle Hawley
Mitchell Monterosso
Amanda Shea

Congratulations!!





BRIDGE WATCH: WORKERS ERECT WOOD FORMS AND STEEL REINFORCING FOR CONCRETE POURS

Article and Photo by Sandy Parisky

Although freezing temperatures, snow, and rain may slow traffic over the Route 8/57 Bridge, workers from J. H. Maxymillian (JHM), managers of the Bridge Replacement Project for Mass DOT, have not been deterred on this \$4 million+ infrastructure project. Wood forms were constructed on either side of the river and so far about 26,000 lbs. of reinforcing steel has been installed and roughly 154 cubic yards of concrete poured.

JHM's on-site project manager explained that the east abutment and first wall section's east wing-wall has been poured as has the west wing-wall up to the west abutment.

The crew has begun backfilling at west wing-walls (near The Old Stone House) for access to west abutment and have one more footing to pour and one wing wall to pour on the east side (near Tolland Road).

Neither snow nor the cold weather has hindered moving forward according to the project's timeline. JHM anticipates setting the steel beams for the bridge's southbound deck by the end of January or early February. Once these beams are in place they can begin building the wood forms required to pour the deck itself.



The progress of the bridge, looking east across the Farmington.

SELECTMAN'S LETTER

By Patrick Barrett

Welcome back to my colleague and friend Selectman Jeff Gray after his hospital stay. A dedicated public servant, Jeff cares deeply for the Town. A long-time resident with a background in road construction, Jeff has worked during his time on the board with state officials and Highway Superintendent Steve Harasyko to improve Town roads. His quick wit and sense of humor continually help defuse tense meetings. We wish Jeff well as he continues his remarkable recovery.

With Jeff's quick return to work, we have decided again to wait for the May election to fill the open seat on the Board of Selectmen. With Richard's seat up for election in May, coupled with the state-mandated election time frame of 60 days from announcement, plus the additional and unexpected expense, we couldn't justify holding a special election. Hindsight being 20/20, we might have handled this situation differently, and we're glad we got through it okay and appreciate the patience of the community during the time in which we only had one available selectman.

I would like to thank our Administrative Assistant Dolores Harasyko for her handling of this difficult situation. Dolores made numerous phone calls to our attorney and state officials in

order to ensure that proper procedures were followed during this crisis. Her handling of this extremely complicated situation ensured that we were able to sign payroll, keep businesses and liquor licenses from expiring, prepare for Tropical Storm Sandy, and maintain the function of town government without any of us ending up in jail. The Town is fortunate to have such a talented professional working with us.

As a community we were fortunate to escape Tropical Storm Sandy with minimal damage. The Town was thoroughly prepared thanks to dedicated work by our town agencies, officials, and emergency personnel. Behind the scenes these people go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that the residents of this community are protected during times of trouble.

This has been a busy and productive year as we continue to try to improve the quality of Town roads. Dirt roads were widened, drainage work done, and culvert replacement and full-depth reclamation of New Hartford Road was carried out. We would like to thank Tryon Construction Company for continuing to provide quality work on Town infrastructure. The Lane Construction Company did a great job resurfacing New Hartford Road and a section of South Sandisfield Road. I would like to thank Sandisfield Highway Superintendent Steve Harasyko and the Sandisfield Highway Department for the job they have done this year. Due to their hard work maintaining our thoroughfares, not one road washed out during Tropical Storm

Sandy. We are now in a position to work on new road projects without having to waste time and resources repairing habitual problem spots.

I would like to thank Kathy Jacobs for posting the agendas and minutes for our selectmen meetings on the Town website. It is our hope that in coming months we will be able to develop procedures and protocols for posting agendas and minutes for all our committees. This will go a long way towards keeping people informed and should cut down on the rumor mill.

We encourage as many residents as possible to fill out cards of support for Wired West. Expressing interest through this card does not obligate you to sign up for the service. It is essential that we show community support in order to be one of the early towns to get high-speed internet service. The future growth of Sandisfield depends on it. Please show your support by filing out the appropriate card! You can find a link to the Wired West response card on the Town's website or from Jean Atwater-Williams.

With budget time coming up again, I implore all residents to attend meetings regarding the process and to become as informed as possible. The more residents who participate in a positive manner the better it will be for our town. Please check postings on the Town website at www.sandisfield.info, Town bulletin boards, and the coverage provided by the Sandisfield Times.

Happy New Year.

Patrick 



Comings and Goings

GERTRUDE E. KELLEY 1928-2013

Gertrude Kelley, 84, of Sandisfield died at home surrounded by her family on January 6th following an 18-month struggle with leukemia.

