

TRUCK IS GONE. WHAT'S NEXT? SEE PAGE 5

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume III, Number 11

March 2013

Meanwhile, Down at the SilverBrook Or What's in Store for Us Now?

by Simon Winchester

All we know for certain is its name. The SilverBrook Café. For now.

Sooner or later we are going to have in our midst a brand-new entity that will be known as The SilverBrook Country Store. Or maybe it will be called Connie's SilverBrook Café.

Or perhaps Connie's Country Café.

Certainty is the one commodity in rather short supply on the imagined shelves of Sandisfield's proposed new general store.

It is now generally accepted that Pete Murray is most probably not going to reopen his New Boston establishment, half-crushed to pieces last fall by a runaway truck. The debate on a replacement has been a matter of constant conversation ever since: should it be located inside the New Boston Inn (the innkeeper initially said yes, but has made no further moves)? Should it be newly built in the spacious Villa Mia parking lot? Or sited in the space down by Tuckers?

Or should it actually be sited on Route 57, away from the commercially attractive passing truck trade on Route 8? This discussion has become increasingly louder in recent weeks, thanks largely to the effervescent personality and endless enthusiasm of Connie D'Andrea, who owns the present-day SilverBrook Café, and now would very much like to turn it – an existing building she thinks could be made very much prettier than today – into something much more than simply a place for beer and the playing of Keno.

"I could open up the front of the building," she says, "and turn the lounge on the eastern side of the building into a store, selling everything we might need here – local produce, milk, eggs, batteries, *Cont'd p.2*



The middle pews, soon to be gone. Photo: Alice Boyd

WINTER AT THE ARTS CENTER

Lots happening, despite the doldrums

By Alice Boyd

People warned me that winter in Sandisfield can be challenging. Temperatures hovering in the 20s, snow piling up and ice covering the roads. Too much time indoors with not enough to do. I wish!

With so much happening at the Arts Center, this winter may not be long enough.

AT LAST, THE HANDICAP LIFT AND VESTIBULE

Following the award of a Massachusetts Cultural Council grant, the Arts Center Board started fundraising to install a handicap lift and vestibule. Thanks to some very generous patrons and local cultural councils, we're pleased to announce that we've reached our goal and construction is now underway. *Cont'd p.4*

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ARRESTS IN LOCAL BURGLARIES



As the Times went to press, Police Chief Michael Morrison reported that arrests have been made in the recent burglaries in Otis Woodlands (in both the Sandisfield and Otis sections) and on Hammertown and Town Hill Roads. Massachusetts State Police and police from Otis and Sandisfield are investigating. See page 3 for online tips for keeping your home secure.



The field at Snow Farm, Beech Plain Road, after the February blizzard.

Photo: Bill Price

Awakening

The first thing I heard
Was the reveille of Spring ...
The cawk of a bird.

And then my little stream began to flow.
And sure enough, a very small flower
Climbed out of its thimble.

And ... soft, soft you now
A door opened
And she appeared

Dressed in all the bribes of Spring.
I love her
Even though I'm just too old to change or sing.

*Val Coleman
Town Hill Road*


Meanwhile, Down at the Silverbrook

Cont'd from p.1

daily papers – and keep the bar and the café on the western side, and offer coffee and sandwiches and light meals there. There is a pressing need, I know – why should we have to go to Winsted or Barrington to buy coffee and soap and candles?”

There is, inevitably, a lengthy and complex permitting process ahead of her. But Ms. D’Andrea – who already has a handful of permits from her five years of running the existing café and bar – is breezily confident the town will help her with the applications. In the formal letter with which she began the process in late February, she wrote that opening a store “will create local jobs, increase tax revenue and provide other Sandisfield businesses a local outlet for their products.” In the meantime her present establishment will remain open, expanding its range of products as the various permits begin to trickle in.

Trickling may not be fast enough, however. There is now a distant possibility that Ms. D’Andrea may have competition. The owner of the property across Route 8 from Tuckers, Happy Banga, has applied for a permit for a buried 30,000-gallon fuel storage tank. After receiving the application in December, the Select Board outlined the lengthy permit process and the number of other boards that must be satisfied. Could this be the long-rumored and potentially-feared approach of Cumberland Farms?

So the Silverbrook Country Store, or whatever it is to be eventually called, may never even get to the starting gate. There is uncertainty about that too. That much is certain. 

TOWN OF SANDISFIELD
Schedule for Elections/Town Meeting
Office of Town Clerk

- March 28, 2013** Last day to obtain nomination papers for election to office.
- April 1, 2013** Last day to submit nomination papers.
- April 11, 2013** Town Caucus – Old Town Hall 7:00p.m.
- April 16, 2013** Last day to object or withdraw nomination papers.
- April 29, 2013** Last day to register to vote for the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Election. This will be held at the Town Hall Annex from 2:00 to 4:00 and 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- May 18, 2013** Annual Town Meeting. Town Hall 10:00a.m.
- May 20, 2013** Annual Town Election. Town Hall 10:00a.m. to 8:00p.m.

Offices up for election this year:

Office	Term	Currently held by
Moderator	1 year	John Skrip
Selectman	3 years	Vacant
Tax Collector	3 years	Edna Leavenworth
Auditor	1 year	Ralph Morrison
Board of Assessors	3 years	Bethany Perry
School Committee	3 years	John Skrip, Jr.
Board of Health	3 year	Douglas Segrin
Planning Board	5 years	Willard Platt

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Stories We'd Rather Not Run

In the last issue of the Times, we printed two stories about local residents who had run into trouble with the authorities. One story concerned a resident who had confessed to an arson spree and the second with a resident charged with a crime against the Medicaid system.

We received one letter of complaint about the stories. Other readers may have felt the same, but did not write to us. A large stack of the Times disappeared from the post office the first day of distribution, possibly taken by someone who disagreed with the stories appearing in the paper. Subsequent distributions at the P.O. were undisturbed.


The individual who wrote to us lives outside of Town and said we needn't publish his letter, but agreed that we could use it to launch a discussion.

He said that articles about legal/criminal problems were inappropriate for a community newspaper, that "in this crazy world we live in, with all the bad things that happen, there needs to be a line drawn." He said that as editor I could draw that line and that the paper should be sensitive to peoples'

problems and feelings and shouldn't "stir the pot." He suggested that we rethink our editorial policy.

I felt obliged to run the stories. Bad news is local news, just as a truck hitting the store and what the Selectmen have decided is news. Bad things happen to our neighbors, some of whom we know and some of whom are our friends. I believe we are obliged to acknowledge these things in these pages. Otherwise we might as well send postcards to each other and forget about publishing a newspaper.

If the stories hadn't appeared, people who read about them elsewhere could have fairly questioned why we didn't report them. That would have been as fair a question as why we did.


This is a community newspaper that reports as much of the news as it can. It belongs to all of us. It is written by many. I enjoyed my correspondence with the fellow who disagreed with our editorial policy, and I encourage others to write to us. 

Bill Price
West New Boston

A Kick-Start for Long-Term Planning Committee

Attentive residents/readers will recall that *two* town committees were organized last summer in order to help the Selectmen with issues of Town Management and Long-Term Planning for Town Buildings. The Town Management Committee has been meeting regularly, working hard, and will soon file a report with the Selectmen (see page 6).

The Long-Term Planning for Town Buildings Committee, however, slipped by the wayside as Chair Patrick Barrett, overcommitted to the rest of his life and obligations, found himself unable to schedule meetings. The committee slipped into disrepair, not unlike the buildings it was supposed to examine.


At the Selectmen's Meeting, February 11, Patrick regretfully resigned from the committee and Jeff Gray stepped in as chair. Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko pointed out that the committee wouldn't have to go far to check at least one town building; just downstairs at the Town Hall Annex they could watch water accumulating on the floor as snow melted outside. Several town residents attending the meeting stepped up to form a re-energized Long-Term Planning for Town Buildings Committee. The new committee members are: Jeff Gray, David Hubbard, Kathy Jacobs, Ralph Morrison, Mary Turk, John Skrip, and Simon Winchester. 

Anti-Burglar Tips

Given the recent burglaries and attempted breaking and enterings in the northern section of Sandisfield, Debbie Harris suggested the following web sites for some good tips for homeowners to keep their homes secure.

www.police.berkeley.edu/documents/campus-safety/HomeSecurityTips.pdf

and

www.securitychoice.com/20-tips-for-home-safety.html. 



Waiting it out, après Storm Nemo, Sandisfield Road. Photo: Bill Price

WINTER AT THE ARTS CENTER

Cont'd from p.1

YOU TALKED, WE LISTENED.

