

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

*Tribunus*



*Plebis*

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

*Volume IV, Number 6*

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## Stones on Stones

*By Brigitte Ruthman*



*The stone walls at Snow Farm on Beech Plain Road are about 200 years old. Still practical and useful, they keep the Tarasuk's sheep inside the pastures.*

*Photo: Bill Price*

What woodsman or farmer hasn't considered the remarkable harvest of rocks that happened before New England's hilly ground could be turned into farmland by determined settlers.

Some were moved by stone boats pulled by oxen, others by hand. They were placed carefully or not in walls that still stand and seem at a distance to wander like piled-up mossy jewels through forests that were once the open ground that heaved them up.

Though stone walls exist elsewhere in the world, their place as architectural land forms is as unique to New England as sap

buckets hanging from the maple trees that sometimes grow alongside them.

Sprouting after the winter ground is done with its annual heaving, their only benefit is to keep the hooves of cows trimmed by the repetitive motion of walking over so many of them. As part of walls, they became boundary lines and stone fences and now are great aesthetic monuments to the past.

I have a love-hate relationship with rocks, sweetly known as stones. I won't walk across the pasture without taking one in each hand, freeing the ground beneath them to sprout a small patch of clover.

*Cont'd on p.15*

## Committee Moving Ahead

**BUT TOWN SAYS "NO" TO POT LOTTERY**

*By Times reporters*

Selectmen at their final August meeting signed warrants for the Long-Range Planning Committee to proceed with hiring two consultants to help evaluate town buildings. The cost will be about \$10,000, which was approved at a special town meeting on August 15 by a vote of 49 to 18.

The consultants will assess not only the structural condition of the buildings but will consider town, state, and federal regulations in order to bring the buildings up to code. They will compare the cost of repairing the old buildings against replacing them with a new complex. An initial report is anticipated within 90 days, at which time an informational meeting will be held for the town.

In order to complete their work, the consultants have asked for a needs assessment from town boards and departments.

*Cont'd on p.4*

## Country Store Plan Reaches Town Boards

**WILL WE HAVE A NEW GENERAL STORE IN SANDISFIELD?**

*By Bill Price*

Town residents who plan to construct a country store/gas station on Rt. 8 south of New Boston presented their ideas to the Planning and the Select boards in early August. They are scheduled to meet with the Conservation Commission in September.

At the boards, Chandru and Kim Paspuletti explained their main objective is to serve the community. They see a common need for a store that works with the town and that the town is

*Cont'd on p.3*

# CDBG GRANT REJECTED

By Alice Boyd


No one likes rejection, but as a professional grant writer I've dealt with my share. When our attempt to secure Community Development Block Grant funding for housing and planning for Sandisfield was rejected by the Commonwealth last month, I was mightily disappointed. Not surprised so much, but disappointed.

The CDBG focuses on helping people whose household income is within a certain range. If the grant had been funded, over \$400,000 might have been available to Sandisfield residents, with each household that qualified receiving up to \$35,000 toward home repairs. The bottom line for homeowners was good: zero percent interest and no money from the resident at all if they resided in or own the house for the next 15 years. Rental property also qualified.

Owners who applied have been notified we did not win the grant. We were prepared for that, since we understood the likelihood the town might not receive the grant the first time it was submitted. The grant is a competitive process, and this was a first time for Sandisfield.

I heard about the decision from a phone call from the Governor's office. They had what they termed "good news." Four of my firm's grant applications were funded – for the Cape and Islands to the tune of \$3.4 million. This was a coup since I've been working with those towns for 25 years. We work with many needy families and I was thrilled for them. Sandisfield's application was a real long shot. But Sandisfield is home to me, and I had really hoped that we'd pull a rabbit out of a hat. We reached in, but there was no rabbit.

We celebrate the success of the four other grants, and we mourn the loss of this one. When my daughter (and business partner) read the draft of the Sandisfield application she said it was the best of those we were submitting. It was sincere, not slick. It came from the heart. It told a story of need that dispelled the state's statistics that Sandisfield is a low-need community.

This winter if the Selectmen are willing, we'll try again, again at no cost to the town. It's a lot of work but worth another try. We'll tweak the narrative, update the statistics, and respond to reviewers notes. It will still be another long shot, but there are residents in Sandisfield who could really use some help. And there's no better feeling than securing a grant that helps your neighbors, so I'll deal with a bit of rejection. And we'll hope for the best next year. 