Her family reports that Gert often remarked about how wonderful Sandisfield was as a place to grow up. "The beauty and serenity of the town," she said, "combined with the kindness and generosity of the people gave Dave and I, my parents, and our children and their families a great life experience."

Born in Pittsfield on October 2, 1928, Gertrude was the daughter of the William R. and Gertrude A. Klingler. After graduation from Lee High School in 1946, she went to work for General Electric. She served as Sandisfield Tax Collector for many years, followed by over 20 years as an accountant with William Stevens, Stevens and Dawson, then T. Dawson, CPA. She was an active member of the Sandisfield PTA, Treasurer of the Council on Aging, Legion Auxiliary, and the Historical Society.

A communicant of Our Lady of the Valley Parish in Sheffield, Gert cherished time with family and friends above all else. She was a devoted conservationist and enjoyed reading, gardening, tackling the New York Times crossword puzzle, and her dogs.

She was predeceased by her husband of 59 years, David A. Kelley Sr., her brother William Klingler of Nevada City, Calif., and son-in-law Paul Lasch of Sandisfield. She is survived by her children: Jaque Kelley-Uyeoka and family of Kailua, Hawaii; Roberta Lasch and family of Sandisfield; David Kelley and family of Carlisle, Pennsylvania; and Patricia Lamont and family of Becket. She leaves 13 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter, born November 25th 2012, and many nieces and nephews.

A Funeral Mass was held January 11 in Sheffield. Burial will be at the Sandisfield Cemetery at the convenience of the family. Memorial contributions can be made to HospiceCare in the Berkshires, in care of Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, 416 Main St., Great Barrington. MA.



Nancy Flach was among the local recipients of the Preservation Award from the Massachusetts Historical Society for adaptive reuse of the SArC Building. Here she is receiving the award from Secretary of the Commonwealth William Galvin, November 2006.

Photo: Sandisfield Arts Center

NANCY FLACH 1927-2012

Friends Remember Nancy...

Nancy came to Sandisfield, and entered my heart forever, thirty-some years ago. I am not actually certain of the year. It was never time or place that would define our friendship. It was spirit, love of life and family, it was intelligence, it was the quest for good, for affirmation of the joys of life that drew us together.

Who can have known her without drawing inspiration from her life of adventure in Africa, her clear devotion to her children, her honest pain at any of the trials and losses they may have suffered, her wish to contribute to her community by helping to transform the old and failing Montville Baptist Church/Synagogue building into the thriving Sandisfield Arts Center. Her birthday celebration, after a serious illness, was celebrated at her home with a display of fireworks that she shared with friends. But as spectacular as they seemed, in my memory, they could not compete with the sparkle and radiance of her smile as she looked around at friends and family on a beautiful Sandisfield summer's evening.

She has been my closest neighbor and friend on South Beech Plain Road. Her perennial garden was beautiful. Every time I drove past it on my way home I understood what I was going to do... hard labor with stones, unexpected weather, May flies, and other Sandisfield challenges that would make me a better person! Nancy helped me create a version of it that has enhanced my enjoyment of my beloved Sandisfield. We shared a deep and unmistakable love of this heavenly place. I looked forward to her plans for her organic produce business that she launched this last year with all the enthusiasm and confidence of a young entrepreneur and all the wisdom of a fine and elegant "Grand Dame."

Thelma Esteves

Our thanks to the following for their generous donations during our fund drive.

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 a state agency.*

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, 413-258-4577 or susanvansickle@yahoo.com.

January/February Events

Beginning Tuesday, January 8 and continuing for three weeks, Tai Chi classes will be held at Old Town Hall Annex basement starting at 6:00 p.m. The cost is \$5.00, and for seniors, just \$3.00. Everyone is welcome. Please call Linda at 258-4816 for more information. (Last class is Tuesday, Jan 22; since this announcement won't be published until Jan. 18, please attend the last class if you are interested in Tai Chi.)

Free Computer Class. Beginning in February, Susan Galik has offered to teach a FREE computer class. She will be available each Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. in the Town Hall Annex basement to help you with the most basic questions. Your first homework assignment is that you arrive knowing the layout of the keyboard.

January 25, Friday, 8-12 p.m. Karaoke Night at The Veteran's Hall, VFW Post#296, 114 Colebrook River Road, Winsted, Conn. Music provided by Liquid Courage. Call 860-379-3489 for more information. Come join the fun!