Through the process of raising funds for the lift and vestibule, we spoke to a number of local residents. And we listened.



Getting down to the subfloor. Photo: Alice Boyd

The one constant theme was "the pews." They are such an integral part of our historic building, and yet, admittedly, they're not very comfortable. We hear complaints all of the time, and even the most stoic soul can't sit through a performance without fidgeting. The seats are narrow and the backs are straight, but they have a rich sense of history, and we are very grateful to the wonderful families and individuals who sponsored these pews in our early days.

So, after years of discussion, consultations with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and with our architect Nick Elton, the Arts Center Board has reached a compromise.

With great deliberation and respect, we have decided to remove the center pews and store them in the attic, replacing them with more comfortable chairs. A beautiful display is being created to honor the families who sponsored these pews. The side pews will stay, although they'll be moveable to increase flexibility, and they'll be refurbished for comfort. This will provide the flexibility to use the upstairs for dinner, dancing or receptions. This seems to be a good solution for all involved and acceptable to the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Now, normally, we'd determine costs, raise the funds and move forward. However, deferred maintenance on our antique wood floors is forcing the issue. Patched together over the years, sections of our wood flooring are very soft and spongy, no longer safe. Without a subfloor underneath, stepping through the weakened floor could cause serious injury. It's happened once,

and we were lucky. While we could patch the floor again, we believe that it's time to do it properly. So between existing and reclaimed wood, we're completely redoing the upstairs floor. And, of course, that requires removing the pews.

Through a combination of grants, fund raising, and careful management of existing Art Center funds, we are able to go ahead with the expense of the new lift, the vestibule and repairing the floor and refurbishing the pews. We will need help with the cost of buying quality chairs, which will be in the region of \$12,000.

If you can help, we'd be grateful ... and you'll be much more comfortable!

THE SEASON AHEAD!

Finally, the Programming Committee has completed their work, a new website is under way, and we'll be announcing our 2013 season shortly. Tickets will be available on line as well as updates on our construction.

We will be holding a ceremony to unveil our new vestibule, lift, and floor ... and perhaps we'll have some chairs to show off as well! ♪

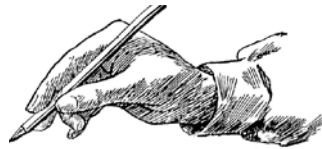
Alice Boyd is co-president of the Sandisfield Arts Center.

THE PEWS

By Val Coleman

"Be it remembered that on this 15th day of January 1839....it is agreed....to wit....in good and workmanlike manner...our assigns....will erect, build and finish one meeting house according to the draft or scheme hereunto attached."

And it was done ... the Baptist Society of Sandisfield built our beautiful building that we have cherished for these 174 years. The specifications were precise, calling for "sound white hemlock, red beech and first rate pine stuff" in the braces, gables, beams and posts. Thirty-six pews, installed on the orchestra level, have served the Baptist, Jewish, and Arts Center congregations all these years. The current renovation (as described in Alice Boyd's article) will bow to the building's history by making half of the pews movable and storing the other half. As the son of an American historian, I have kept a weather-eye on this renovation, and although I heartily agree with the installation of the lift and the building of a new vestibule, I remain opposed to the removal, change, and storage of the pews. ♪



W Way to Go, Sandisfield!!!

by Jean Atwater-Williams

Sandisfield is well on its way to achieving a 50% support rate for the WiredWest network.

We had been languishing around a 30% support rate (too low to guarantee Sandisfield would be included in the first round build out), but in early February our Selectmen sent a letter to residents citing reasons why the WiredWest network will be important to the town. The mailing went only to those who had not yet responded. As of February 21, 47 additional support cards had been mailed in and a score or more had been submitted online. We are now at 302 responses out of 671 households for a response rate of 45%. Only 40 more responses are needed to exceed 50%! If you haven't already done so, complete your support card and mail it today (cards are available at Town Hall Annex, The Library and the Transfer Station); or, go online to www.WiredWest.net.

From the Selectman's letter:

WiredWest network will provide enormous benefits to our town and region:

Superior service – There is no other system for telecommunications that provides service as quickly, reliably and affordably as fiber-optic. It's the only technology that will support our data needs for decades while providing state-of-the-art service today.

Access to high-speed internet for all Residents and Businesses – Many of our residents are cut off from the modern digital world. They struggle with dial-up or satellite, which makes working from home or operating home businesses more difficult.

More robust local economy – Today your payments for phone, internet and television service go to out-of-state companies and their shareholders. For just the WiredWest towns, that's over \$50 million per year. Imagine the effect on our local economy if that money stayed here? Also, WiredWest will create good local jobs.

Improved Education – Lack of universal access to high speed internet penalizes our students from doing homework and accessing online education tools. It drives young families, professionals and college graduates out of our towns.

Enhanced Real Estate Values – Homes without access to high speed internet are much more difficult to sell or rent. Realtors report that prospective home buyers often won't even look at them. ♪

Down Where the Store Used to Be

“We’re getting there ... but really nothing yet.”


By Bill Price

After a 20-ton asphalt truck ran into the west front of the New Boston Store at the beginning of last October, it remained lodged in the building, covered by a very large blue tarp, for a long time. In the Jan/Feb issue, the Times predicted our grandchildren might be the first to know when the truck would be pulled out of the store. It turns out that the truck’s removal in late January made news as far away as the Pittsfield newspapers.

Three insurance companies apparently agreed on how to proceed. Required demolition tests were signed off on. Associated Building Wreckers of Springfield were issued a permit. Working with Tolland Mountain Builders, Associated removed that side of the building, and A&M Auto Service sent a tow-truck down the hill, hooked onto the back of the dump truck, and hauled the truck back up the hill where it sat in A&M’s yard until State Police could determine what if any charges should be made against the driver and/or owner of the truck, a determination yet to be announced. The truck itself was totaled by the insurance company and has since been towed away, out of our lives forever but not out of our bitter memory of what it caused.

About a third of the river side of the building had to be demolished. Tolland Mountain Builders sealed the remainder of the building with plywood, covered it with Tyvek, and cemented over the exposed basement. The place looks tidy now, but nobody likes it.

Pete and Sue Murray, owner/operators of the store who lived upstairs, have not moved back into the building. “They haven’t determined yet,” said Pete, “if the place is rebuildable. We’re getting there, moving forward, but really nothing yet.” Pete and Sue are living with Roger and Bonnie Harbour, Sue’s sister, near their New Boston Crane Service building on South Main Street. Pete and Sue’s daughter, Megan, is staying with a cousin on Tannery Road behind the store. Pete himself has been ill recently and spent a short time in the hospital. He reports he is feeling better.

Sandisfield Building Inspector Eric Munson reports that he has met with an insurance contact, construction engineers, and a contractor who went through the building, but no decision yet on the building’s future. 



The abbreviated New Boston Store.



The truck that did the dirty deed. Photos: Bill Price

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Town Management Committee Minutes

January 15, 2013

Old Town Hall

Present: Teresa DellaGiustina, Debbie Harris, Kathleen Segrin, John Skrip, Joe Zeller

Absent: Rhee Kasky, Bill O'Brien

Jean Atwater-Williams was present to discuss the proposed suggestion box on the Town of Sandisfield website. She recommended a separate page for the Town Management Review Committee with a link to either a contact form or a moderated blog. The moderated blog format would mean that people would make submissions via an email address which is monitored by one or more committee members. Upon review, possible editing and approval by the monitor(s) the submission would be made public.

Discussion ensued regarding the logistics of such a moderated blog. It was agreed that the submitter should be required to provide contact information in case issues arose with the submission (e.g., questions, inappropriate comments, profanity, submission not on point, etc.). Because some submissions may have great ideas or bring out important points but not be directly responsive to the issue being addressed, a different forum (e.g., The Sandisfield Times or forwarding to a different committee) might be the best place to present the submission rather than the suggestion box. And it was suggested that there be a place on the submission form where the submitter could indicate if he/she would prefer their submission be published anonymously.

John noted that the Town Management Review Committee will likely expire soon after presenting

our recommendations to the selectmen. However, it would be a good idea if the suggestion box/moderated blog lived on. Therefore, it was agreed that the format should be such that various boards and committees could be in charge as needed; the possibility of publishing the monthly focus of the suggestion box/moderated blog in The Sandisfield Times was discussed.

In the end the committee unanimously agreed to the moderated blog format.

Jean said she would work on setting up a test blog entitled "Sandisfield Suggestion Box" and could have it ready by February 1, 2013. She asked that the committee put together information on its mission and the purpose of the suggestion box/moderated blog and forward it to her in the next week.