# Rescuing the American Legion Pavilion

## PLANNING UNDERWAY

By Ron Bernard



*Dancing at the pavilion at the Goldsmith's anniversary, 2009*

The lead story in the July Sandisfield Times sounded the alarm that the American Legion Pavilion in New Boston, site of innumerable social events and fun-times for decades, is in need of serious attention.

Maria Domato, commander of Legion Post 456, is responsible for the building and the grounds alongside the Farmington River known as Hamilton Grove.

Maria said, "The pavilion has never been upgraded and it has deteriorated from wear and tear and weather. Floods and big storms like hurricane Irene in 2011 have really impacted us. Untreated support posts are rotted and practically every system has to be repaired or replaced." Bottom line: this popular family-friendly venue is worn out.


The place has touched the lives of many Sandisfielders. One recent example involved the Goldsmith family who, in 2009, made a deposit at a Tyringham establishment to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. Plans soon unraveled. Judy Goldsmith explained:

"We were in a tight spot," she said. "Two months before the date, we learned that the place was out of business, and we should expect to kiss our deposit goodbye. Still, almost a hundred guests were expected and we had to act fast. A good friend, Liana Tosca-

nini, suggested we check out the American Legion pavilion.

"The hall and grounds were just what we were looking for: spacious with facilities to serve hot food. Our Great Barrington caterer was at first wary but later admitted, 'I had no idea. What a great place to have a party.' And what a party it was! It started with an afternoon of square dancing to a country band that worked up everyone's appetite and the celebrations went into the evening."

Maria has been busy assembling estimates for a long list of repairs and essential upgrades, particularly for the outdated kitchen and bathrooms. Not surprisingly, it is looking like the tab may ultimately approach \$100,000, a significant amount to be sure, but much less than a new facility would cost. With careful planning and community support, the Post anticipates that a handsome, rejuvenated pavilion will open on Memorial Day, 2015.

A capital campaign will kick off this fall. In the meantime, an advisory committee is being formed. If you would like to be part of the special community project to save our venerable hall and ensure its availability for years to come, contact Maria Domato at (413) 258-4578 or by email at: rainbow2498@embarqmail.com. To learn more about plans come to an informational session at the Pavilion on Wednesday, September 11 at 7 p.m. Casual food and soft drinks provided. 

INSIDE	PAGE
No Pot, No Way	5
Setting Tax Rates, 1960's Style	6
Council on Aging Catching Up	7
Speak, Eat, Watch	8
Bridge Watch	9
Town Business	11
"The Maverick Theatre" by Val Coleman	15

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## NEW DUMP HOURS FOR WEDNESDAYS

Dump hours for Wednesday will change September 11. From 2-5 rather than 1-4. That will inconvenience some, make it easier for others. Hours will remain 9-3 on Saturday and Sunday.

Our new dumpmaster, Louie Rossi, has been cleaning up the place. He says, "Just because it's a transfer station doesn't mean it has to look like a dump." The bad news: he does not intend to supervise a Dumpyard Dog. Former dumpmaster Dana Parsons, explained Louie, went back to his full-time construction job, better pay and more consistent hours.

## NEW YORKERS TOURING SANDISFIELD

Anyone home in West New Boston or New Boston on Sunday August 11 had unexpected company. A downed power line on Rt. 8 between here and Otis closed the highway. Traffic south was diverted to – you guessed it – Beech Plain Road. Traffic north was sent up Town Hill Road. None of the drivers were happy about driving through the pretty woods.

Those coming down Beech Plain were the unhappiest New Yorkers and Connecticut people we'd seen in town for a long time. Sunday's the day to head "back home" and most of them wished they'd stayed wherever they were.

It was bumper to bumper on Cold Spring Road

and a lot of other local byways. Fire Chief Morrison was in upper Sandisfield directing traffic, and firemen in uniform were at the New Boston Inn and other strategic intersections.

The unwilling tourists came down the steep one-lane hill past Snow Farm while a few errant northbound cars were trying to get up the hill. Many drivers had likely consulted their GPSs once they knew they were lost, which correctly told them the way back to Rt. 8 was to turn left on River Road. This made the backup worse.