February 2, Saturday, 5-8 p.m. Otis Chili Cookoff & Square Dance. Farmington River Elementary PTO is hosting. Everyone attending can sample chili entries and vote for their favorite. All kinds of chili are welcome. After the tasting, caller Cliff Brodeur & the Housatonic Philharmonic will lead a down-home square dance. For chili entry rules, call Anastasia at 413-429-5504 or email at Anastasia@stanmeyer.com. Shrug off the winter blues at the Knox Trail Inn, 1898 E. Otis Road (Rt. 23), East Otis. Donation: \$5/adult (free for chili contestants). Proceeds to the PTO.

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.

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 2:00-5:00 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. Call ahead at 258-4966.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

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.

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SANDISFIELD TOWN DIRECTORY

All meetings take place at Town Hall Annex unless otherwise posted

AMBULANCE: 911 Non-Emergency: 258-4742

ANIMAL WARDEN / DOG OFFICER

Kim Spring: 258-4450

ASSESSORS OFFICE: 258-4701

Office Hours: Tu., Wed., Th. 9:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Meets second Tues. every month at 5 PM

BOARD OF HEALTH: 258-4053

BUILDING INSPECTOR Eric Munson Jr.: 258-4590

CONSERVATION COMMISSION: 258-4901

Meets third Tues, 7pm

CONSTABLES

Nazario Sanchez: 258-4705 Joseph Zeller: 258-4836

COUNCIL ON AGING

Linda Riiska 258-4816

Wed: 11 AM – 2 PM Senior Center/Town Hall Annex

Business Meeting 1st and 3rd Wed. 10 AM

DUMP HOURS

Wed: 1 PM – 4 PM Sat/Sun: 9AM – 3 PM

FINANCE COMMITTEE Kathy Jacobs: 258-4487

FRIENDS OF YANNER PARK Robbin Campetti: 258-4615

FIRE DEPARTMENT Emergency: 911

Ralph Morrison, Fire Chief: 258-4742

FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOL

North Main Street, Otis, MA

Jo Ann D. Austin, Superintendent: 413 269-4466

FRRSD **SCHOOL COMMITTEES** meets first Mon, 7 PM

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Meets 2nd Saturday of every month (in season)

Norton Fletcher, President: 258-4520

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

Elaine O'Brien: 269-4465 John Skrip: 258-4788

LIBRARY: 258-4966 sandisfieldlibrary@yahoo.com

Monday & Tuesday: 9-12:30 PM

Wednesday: 6:30-8:30 PM

Thursday: 2:00-5:00 PM

Saturday: 9-12:00 PM

MASS. POISON CONTROL CENTER 800 222-1222

PLANNING BOARD

Meets second Monday every month at 6 PM

POLICE – LOCAL Emergency: 911

Michael Morrison, Police Chief

258-4742 Non-Emergency: 258-4742

POLICE – STATE Lee Barracks: 413 243-0600

POST OFFICE: 258-4940

Window Hours:

Mon – Fri: 8 AM – 12:30 PM & 1 PM – 4 PM

Sat: 9 AM – 11:30 AM

Lobby Hours: M-F: 8AM – 4:30PM Sat: 8AM – 12 PM

ROAD SUPERINTENDENT: Steve Harasyko 258-4979

SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER (May thru December)

5 Hammertown Road

PO Box 31 258-4100 www.sandisfieldartscenter.org

SELECTMEN: 258-4711

Mon at 7 PM except July & August on alternate Mondays

STATE OFFICIALS

Benjamin B. Downing, State Senator: 413 442-4008

Email: Benjamin.Downing@state.ma.us

Smitty Pignatelli, State Representative.: 413 637-0631

Email: rep.smittypignatelli@hou.state.ma.us

TAX COLLECTOR: Edna Leavenworth: 258-4977

Mon – Wed: 9 AM – 12 AM

TOWN CLERK: Dolores Harasyko

PO Box 163 sandisfieldtownclerk@verizon.net

Town Hall Annex: 258-4075

Mon-Thurs: 8AM – 2PM Mon: 6PM – 7PM by appt.

TOWN GARAGE: 258-4979

TOWN HALL ANNEX: Mon – Thurs: 8 AM – 2 PM

Secretary: 258-4711; Fax: 258-4225

TOWN TREASURER: Teresa DellaGiustina: 258-4712

Mon, Wed 9 AM – 3:30 PM

VETERANS SERVICES Lauri Hils

Great Barrington Town Hall: 413 528-1580

Mon – Thurs: 7 AM – 3 PM

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



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