Discussion then turned to reviewing the draft report to the selectmen to be presented in March. It was noted that it might be difficult to find the right person to serve as a part-time town administrator and John suggested that perhaps this could be a retired selectman. In any event, it was agreed that whoever assumes this position would have to be impartial. Of course, it is up to the current selectmen to approve the idea and to determine if and how to provide remuneration to such a person.

Tasks assigned for next meeting:

Draft a blurb for Jean – John and Debbie then review by all committee members

Set up a moderator address, probably via Hotmail -- John

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, February 12, 2013 at 7:00 at the Old Town Hall.

Town Management Review Committee minutes for February will appear in the April issue of The Sandisfield Times.

Management Committee to Present Recommendations Part-Time Administrator in Our Future?

By Debbie Harris

The Sandisfield Town Management Review Committee is winding up its current work. The committee was initially created by the Selectmen with a charter of looking into the feasibility and logistics of hiring a town manager/administrator. A report of the committee's work is currently being prepared for presentation to the Board. Once this report is finalized and presented it will be up to the Selectmen to determine if the committee should continue and, if so, exactly what tasks it should undertake to implement plans moving forward.

The recommendation will likely be that a part-time administrator be hired. The committee will likely recommend that this person be someone impartial who has both the responsibility and authority to coordinate with all town boards and committees regarding the details of their work (including, most importantly, budget issues). Of course, this is only a recommendation, and the Selectmen will be free to accept, reject, or revise any or all of the committee's suggestions. However, because a new, salaried, position is being recommended, it is imperative that plans be finalized by the Town in time for the start of next year's (i.e., FY2015's) budget process. Note that we are currently in the FY2014 budget process, so anything that is put into place will have to be done in FY2015, which begins on July 1, 2014. This is a time-consuming process.

The other major suggestion of the committee is a suggestion box blog as part of the Sandisfield website, www.sandisfield.org. The committee is actively working with Jean Atwater-Williams to set this up. However, as always, things take longer than initially expected, and procedures for this need more discussion and finalization before they can be implemented. Please watch The Sandisfield Times for further information in the months ahead.

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By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

Our next Genealogy Assistance Class will be March 27, Wednesday, at 6:30 p.m.

New Books:

- Alex Cross, Run/James Patterson
- The Story Teller/Jodi Picoult
- Saturday Night Widows/Becky Aikman
- Island 731/Jeremy Robinson
- The Accursed/Joyce Carol Oates
- Bay of Fires/Poppy Gee
- Ordinary Grace/William Kent Krueger
- Death of Yesterday/M.C. Beaton
- The Striker/Clive Cussler
- The Ice Cutter's Daughter/Tracie Peterson

SANDISFIELD COUNCIL ON AGING

TAI CHI AND COMPUTER CLASSES

We want your ideas, what you'd like to have at COA

Did you know that there is NO AGE LIMIT on COA membership? Anyone, any age, can join and attend. Did you know that if you are 55 years or older you can be a board member and help in the decision-making process?

We are open to any and all suggestions. We want to do more and help more.

Do you know that we offer free transportation on Tuesdays? Anywhere you want to go, anything you want or need to do. This is not just for doctor appointments. This is shopping, hair dresser, just going to visit a friend. ANYTHING ... just call and ask ... call Linda @ 258-4816.

In January we held tai chi classes, with about 14 people participating during the three sessions. We are planning to repeat the classes in the spring. We would love to hear from people ... ALL ages ... as to what night would be preferable and what time. The Old Town Hall is big enough for twice as many bodies. Again, call Linda @258-4816.

In February we held free basic computer classes. Attendance was ... well, disappointing. So the questions are, do you not need the classes? Is the time frame wrong? They were held at 10 a.m. Do we need to move them to the evening? Can you use these classes? Please let us know. This time, call Susan @ 258-4113.

For March we are talking about conducting a craft class? And more exercise ... maybe involving the Wii. And definitely continue the balance exercise we learned that has really helped a lot of us.

OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Sylvia German, longtime Montville resident, suffered a fall on February 18, fracturing five ribs. She spent three days at Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield and was subsequently transferred to Fairview Commons Rehabilitation Center in Great Barrington. She is doing well, and is expected to spend several weeks at Fairview recovering. Inquiries can be made to her son, Steve, at 860-653-5733.

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Riding with the Snowplows

By Bill Price

Two feet of snow fell on us in a few hours starting mid-day Friday, February 7. For those who keep track of such things, it was Storm Nemo. Boston suffered worse than we did, for a welcome change. In other parts of the Commonwealth, the Mass Turnpike and interstates were locked down, drivers ticketed for being on the road, and the snow piled higher and higher.

For us it was light snow, dry, for the most part easy to shovel or push out of the way. Everyone with a snowplow hooked up and went to work. Everyone who had looked at snowblowers at the New Boston Crane Service & Sled but put off taking one home regretted that decision all day Saturday and Sunday.

The Highway Department was busy even before noon the first day. By Saturday crews were working around the clock to keep the roads open. Road Superintendent Steve Harasyko said five drivers were on the job over the weekend, plus two extras called in from out of town. Some drivers worked as long as 16½ hours at a stretch. “It was a normal heavy snow,” Steve said. “We started plowing early and kept on top of it. Some roads got a little narrow between snowbanks, but we widened them out in a couple of days.”

On Sunday, a Sandisfield Times reporter was invited to ride along with Scott Worcester, a town driver who’s been on the job two years. Scott, who lives on Dodd Road, was assigned the task of sanding the dirt roads in the northern section of town. He climbed behind the wheel of the Town’s 1998 4700 International, a 10-ton truck (the oldest vehicle in the fleet and the one that has received the most expletives deleted). In about an hour and a half Scott had covered all of Beech Plain Road and the upper part of Hammertown. Then he deadheaded from Otis down Route 8 back to the salt shed on Silverbrook for Steve to send him somewhere else.

Scott’s longest workday of the storm was 14 hours on Saturday, which doesn’t sound so bad until he remarked that the 14 hours followed 3 hours off which followed a 10-hour day on Friday steering that old truck between narrowing snowbanks along Sandisfield roadways. ❧

Top: Hammertown Road through the windshield, freshly sanded.

Middle: Scott Worcester on the job.

Bottom: Sandisfield taxes at work, ready to go.

Photos: Bill Price



MOVING FORWARD BY GIVING BACK

Three funds set up by Sandisfield residents

By Susan Crofut

In the 1990s, when I first learned about the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, I had no idea what it was. A Community Foundation? What was that? And now the BTCF is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Congratulations to it.

The Foundation, located in Sheffield, works to connect individuals or families who desire and are able to give with causes and programs they want to support. The Foundation is active in every aspect of community life: education, health, caring for the poor, affordable housing, child care, the environment, the arts, and much more over a wide area that includes all of Berkshire County. In its 25-year history the Foundation has awarded more than \$80 million in grants.

The beauty of BTCF is that it offers the donor a chance to channel his or her money, however modest, into any aspect of our community life. Three very active funds established by Sandisfield residents are currently operating through the BTCF. The Ferris Burtis Fund provides support for young musicians who demonstrate the possibility of having a professional music career (see sidebar). The other two were started by my late husband, Bill Crofut, and myself.

Bill and I were looking for a way to contribute and give back to our community, even in a small way. Living in Sandisfield we knew the values inherent in our town: simplicity, authenticity, humanity, the value of simple acts of kindness, and neighbors taking care of neighbors. We discovered that BTCF mirrors these same values.

In 1999 we established "The Crofut Family Fund" at BTCF. In this Donor Advised Fund, we provided a sum of money which became a kind of charitable checking account through which we have been able to support causes important to us. BTCF handles all the administration and tax requirements.

The second fund was established shortly before Bill became ill. It is "The Simple Gifts Fund." Bill had a vision to make a recording with some of the artists he had collaborated with during his long musical career and donate the proceeds to help aspiring young people explore their interests in cultural or other creative endeavors through summer enrichment programs. Although he became ill before the CD was finished, he was determined to continue with the project and in many ways completing it sustained him until he died. "Dance on a Moonbeam" was released in 1999. The sale of the CD and generous gifts from friends and admirers of Bill has resulted in the Simple Gifts Fund being able to make 83 grants to date. Over the years it has been very rewarding to see how these "simple gifts" have impacted the lives of individual young people.