Margaret O'Clair lives on River Road and when drivers were stuck in front of her house, yelling at each other, she took action. She walked past all the stuck traffic, one New York driver after another, and diverted them across the little bridge onto 57 and then left toward 8, away from the bottleneck of River Road.

Can you imagine being lost in the woods, easing your nice car down that hill only to be confronted by Margaret in her gardening clothes and a white headband waving you to the right when your GPS said go left? Margaret prevailed, as of course she would, and they dutifully turned right, went across the bridge and then left toward 8. Most probably made it home okay but they all had a story to tell when they got there. 🍷

Bill Price  
West New Boston

## Country Store Plan Reaches Town Boards

*Cont'd from p.1*

comfortable with. They are negotiating to lease/buy property near the site where a businessman from Lee, Happy Banga, has also indicated interest in building a gas station/convenience store combination.

The difference might be that the Paspuletti's know the town well, having owned a home on Beech Plain Road for over 20 years.

As the couple outlined, they visualize "a community place, a crafts place, a place for vendors. Possibly a farmer's market on weekends." While they emphasize the local aspect of the potential store, they also hope that it might become "a destination place for the Berkshires."

Chandru explained that they see "a country store first, a gas station second." The design of the general store and location of gas and diesel pumps are in the works. They plan to install pleasing and not overly harsh lighting. "No glaring lights at night or when we're closed."

The store would consist of about 1,500-2,500 square feet in a free-standing open-space building with "basic staples that everyone needs," including a package store.

At the Selectmen's meeting, Kim said they hoped to build and operate an "eco-friendly kind of place. With muffins in the morning." Regular hours, possibly dawn to dusk. Wood and log construction, a wide porch out front.

Mr. Banga has so far met with the Conservation Commission, which ruled that it had no jurisdiction in the parcel across from MJ Tuckers. Mr. Banga would appear to have an advantage in the process, since he owns the property where he intends to build, while the Paspulettis are negotiating a lease/buy situation. [The Times reported in error last month that the Paspulettis already owned the property.] Mr. Banga has, at least for the time being, postponed his plans.

Chandru and Kim see their proposed store as an additional stopping place in Sandisfield that would support already established businesses: The Silverbrook Country Store and Cafe, Villa Mia, and Tuckers. The new store should draw more people and customers, hence create more business – which could boost the town's tax receipts.

The next steps for the Paspulettis are to ensure the land is suitable for traffic, obtain the property, visit the fire marshal for gas and diesel tank requirements and permits, return to the Planning Board with a plot plan, and walk through the other legal steps necessary for building a store and gas station combination in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and town of Sandisfield. It is not an easy process.

But as Chandru and Kim heard at both boards they have visited so far, "Good luck. We hope you can do it." 🍷

## SUGGESTIONS NEEDED!



The Town Suggestion Box needs your constructive ideas.

We've received about 15 so far and all have been passed along to the Select Board.

The Suggestion Box can be accessed through its email link: SandisfieldSuggestionBox@gmail.com

All suggestions are reviewed for clarity and language, before being delivered to the appropriate person, board, or committee. Include your name, phone or email address in case we need to contact you for clarity. You can specify that the suggestion be passed along anonymously.

– John Skrip

## Welcome Back to School

*By Tara Beardsley*

About a third of the 144 student in Pre-K-6th grade at Farmington River Elementary School are from Sandisfield. More are attending Middle School and High School in Lee and at Berkshire Hills.

### SEPTEMBER DATES OF INTEREST TO PARENTS:

September 5, Back to School Night, gymnasium, 6:30 p.m.

September 12, PTO Meeting, library, 3:15 p.m. PTO meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month; childcare provided.

September 20, Early Dismissal at 11:45 a.m. for Teacher Professional Development.

September 25, School Safety Presentation by State Police Officer Jim Carmichael, cafeteria, 3:15 p.m.



# Broadband Update

SANDISFIELD AHEAD FOR ONCE

By Jean Atwater-Williams

Sandisfield is not often ahead of other communities, but out of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute's 124 "middle mile" communities, Sandisfield is one of only eight communities to be operational. This anomaly is due to technical delays; the rest of MBI network is now scheduled to go live by December.


This means that our CAI's (Community Anchor Institutions) could very soon be connected to a state-of-the-art fiber optic broadband network. But fiber comes at a

cost. The smallest connection is 5mbps (megabytes per second) and costs each location approximately \$115 per month (currently most of our CAI's are paying around \$40 per month for their slow DSL connections).