Here are two stories from the recipients of these grants:

"Summer intensives are a crucial part of a young dancer's training if they wish to be a professional. Without this award from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, paying tuition would be a huge struggle. Ballet is one of the best things that has ever happened to me, so I'm glad that Berkshire Taconic has helped me keep my dream alive." – Kylie Pecord

"I was able to experience another culture including their food, currency, and way of life. It was one of the greatest things I have ever done, to be able to go to Peru for 2 weeks, live the way they do, and meet all the extraordinary people I met. Nothing could have been better. It was the best summer of my life." – Elias Garivaltis

Now our daughters are taking over the mantle that their father left them. Guided by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation staff they help each year in the process of selecting the recipients of grants from a wide range of applicants. It's full circle-family giving. I encourage you to get involved with your community foundation. Giving always benefits the giver as much as the one who receives.



Editor's Note: Contact the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation at 413-229-0370, or info@berkshiretaconic.org.

The Bill Crofut Arts Fund for Children is a separate fund designated specifically for students who reside in Sandisfield, and is handled through the Sandisfield Arts Center. For specific information, see adjoining column, "Gold in the Arts."

THE FERRIS BURTIS MUSIC FOUNDATION

In 1987 John Ferris and Herbert Burtis of Sandisfield established the Ferris Burtis Music Foundation within Berkshire Taconic. Over the years they have given scholarships to young musicians in order to help them in their careers, most notably Yevgeny Kutik, who now performs internationally. On Sunday, June 9 at 4 p.m., the Foundation will present a fund-raising concert at the Sandisfield Arts Center featuring performances by Julian Muller, cellist; Gabriella Macuk, pianist; Katie Weiser, soprano; and Yevgeny Kutick, violinist. All of these talented young musicians are receiving help from the Ferris Burtis Foundation, and all proceeds of the event will be used to support the work of the Foundation.



GOLD IN THE ARTS!

Well, almost. If you are a Sandisfield resident under the age of 21 and are interested in participating in an arts program, the Bill Crofut Arts Fund can help you. Founded in 1999, the fund began making awards in 2002. Since then it has helped young Sandisfield residents participate in over fifty music, art, crafts, theater, camp and dance programs. Individuals, teachers, instructors, and organizations may request the funds. Don't miss this opportunity to explore and develop your creativity.

To apply: Send a letter describing the program, activity or item you are interested in, the cost, your background, and why you would like to participate.

Deadline for Summer Awards: June 1, 2013

Deadline for Fall-Winter Awards: September 15, 2013

Mail application or questions to: Sandisfield Arts and Restoration Center, Inc., P.O. Box 31, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or to: soconnell@wesleyan.edu.

Sing a Tropical Song

LOCAL MAN COMES HOME

By Herb Burtis

As some of my neighbors know, I have been a resident of South Sandisfield for the last 52 years. I love the winding, sometimes bumpy side roads, the cool summers, clean air, the flora and fauna. But winters can be harsh on old bones, so for several years I have spent a part of each winter in Isla Verde, Puerto Rico.

The gorgeous beach in front of my condo is usually calm, with a few sun-tanners stretched out on it. At night the sound of the reef is soft and soothing. But not always.

The other day, President's Day, the beach looked and sounded like Coney Island on the Fourth of July. We were treated to non-stop noise coming from a lone ghetto blaster on the beach from mid-morning until dark. One was all it took for whatever was emerging from this monster to be heard in Cuba. The young people standing near the Blaster merely stood.

All Day!

No one danced. No one could possibly talk. They just stood. All day!

Next to my condo is a boutique hotel, The Water Club. "Boutique" is Isla Verdean for "Expensive." It has an open air night club on the roof that has an incredible sound system for this same type of music, blasting away until 3:00 in the morning. I close my sliding doors and still can't hear my TV.

If anyone wants to compose a work for this medium, I have found the secret:

- Volume is of the utmost importance.
- There must be no trace of a melody.
- The rhythmic pattern must be 'boom gada boom, gada boom, boom, boom', *ad infinitum*.
- The composition must be absolutely stultifying.
- There must be no more than two harmonic chords used, preferably the Tonic and the Sub-Dominant.
- The words, if any, must be unintelligible.
- When nothing else is happening there must be an electronic drum beat that is relentless.
- The composition must offend as many people as possible: including all of the Lesser Antilles.

This is not 'Rap', but it rhymes with that word and begins with a 'c' and an 'r'.

Soon I will come home to the March Mud Season. But mud or not, I relish returning to the peace of Rood Hill Road. 🍷



Potatoes

Mashed, smashed, or whipped

By Adam Manacher

Whipping up some warm mashed potatoes for dinner on a chilly evening in early spring? Here are some tips to help you create a savory dish to satisfy everyone at the table.

Choose your potato depending on your desired texture. For a fluffier mashed potato, "baking potatoes", like the russet (often called "Idaho"), is the best. This spud has a higher amount of starch, amylose starch in particular, that allows the potato to absorb more liquid when you mash them up. The Yukon gold potato is also a good choice. Known as an "all purpose" potato, Yukon has a little less starch; mashed, it will not be as light in texture but will have a buttery flavor. Potatoes to avoid are "boiling" or "waxy" potatoes such as red, round white, "new," or red bliss varieties. These potatoes have less starch, and they have a tendency to hold their shape after being cooked.

Wash the potatoes, place them whole and unpeeled into a saucepan, and add cold water (salted to taste) to cover by about an inch. Boiling unpeeled potatoes reduces the amount of water the potato absorbs and increases the amount of milk and butter you can incorporate after mashing. Bring to a gentle boil and cook over medium heat. Cook until tender, when you can pierce them with a paring knife (about 25 minutes.) Drain into a colander and shake off any excess water. Set them aside for a few minutes and let them dry.

If you want a smooth finished product, peel the potatoes into a bowl using a paring knife and a clean kitchen towel to protect your hand from the hot spud. Otherwise you can mash them right in their skins. Mashing can be done using several different tools, each producing a different texture. A wire masher is the most versatile. If you like a lumpier, more rustic result, mash a little and have "smashed" potatoes. Mash them more thoroughly to get a smooth and creamy finished texture.

Using a potato ricer that forces the potatoes through little holes will give a completely smooth and light texture, making it easy to add in the butter and finishing liquids. The ricer incorporates very little air into the mixture, so it can seem a little dense. A third option is to whip the cooked potatoes using an electric mixer. This incorporates a lot of air, resulting in light and fluffy potatoes. One kitchen tool never to use is a food processor, as the high speed of the blade actually breaks down the starch granules and makes the texture very gluey.

Now add your other ingredients. Be sure to begin with the butter, preferably melted. The butter (fat) actually coats the starches. Coating the starches keeps the potatoes from getting "gluey" when you add back in your liquid: warm chicken stock, milk, half and half, or yogurt. So once you've mashed in the fat, mix in the liquids. Finish with salt and pepper. Serve while fresh and hot.

Experiment with adding garlic to the cooking vegetables, or herbs, such as thyme or rosemary. And don't forget the fresh chives. Enjoy! 🍷

Or Try This!

Another great way to enhance mashed potatoes is to incorporate root vegetables into the mixture. Dice ½ pound of root vegetables: carrot, parsnip, turnip or celery root or a combination of them. In 3 tablespoons butter, sauté the vegetables over high heat 2-3 minutes, add ¼ cup chicken stock, and simmer until very soft. Prepare 2 pounds of russet potatoes as instructed above. Place cooked soft vegetables in a bowl and mash, reserving any liquid to the side. Add the cooked yet un-mashed potatoes. Mash with the vegetables and add 4 tablespoons of melted butter. Mix in any remaining chicken stock and ¾ cup of warmed milk or half & half. Season with salt and pepper.

historia (Greek) - "inquiry, knowledge acquired by investigation." The discovery, collection, organization, and presentation of information about past events.

Lieut. Governor George Hull Sandisfield's Famous Native Son

By Ron Bernard

Despite its geographical remoteness and agricultural character, in the 19th century little Sandisfield produced an impressive number of successful and prominent businessmen, military leaders, educators, and public servants. Among this group of self-made individuals, George Hull stands out as Sandisfield's most notable native son.

Recently his photograph was discovered in family archives by his 2nd great grandson, John Hyde, Professor of History, Emeritus, Williams College. The only known image of Hull, it was taken around 1860 when he was about 72. Someone long ago annotated the reverse with a hand-written biographical summary.



George Hull, 1788-1868, as he appeared about 1860.

"George Hull, son of Eliakim and Sarah Andrus Hull, was born in Farmington, Conn., Jan. 8, 1788. When he was 12 he moved with the family to Sandisfield, Mass. He was the first president of Lee Bank (now Lee National Bank) and postmaster at Sandisfield from 1811 to 1862. He was Massachusetts state Representative in 1821 and again in 1826; Senator in 1823-24 [at 35, the youngest of 40 senators]; member of the [prestigious] Governor's Council in 1830; and [longest serving] Lieut. Governor from 1835-42 with Edw. Everett, Marcus Morton, and John Davis as governors. In every position which he held he had a commanding influence: the influence of common sense, sound judgment, extensive knowledge, and strict integrity. For nearly ten years before his death he was almost totally blind. Members of his family read to him for hours every day. George Hull was a Free Mason."