Who will take the service first? The Town Hall Annex is a likely candidate. We are working with several vendors to determine the best choices for service for the annex, where most of our town employees are located. Once there is a good broadband connection, it is possible to look at ways to save the town money by running services such as telephone over the internet. Other Sandisfield CAI's that could be connected to the MBI fiber are the Old Town Hall, the COA, and the Library as well as the Police and Fire stations.

This leads to the obvious question: When will homes and businesses be connected? The answer is not so simple. When asked that question in a recent radio interview, Judy Dumont of the MBI replied that it could be 3 to 5 years. WiredWest, which had hoped

to do it in as little as two years, has done much planning and preparation toward the construction of the "last mile" network, but does not currently have the financial resources to begin construction on the network by itself. WiredWest and the MBI are currently exploring how they can work together to accomplish the goal of "connecting the unconnected" with WiredWest continuing to advocate for fiber optic broadband that is both affordable and universally available.

Governor Patrick has included a \$40 million bond for last mile in his budget. The proposal is winding its way through various committees at the state house. If approved, it will be a very good start on funding this vital infrastructure which is forecasted to cost in excess of \$100 million for the approximately 45 underserved towns in western Massachusetts. 


To learn more about connecting Sandisfield's CAI's, contact Jean at 258-8000 or [atwaterwilliams@gmail.com](mailto:atwaterwilliams@gmail.com).

# Sandisfield Historical Commission

UNVEILING OUR HISTORY: A SERIES OF NEW HISTORICAL MARKERS

Town officials and State Representative Smitty Pignatelli will join Sandisfield Historical Commission members to unveil a permanent historical marker for Sandisfield Center on Saturday, September 7, 1 p.m., at Sandisfield Center (top of the hill on Rt. 57).

The marker and similar plaques in each of the five original villages that made up Sandisfield relate the founding of the village, key events, and historical personalities. Other markers have been installed at New Boston village in the open area by the river, at West New Boston in front of the Old Town Hall, at Montville at the corner of Rt. 57 and Hammertown Rd., and in South Sandisfield in front of the Historical Society building.

Everyone is invited to the official unveiling on September 7. Information contact: Ron Bernard, 269-0012. 

## Committee Moving Ahead

Cont'd from p.1

The committee is circulating a non-binding, informational survey to be filled out by town employees, with a return date of September 20.


The next meeting of the committee is Wednesday, September 25, at Firehouse #2 at 7 p.m. The meetings are open to everyone.

Also voted on at the town meeting was a request to appropriate \$45,000 to repair the Town Hall Annex roof which passed 79 to 1. Despite the fact that the committee is assessing whether or not to replace the Annex, voters decided to repair the roof because town employees are working in the building and will be until a new building is in place, if ever.

Voters turned down the opportunity to apply for a medical marijuana dispensary that would have been operated by the town. The application required state approval, so could have been turned down even after the \$30,000 expense of a consultant to submit the proposal. The idea's main proponent, David Hubbard, described the proposal as not "gambling" but more akin to buying a lottery ticket. He described the \$30,000 as not a lot to risk for a town with a \$3 million budget, like risking \$2 on a lottery ticket.

Not liking the odds, or the details, the taxpayers voted 57 to 23 against the proposal. (See *Simon Winchester's report on the meeting on page 5.*)

What the Times terms the "Long-Range Planning Committee" was initially known as the Committee to Evaluate Town Buildings, then the Strategic Planning Committee, which is how it is known in town records. The committee, however, is not involved with strategic planning as much as it has evolved into an entity that is considering ideas to produce extra income for the tax-strapped town, the cost effectiveness of repairing town buildings or replacing them all with a single, up-to-date building that could serve now and in the future, examining outdated town bylaws, and recommending a long-range plan for the town in order to facilitate the town's applications for state and federal grants.

In the meantime, the deadline for applications for a part-time town administrator is September 4. It is anticipated that the administrator will work with the Long-Range Planning Committee to help carry out some of their proposals. The Town Management Review Committee, which recommended the hiring of an administrator, will participate in the interview process. 