The Rev. Aaron Field of Sandisfield, writing Hull's biography in 1893, said: "According to his own statement [1854 autobiography], after moving to

Sandisfield he never went to school." But Hull was very intellectual and curious and a passionate reader with an extraordinary memory. He would read through the night any newly arrived book before it was placed in the public library, which was located in his father's famous general store at Sandisfield Center on what is today the Linkovich property. George clerked at the store with seldom a day off until age 20 when he became manager.


Early in his career he heeded the call of the citizenry and served the town in various offices including as town clerk, school committeeman, and as town meeting moderator where he "presided with great dignity and dispatch." Hull was said to be sociable, affable, and accessible. A 1912 Berkshire Eagle column about past Sandisfield eminences also described him as "a notable figure of commanding presence who rode his horse with martial dignity, (and) was allowed by his townsmen the title of 'Governor Hull.'" His advice was often sought by hopefuls for high office, including the greatest orator of the day, Daniel Webster.



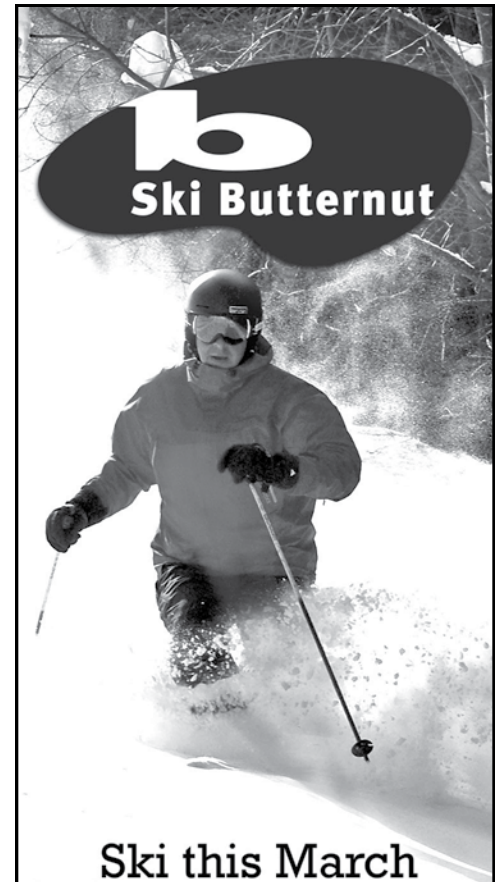
Former Hull Store building, 1924.
It was dismantled in 1970 and the timbers salvaged for another building elsewhere.

Photos Courtesy of Prof. John Hyde.

During the years Hull was away or preoccupied with legislative or political matters, his sons assumed responsibility for store operations, including the post office. Later he supported and invested heavily in his son Albert's tanneries at Montville and New Boston. Unfortunately, by 1862 a series of reversals, including inattention to the store, heavy losses by the tanneries, probable losses on land transactions, and possibly the loss due to fire of his fine house at Sandisfield Center, resulted in George Hull's bankruptcy. He died penniless in 1868, one day short of his 80th birthday.

The Honorable George Hull Sr. had a full life. Accomplished and beloved by the community, he also set the standard for integrity as a public servant at the highest levels. Despite his troubles and reverses later in life, Hull remained humble and loyal to his hometown and will be long-remembered as a credit to Sandisfield. 

For more about the Hulls of Sandisfield, see *Sandisfield Then and Now: 1762-2012*, pages 166-7, 224-6, 329, and 338-9.



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The Gardeners' Almanac



By Sue Tarasuk, Snow Farm

A MULCH PRIMER

The benefits of mulching your garden are numerous. When applied to the surface of the soil mulch conserves moisture, moderates soil temperature, controls weeds, maintains the physical structure of the soil, and prevents soil erosion. Just about anything you can spread over the soil will serve as a mulch – leaves, pine needles, bark chips, or stones, chips of marble or plastic. Some people have even used old carpets.

The characteristics of a good mulch in my experience is made up of relatively coarse particles that stay loose. If too fine, they tend to pack down and then the mulch will draw moisture from the soil and allow the water you are trying to maintain in the soil to evaporate. The dead air space between coarse particles also insulates the soil, moderates soil temperature and allows oxygen to reach the soil.

Some of the mulches you may find available in our area are bark mulches. These are readily available in most nurseries either in bags or in bulk. They are a nice warm brown color and are durable, slow to decay and easy to spread. Wood chips are hardwood branches run through a chipper. Sometimes you can get a tree removal company to dump a truckload of chips at your property. They are cheap, but I like to let them decompose for a year or two in a pile just because their color is too light for using in perennial gardens. Leaves are a great mulch but only if chopped up. When applied whole they tend to pack down. Pine needles are readily available for the gathering. They are slow to decay, easy to spread, but can be a fire hazard. They are also very beautiful in the garden.

Mulches are not perfect, however. They can also cause problems in the garden. Be very careful with what you apply as a mulch. If using hay or straw they can be loaded with weed seeds that will cause havoc in your garden. Mulch can also provide a favorable environment for pests. Slugs love mulch. It is a cool damp hideout during the daylight hours. Mice, voles and other rodents use mulch as a cover and burrow under it to access the roots and stems of your plants.

Some research claims that when using some mulches, particularly sawdust, you can cause a temporary nitrogen deficiency in the soil. Microorganisms that try to breakdown the sawdust need nitrogen therefore they will take it from the soil, leaving a deficiency in the soil. To combat this, scratch a bit of nitrogen fertilizer in the soil before applying your mulch. This is a temporary problem and will recede after the first few weeks after applying.

Applying mulch is easy and I find rewarding. I love the look of the garden after I have applied the mulch. The depth you apply the mulch depends on the material you are using. Large particles should be laid on more thickly than finer mulches. I recommend 1 to 2 inches of fine materials such as sawdust or buckwheat hulls, 2 to 3 inches of coarser materials such as bark and 3 to 4 inches of pine needles. When applying mulch, avoid packing against plant stems. This can cause death to your plants as it can create conditions that favor diseases to develop or can smother the plants.

You will need to replenish your mulch yearly or less often, depending on what you use and, of course, digging in the garden will inevitably cause mulch to disappear in the soil. ♡

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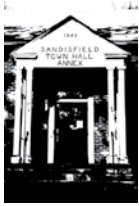
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TOWN BUSINESS

Submitted by Dolores Harasyko, Town Clerk

Edited by Bill Price

Selectmen's Meeting

December 17, 2012

Members present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Stephan Harasyko, Dolores Harasyko

Steve reviewed Highway Department updates. Roadside mowing/brush cutting continues, as well as preparing equipment for winter. A new product, QPR, will be tried for cold patches on potholes.

Discussed bridge replacement project on Clark Road near Willard Platt property. Discussed Highway Dept. job descriptions. Kathy Jacobs asked for clarification on the highway positions. Steve reviewed the union contract. Joe Zeller's retirement created an opening for equipment operator. It is not a new hire, but is to replace the equipment operator position. Steve and Patrick would like to create a Forman position using the same number of employees as we currently have. This would be a non-union position and will be discussed at the next union contract negotiation. The purpose of Forman would be to assist the Road Superintendent and step in when he is unavailable.

Discussed the lack of storage space in Town buildings. Dolores asked about researching the possibility of renting the back of the post office building. Ralph and Mike Morrison suggested use of a storage container that could be placed at the Town Hall Annex.

Discussed upcoming Selectmen's meetings that, since they would fall on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, will not be held.

Reviewed and signed cemetery deeds.

No meetings were held December 24 and December 31.

Selectmen's Meeting

January 7, 2013

Members present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Stephan Harasyko, Dolores Harasyko

Steve provided Highway Department updates. There will be a meeting January 16 at 11 a.m. at Town Hall annex regarding the Clark Road bridge replacement project.

Steve met with Tom Ryan, DCR Service Forester, regarding trees on Town property. Enough trees need to come down that would support a logging job. The logging could reduce the expense to the Town for taking them down. These are trees that are along roadsides within the Town's right-of-way. Discussed the need for clarification on what is the Town's right-of-way. Steve will continue to pursue this. Kathleen Segrin asked about clearing obstructed views by private driveways. She claims that her neighbor has planted trees that are now obstructing her sight line when pulling out of her driveway onto Route 57. Steve will check first to see if power lines are involved.

Discussed the Ford F550 pickup truck owned by the Town. In the past 2½ years we have spent \$18,500 in repairs. Steve would like the Town to consider replacing the truck this year. Discussed the backhoe and Scott's 1999 truck. Steve can use Chapter 90 funds for these two pieces.

Discussed Highway Dept. job descriptions. Steve still recommends bumping two employees



Two feet of snow piled even higher in February
Photo: Setsuko Winchester

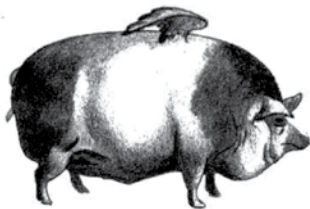
to the equipment operator position. Patrick is still researching the non-union Foreman position. He would like Steve to hold these decisions until the union contract comes up for renegotiation next spring.

Discussed the fuel account. The pumps are working but the computer read-out is not.

Ron Bernard expressed his appreciation of the condition of Town roads. He stated that the roads are in terrific condition (meaning very good).

Sean Carr appointed to the Conservation Commission, effective January 31.

Discussed the Selectmen's budgets. Dolores would like to start working on the budgets and presented quotes she has gotten for building repairs. Kathy Jacobs would like the repairs to be considered under the Future Planning Committee. Dolores explained that these are repairs that have been necessary for the past 5 or 10 years and would like to place a separate warrant article for them with the thought that if the Future Planning Committee had a plan for funding before the annual Town Meeting then we could table the article. This action would allow us to have an article in place in case the Future Planning Committee is unable to take action by that time. Patrick explained that he may need to withdraw from the Future Planning Committee as he is unable to attend the meetings due to family obligations.



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Town Business

Cont'd from p.13

Discussed salaries for FY2014. The Selectmen agreed to allow a 2 percent increase in salary for hourly and full-time positions. They suggest that elected officials level fund. They are trying to compile a salary comparison of surrounding towns and will address this issue at the next Regional Selectmen's meeting. Kathy Jacobs attended the School Budget meeting on this date. Their budget increased by 3 to 5 percent. Kathleen Segrin reviewed a study on Boards of Health and said she feel that our board is behind on salaries and fees.

Discussed the Fire/EMT compensation plan. Patrick will follow up with Fire Chief Ralph Morrison.

Selectmen's Meeting January 14, 2013

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

The public hearing for the Community Development Block Grant was called to order. Grant Writer Alice Boyd present. She read aloud the legal posting from the newspaper. Alice reviewed the requirements and intent of the grant. She is applying for \$700,000. She has had 20 applicants. The grant covers housing rehab for low- to moderate-income households. The rehab can be items such as window replacement, insulation, roofs, foundations, septic work. It is completely confidential. She will continue to accept applications. Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to accept the submission for the Community Development Block Grant and allow Patrick to sign the contract as chair for the board.

Steve reviewed some repairs that have to be addressed immediately. The ladder to the loft must be replaced with stairs as an employee has fallen off the ladder. The electrical breakers keep tripping, indicating the breakers are overloaded. He has contacted the wiring inspector who will correct this and fix the exterior light on the parking lot at the Town Hall Annex. Discussed the Route 57 bridge by the Library. It was hit again three days after being repaired. Steve has ordered more signage. Patrick suggested contacting Mass DOT for input on marking this turn.

This Wednesday there will be a meeting on the Clark Road bridge replacement. Discussed the Ford 550. Steve spent another \$1,500 in repairs this past week, which brings us to \$21,000 in repairs. He would like to replace it with a F350. He will get more information and present a warrant article.

Jean Atwater Williams asked about the stone wall on South Beech Plain Road. Steve responded that the homeowner has moved the wall back.

Jeff commended the highway department on their work pushing back the snow banks.

Jean Atwater-Williams in to discuss Wired West. She would like approval from the Selectmen to do an additional mailing seeking interest in Wired West. Jean presented two sample letters she would like to use to create a mailing on Town letterhead. She will prepare the letter for the Selectmen's signature. She would like the Selectmen to provide envelopes. Discussed the cost of the mailing. Since the Selectmen did not budget for this, the postage will be paid from the Technology Committee budget. The Selectmen will provide the envelopes and labels.

Gary Bottums from the Planning Board in to ask the Selectmen who makes the decision on hours for secretaries. The response was that the chair of each committee makes the recommendation to the Selectmen with documentation for the need to increase hours. The Selectmen would then decide.

Gary asked who to use for computer repairs. He explained that the Planning Board computer has not worked for several months. They purchased a new computer last year. Dolores replied that they can use Bob Rocke or Jean Atwater Williams. There is a separate budget account for computer/tech support.

Discussed the Right to Farm bylaw and revised driveway permit bylaw that were never submitted to the Attorney General after approval at last year's Town Meeting. The information was never presented to the Town Clerk for submission. The Planning Board is considering repeating the process this year. The Selectmen suggested gathering all the documentation from this past Town Meeting and submitting that to the Town Clerk so she can submit it and if it rejected then redo it. This could save the cost of redoing the process.

Reviewed and signed a cemetery deed. Reviewed and signed All Alcohol license for MJ Tuckers. Reviewed FEMA Storm Irene. We received an additional \$46,029. This will reduce the cost requested at the Special Town Meeting.



Selectmen's Meeting January 22, 2013

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

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission in to present a power-point presentation on the Road Study Survey. Doug, at the request of Steve Harasyko, conducted the survey. He handed out the Road Condition Report, which grades the condition of all Town roads and offers suggestions for repair and possible funding. Doug will follow up with Mass DOT as there are some inconsistencies in their records and Doug's findings. Mass DOT shows some roads as gravel which are actually paved. This makes a difference in funding Chapter 90. Discussed possible increase in Chapter 90. Doug reviewed the bridges in Town, most are in good shape. Discussed the prioritizing of projects. Discussed Route 57. Discussed funding.

Dolores asked about the Road Status Report. Doug will follow up on this. The Road Status Report would be conducted by BRPC. The report will include all roads in Town and determine whether they are open, discontinued, or abandoned. This will be a valuable tool for the Town.

BRPC has the ability to assist us in applying for the Strap Grant. Doug will check into this.

Steve provided highway department updates. Some items need immediate attention at the highway garage building. A large block fell out of the center pier of the garage. Steve will get an estimate for repair. He would like to replace the water heater at the Old Town Hall. They do not have hot water at the Old Town Hall. He will also get a price for this.

Reviewed the Clark Road bridge project. We had a meeting with the Right of Way Department. They reviewed the requirements for the Town to proceed with this project. Discussed concerns regarding Willard Platt once the bridge is removed. Willard lives at the west end of the bridge. The state plans to install a foot bridge for Willard. Steve has already discussed with the ROW department that there are concerns for Willard's safety if there is only a footbridge to his house. They will consider this before they present the plans.

Update on the SilverBrook Café. Bruce Wall has withdrawn his application for the liquor license transfer.

Reviewed and signed the Community Development Block Grant contract.

Cont'd p.15

Ralph Morrison contacted Jean Atwater-Williams regarding the Town's website. He will set up burning permits on the website.

Ralph requested that the Town bid out the fuel oil contract next year. We have used the state bid in the past. We will also put it out to bid and compare to the state bid.

Reviewed a letter from Bill Bures. He will attend the February 19 meeting.

Michael Morrison and Megan Murray were unable to attend this meeting and will be added to next week's agenda.

Selectmen's Meeting, January 28, was postponed until February 4, due to ice conditions.

**Selectmen's Meeting
February 4, 2013**

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

Steve presented Chapter 90 reimbursement paperwork for New Hartford Road. Reviewed and signed. Reviewed Highway Department budgets for FY2014. He is increasing the tree account to \$15,000. There remains a lot of tree damage from the ice storm. He has depleted the account for this fiscal year. All maintenance/expense accounts are level funded; salaries are up by 2 percent. Steve is requesting a replacement for the 2006 F550. To date the department has spent \$26,000 in repairs after warranty. A new truck would cost approximately \$60,000. He can use the plow from the 550 on the new truck. It would be paid for from the Stabilization account with a repay over 10 years. Discussed Snow & Ice, which is the only account that can legally be overdrawn. We cannot intentionally reduce it or overdraw it. Discussed the Assistant Road Superintendent job.

Dolores reviewed the Selectmen's budgets. The contract for the transfer station is up this year. It will be bid out, and we will have to adjust the line item at the annual town meeting. We will need to increase the budget for the cost of heating fuel. Discussed repairs for town buildings.

Dolores reviewed the Town Clerk's budget. It is actually reduced from last year's because there is no state or federal elections scheduled for FY2014. She is not taking a salary increase as Town Clerk or for the Assistant Town Clerk. She also reviewed a request from the Reserve Fund to pay for the Special Primary in April and Special Election in June to fill Senator John Kerry's seat.

Jackie Bitso reviewed the Assessors' budget. They are giving Jackie a 2% increase in salary. Assessors' salaries will not be increased. Discussed the benefits and cost of Map Quest. Discussed the need for new computer and software. Discussed having more information and mapping available online. Kathy Jacobs and Bill O'Brien questioned the overhead in the Assessors' office. All three Assessors reviewed the day-to-day functions of the office. Members of the public stop in every day. Discussed the misconception of Jackie's job being a new position, which it is not. Kathie Burrows took the place of Elaine O'Brien and Jackie took the place of Noel Nilson. Noel was paid in addition to being an Assessor.

Michael Morrison reviewed the Police Department budget. They are level funding the expenses and increasing salaries by 2 percent. David Hubbard asked for clarification on revenue generated by speeding and traffic tickets. Mike responded that the town keeps 25 percent of that revenue.

Ralph Morrison reviewed the Fire Department/EMT budgets. He is unable to level fund expenses as the cost to operate has gone up, as have fuel expenses. Salaries will increase 2 percent. Bill O'Brien asked Ralph how much he gets paid as Fire Chief. Ralph responded with \$7,500. Bill responded that he feels that is too high. Ralph

reviewed the class time, paperwork, and call that come to the Fire and EMT departments. John Burrows discussed the 184 calls they had last year. Kathie Burrows asked Ralph to supply a better breakdown of his accounts. Ralph does not have the time needed to itemize electricity, fuel cost, heating fuel, etc. Kathie said that if the Selectmen are happy with Ralph's budget submissions, they would accept them also.


Michael Morrison suggested a different approach to the capital expense for future purchases. Patrick will follow up on this.

The Finance Committee requested a copy of the Highway Department union contract. Dolores supplied the copy.

Discussed grant writer and strap grant. There was a meeting recently with the Highway Department, Selectmen, and Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. The BRPC is looking into strap grants and any other available grants for the town.

Binney Meigs and Chuck Nelson in to discuss donating the sculpture created by Binney for the 250th Celebration that is at the intersection of Route 57 and New Hartford Road. Mr. Meigs would like to donate the sculpture and Chuck will donate the platform. If the town accepts it, they would like to know the sculpture is insured and maintained. Maintenance would involve keeping the area neat and mowed. They would also like it lighted if possible. They would provide a plaque reading "Then and Now." On behalf of the Selectmen, Patrick thanked them and responded that it was a generous and wonderful gift to the town.

Michael Morrison and Megan Murray present to discuss the speed limit on Tannery Road. Patrick apologized for the way he handled this situation. He feels very strongly that if he had acted sooner this meeting may have been avoided. Mike addressed the complaint made by Megan accusing him of harassing her. He clearly stated he was not harassing her, that he was very concerned as a parent for his child's safety. Megan questioned the speed limit sign that is on Michael's property. Mike keeps it on his property because there is no storage available on town property. Discussed what reasonable speed limits are. Megan responded that she only goes 15 mph when passing Mike's house. Michael and Megan resolved the issue and shook hands. Ralph stated that he has requested stop signs and speed bumps from the State Highway.

David Hubbard reviewed some ideas to help promote the town. 

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Fax: 413-243-4622 • 71 Main St., Lee

Comings and Goings



Jim in a plaza in Venice, 1951, 26 years old.

JIM REESE 1925-2013

Jim Reese, of Sears Road, died February 8. Jim moved to Sandisfield in 1971 to be closer to his sister, Emilie Green and her family. He quickly integrated into the Sandisfield community and forged many lasting friendships. An active member of the American Legion, Jim served as Chaplain for many years. Jim will also be remembered for proudly driving his 1927 Model-T Ford in the Memorial Day parades. A local "pit crew" ensured the journey could be completed to Hamilton Grove.

Jim was passionate about history and antiques. He loved to study each and every object that crossed his path, scrutinizing all the details to tell you why it was a treasure or a hunk of junk.

Born July 14, 1925, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Jim joined the Navy in March 1944, when he was 19. He felt: "If your country is at war, you have to do what you have to do, period." His part of World War II was spent in the Pacific where he was based on Ulithi Island. He took part in the attack on Truk Lagoon, considered the most formidable of all Japanese strongholds. Jim rose quickly in the ranks to become Chief Petty Officer; he had an impeccable naval record and was a highly decorated sailor earning many citations and medals: The National Defense Service Medal (3 Awards), the Navy Occupation Service Medal, the Navy Good Conduct Medal (6 Awards), the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal (2 Awards), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medals (Cuba, 2 awards), and the Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Jim loved active sea duty and preferred service on destroyers and cruisers. He served aboard the *USS Wisconsin*, *USS Portsmouth*, *USS Newport News* (9 ½ years), *USS Bristol*, *USS John Paul Jones*, *USS Mullinnix*, and the *USS Dewey*. He travelled the world and was involved in all the major conflicts such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, Korea, and two tours of duty in Vietnam. He was a master practitioner of traditional naval folk-art, specifically macramé, which he referred to it as MacNamara's Lace. One of his masterpieces was the complete decorating of the bridge of the *USS Dewey* in macramé, done at the Captain's request over a period of weeks during his off-duty time.

In Jim's last years in Sandisfield, one of the highlights of his day was sipping coffee at Ralph's garage where he would stay informed of the comings and goings of the Town and beyond. Even at Geer Village he followed Sandisfield news and was very sorry to learn of Pete's misfortune.

Following his wishes, Jim will be buried in Arlington Cemetery. In the spring, there will be a Sandisfield memorial service to celebrate forty years of friendship in the Town.



EMMALYN DAWN MARIE PACHULSKI

BORN FEBRUARY 18, 2013

Parents: Matthew & Billie Pachulski

Proud Grandparents: Eric & Dawn Pachulski

Great Grandfather: Maurice Campetti

Great Grandmother: Elizabeth Pachulski





FRAN LEVENSON

1932-2012

Fran Levenson, longtime Sandisfield homeowner, beloved neighbor, and dedicated devotee of libraries throughout the Berkshires, died December 6 in New York City after a prolonged, courageous battle with breast cancer. Internment was in the Sandisfield Cemetery beside her husband, Gabriel Levenson, who died last summer at the age of 98.

Bronx born and raised, Fran graduated from Brooklyn College and received her Masters in Guidance from Bank Street College of Education. Passionate about her family, children, reading, and her garden, Fran was outspoken and fearless. Forever hopeful of a cure for her disease, she tried every new medication Sloan-Kettering offered.

A teacher and guidance counselor for over 30 years in the New York City public school system, Fran continued to counsel students until recent years. After retirement she volunteered with children at the Botanical Garden and with a program that brought art into schools. She put down roots in Sandisfield in the 1960s at the invitation of her close friend, Anne Hoffman.

To her grandchildren who enjoyed her keen sense of humor she was "Franma." She greatly relished visits from her extended family although she rarely set foot in the kitchen; that was Gabe's domain. Fran loved to drive, covering many miles between Riverdale and Sandisfield, visiting family in Boston and fellow teachers in New Hampshire and points between. To the very end, she participated in her book club and made lists of authors she wanted to read.

We bonded with Fran at the Sandisfield Arts Center in 1998 at a concert she attended with a guest (who in a small-world coincidence was my 3rd grade teacher in Manhattan, back in the day). At the time we lived one house apart on Route 57. Fran and Gabe became resident grandparents to our grade-school daughter who spent happy summers in their tree house hanging out with their dog, Ella. We shared many lively meals together in Sandisfield, New York, and even once in London.

Fran is survived by her son, Miyan of New York City, stepchildren Deborah and Tim, and grandchildren, David, Claire, Ana, and Jasmin.

Donations may be made in her memory to New Yorkers for Parks, The Daffodil Project, 55 Broad Street, 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10004 or online at www.nyfp.org/about/support-us

Submitted by Michelle Arnot



DR. NILDA A. TORRESOLA

1931-2013

Nilda Torresola, who owned the east cottage on River Road, died in New York City, January 30, after a short illness.

Born in the East Harlem barrio to immigrant parents from Puerto Rico who operated a bodega on East 107th Street, Nilda earned her bachelor's degree from Hunter College in 1953, her master's from Fordham University, and her ED.D, doctor of education in educational psychology, from Teacher's College, Columbia University, in 1994. As she often said with a laugh, "You come a long way, baby."

Her first job after stocking her father's grocery shelves was as a mathematics teacher in an agricultural high school in Queens. She was always pleased that she was able to persuade boys who might become farmers that math was important for their future success. She later was assistant superintendent for federally funded programs in School District 7 in the South Bronx, one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city.

When her friends and colleagues, Marion and David Dragoon, invited her to Sandisfield for visits to Tanglewood in the 1970s, she fell in love with the Berkshires. In 1978, she bought the small cottage by the Clam River (which she insisted was the Buck), and spent as much time here as she could. After her retirement, she spent entire summers here as well as many weekends during spring and fall.

Nilda loved music. It's what drew her to the Berkshires. She attended Tanglewood concerts, often with out-of-town guests or Town residents who had become friends. She sang soprano in the Boricua College Chorus in Manhattan. The chorus performed at a memorial service held for Nilda in February in Queens. Several of her Sandisfield friends attended.

Nilda also loved sports. She followed the New York Giants and she had a passion for the Yankees. After struggling with radio static for years, she finally figured a way to get TV reception at her cottage so she could better follow her team. She often cheerfully argued with local friends who supported either the Red Sox or the Tampa Bay Rays.

Nilda is survived by two nieces and a nephew and their children, all in California. This summer, a local memorial service will be held at the Sandisfield library, hosted by the book club, of which Nilda was a member.



Abisha Rice House

It was gratifying to see that my 3rd great grandfather's house is marked as an historic place on Town Hill Road. I confirmed this for the current owner in 2010.

Sincerely,
Bob Royce, Northford, Conn.

A Very Special Thank You to Gene Riiska

I would like to send out a very special "Thank You" to Gene Riiska for his quick response, kindness, and strength on January 2, 2013.

My horse, BlackJack, tried to roll in the snow and got stuck. His hind end was on a mound of snow higher than his front end and after a few attempts to get up, he gave up. It was single digits outside. I knew I needed help and needed it fast. With my husband, Bobby, at work, I knew who I could call for help. I phoned Gene. I ran back outside and shoveled all I could around BlackJack. In less than five minutes Gene arrived and I tied lead ropes to one of BlackJack's front legs and to one of his back legs, the ones that were closest to the ground. Gene was on the heavy end, the front, and I was on the hind end. We each pulled on our lead ropes and flipped BlackJack over. He rose to his feet and walked away just fine.

It doesn't take long for things to go terribly wrong when a horse is down, especially in cold weather.

Gene helped save BlackJack's life.

Not five minutes went by and my pony Finny decided he had to roll in the same spot ... show-off ... he got right up after scratching his back. I shoveled out a flat roll area for both boys for safety, but pleaded with BlackJack to not make any more snow angels any time soon! :-)

Thanks for being there, Gene! We are all so grateful!

BlackJack, Sharon & Bobby Poley
and Finny pony too, New Hartford Road

Dear Friends,

Keep up the good work!

Here's a little something to help The Sandisfield Times through the winter doldrums: It's great weather to sit inside and remember how great last July's celebration of Sandisfield's 250th Anniversary was. (What's a little rain compared to this cold. Keep up the good work (excellent work)!

Sincerely,

Jeanne and Daniel Keener, S. Sandisfield Road


To the Editor:

I have no sympathy for arsonists. Back in the 1980s, an arsonist burned down at least a dozen houses in Sandisfield. It was very frightening. You never knew if your house was next. During the same period, an arsonist burned down the movie theater in Copake, NY, and another arsonist burned down the covered bridge in Sheffield. Arson should be dealt with severely. If an arsonist is caught, the least of his worries should be a news story.

Larry Dwyer, West Road



The Times is supported in part by a grant from the Sandisfield Cultural Council, a local group which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

EMS & FIRE DEPARTMENT  **JANUARY REPORT**

Fire Dept.		EMS
Chimney Fire	2	13
Assist EMS	1	
MV Accident No Injury	1	
Standby for Tolland FD	1	

POLICE BLOTTER 

1/1	Erratic MV Operation, N. Main	1/21	MV Accident, Sandisfield Rd.
1/1	Well-Being Check, S. Main	1/23	Court Service, Sandisfield Rd.
1/2	Well-Being Check, S. Main	1/24	Noise Complaint, S. Main
1/3	Erratic MV Operation, S. Main	1/26	MV Accident, Town Hill Rd.
1/8	House Alarm, Sullivan Rd.	1/27	MV Accident, Sandisfield Rd.
1/11	Disabled MV, Dodd Rd.	1/28	B&E, Hammertown Rd.
1/12	Domestic Complaint, Town Hill Rd.	1/29	Road Safety Complaint
1/19	Court Service, Silverbrook Rd.		

NOW HEAR THIS!

The Times thanks Susan Van Sickle for her contributions and dedication to the newspaper.

Susan, it was a pleasure working with you.

Please send future notices for Now Hear This! to calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org

March Events

A six-week Chair yoga class, taught by Connie Wilson (certified yoga instructor), will begin February 27 and run through April 3rd. Chair yoga is a gentle form of yoga practiced sitting in a chair or using a chair for support. The class meets in the Knox Room at the Monterey Library on Wednesdays from 9-10 a.m. All ages and abilities welcome! There is a suggested donation of \$7 per class for non-Monterey residents. For more information, contact Connie at yogawithin@hotmail.com or 528-3798

FREE BASEBALL SPRING TRAINING. Begins Sunday, March 3. Otis, Monterey, Sandisfield, and surrounding towns' players of all levels, 8-12 years old. Free indoor baseball hitting practice (with tennis balls) begins Sunday, March 3, at the Farmington River School gym, Route 8, Otis, 3-4 p.m. The practices will be during the four Sundays in March. Outdoor activities begin early April. Sign-ups for the 2013 season have begun for players 5-12. There will be one 5-7 year-olds rookie team and two AAA teams for players 8-12. No tryouts. Players of all levels learn to play and enjoy baseball. Home games and practices are at Greene Park, Monterey Center, Route 23. The season starts in late April and runs through June. For information, contact Steve Graves at sgraves8@yahoo.com.

Tolland Fire Department annual spaghetti dinner. Saturday, March 9, 5-8 p.m., Tolland Public Safety Complex, Route 57. All the salad, pasta, meatballs, and dessert you can eat for \$10 for adults, \$5 kids under 12. Pay at the door. Come see the new 3,000-gallon vacuum tanker truck!!

"Finding Your Voice," a writing workshop for middle- and high-school students, on March 24, Sunday, 2-5 p.m., at the Otis Public Library. In the free workshop which will be led by Anastasia Stanmeyer, editor of Berkshire Magazine, young writers will be guided through the process of crafting a feature story and taught some tricks of the trade. Participants are encouraged to bring writing samples to share. There are neither grades nor wrong answers. The workshop is supported by a grant from the Otis Cultural Council. Registration is recommended at astanmeyer@morrismediagroup.com.

Ongoing Events

The Tolland Council on Aging has organized a Senior Ride Program to address the difficulties facing seniors in getting to doctors' appointments or shopping. Any senior in Tolland, 60 years or older, may call the ride coordinator at 413-579-7834 to leave a message with name, address, phone number and date a ride is needed. Requests must be made 72 hours in advance of the time a ride is needed. For further information contact Pat Storey, COA Clerk-Tolland at 413-269-6575

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 Mesina. For more information call 413-644-0104, Ext. 1159.

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

PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION AND SCREENING

New Students Only

Preschool Open House

Thursday, March 28, 2013 from 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Preschool Registration/Screening

Wednesday, April 10, 2013
from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

- The screening will be conducted in the areas of speech and language, fine and gross motor development and learning skills. Screening is required for all new enrolling children only.
- Interested families should call Lynette Gagnon at the school (269-4466) beginning Monday, April 1st to schedule an appointment for screening and pick up a registration packet.



Misplaced Brush Pile; Fire Season Now On

Because of an editing error in last month's Town Business column, a brush pile described as being on George and Eleanor Munson's property is in fact on Elizabeth Pachulski's property next door. The Times regrets the error.

The brush may have gone up in smoke already, since Fire Season is now open

Which reminds us: Open burning of brush is permitted until April 30th, weather and safety conditions permitting. An Open Burning Permit application must be submitted to the Sandisfield Fire Department before beginning your burn. Burning on unauthorized days is illegal and subject to fines and penalties. Forms may be downloaded from the town web site (www.Sandisfield.info) or picked up at the Fire Chief's office between 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday-Friday. Phone: 413-258-4742.

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

P.O. Box 584
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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 Café. Other locations include The Roadstore Café and the Monterey General Store in Monterey and the Southfield Store in New Marlborough.

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