# No Pot, No Way

By Simon Winchester

There is a famous old Monty Python sketch in which a gigantic heavyweight boxer named Ken Clean-Air Systems – whose main and only interest was said to be ‘gravel’ - beats the living daylight out of a pertly frail and freckled teenage schoolgirl named Petula Wilcox. Our most recent Special Town Meeting had something of the same ludicrous inevitability to it – with our hapless local pot-enthusiast David Hubbard, though not that evening clad in gingham and taffeta, flat out for the count almost before the meeting had begun.

David Hubbard is a courageous man, but that night he was faced with the Sisyphean task of staring down an opposition who could have written encyclopedias on gravel. The hall was filled – unsmiling constables at the ready – with a murmuringly murderous audience. A respectful hush fell as he stood to propose his master plan: that we vote to cough up \$30,000 in town cash to lodge an application to be allowed to grow and dispense marijuana to those who have persuaded their doctors they are sick enough to need it.

He then sat down, looking for support – only to be caught wrong-footed almost immediately by a stentorian rumbling from six rows back, and which surely spelled his doom. This was Barbara Cormier, foursquare, unsmiling and as defiant as a railroad train, caustic in congratulating our neighboring towns – Monterey, Otis, Lee and their kin – for already throwing out with contempt any such preposterous idea of dealing in dope – even the medical variety.

And with Ms. Cormier’s opposition so firmly stated, a mighty wave of hostility broke and one after another townspeople stood to tell why they thought the idea was the sheerest of sheer

nonsense. Yes, all agreed, the town is running out of money, is short on hope and future: but do we really need this, is this the best idea that the Long-Range Planning Committee can come up with?

The most cogent expression of opposition came from Sonja Gray, wife of our Select Board chairman. She had just acquired, hot off the internet, the final regulations that Boston would impose on any entity that won the right to peddle the medical pot. And in her reading of it – of the interpreters needed, of the security needed, constant video surveillance, fences – one by one the bullet-points of bureaucratic reality thudded home on the flanks of the plan’s small legion of supporters. When finally Dolores Harasyko, our much-cherished town clerk, rose to remind the listeners that she would likely often find herself all alone in the annex when people desperate for dope arrived to demand their drugs – there came an audible thunder of sympathy and with it the coup de grace, the knockout punch.

David Hubbard looked stricken, winced and wounded as he waited for the vote. There was some procedural wrangling with John Skrip, our moderator – a Mr. Kellogg, a welcome expert on Robert’s Rules of Order, helped get things going – and the tally was taken. It showed the incontrovertible inevitable: the measure had been defeated, and roundly.


There had been no unpleasantness, no need for constabulary muscle. This is Sandisfield, after all, a community civil to the core. A sober David Hubbard eased his way through an otherwise elated crowd, his high hopes dashed.



David Hubbard presenting the plan to a full house.


Photo: Bill Price

He reminded us that our financial problems are still acute and far from solved. And it is to the Long-Range Planning Committee – winded by this fight, no doubt – that we must now look for fresh ideas. Only next time they have to be well-thought-out and well-researched to win the support of a very tough crowd. ♡



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# Setting Tax Rates, 1960s-Style

## HOW I REMEMBER IT

By Barbara Newsom

Gremler Road, 1961-1978



Jack and Barbara Newsom, 2011.  
Photo: Deborah Geithner

In 1961, Jack and I fell in love with a house – really, the Constant Bosworth House – on Gremler Road. It had been vacant for three years and, it seemed, pretty much abandoned by its then owner, film actor Richard Widmark.

We were referred to the property by a Connecticut realtor who told us that prices weren't as high across the border in Massachusetts. For his part, he wasn't about to make the long drive into Berkshire County's "Siberia" to show us the place. Instead, he gave us directions to get to the house on our own, without a key. We had to break in.

One Mayfly-ridden afternoon soon after we bought the place, we were visited by a neighbors who drove up in a convertible, wearing shades, to welcome us and look us over. Vic and Helga Pisani quickly became our new best friends.

An NBC lawyer, Vic had a special interest in taxes. One evening in the early '60s, he attended his first Sandisfield Taxpayers' Association meeting, held probably in the town hall or more likely someone's house. The docket included the

annual election of officers. Attendance being sparse, no one offered to fill the top of the slate. Victor felt moved to nominate two of his absent friends, Willard Roosevelt for president and Jack Newsom for Vice President.

Informed of their new status, Willard and Jack were both stunned and stuck. In a post-meeting gathering, the two officers and their irrepressible nominator mulled over their predicament and finally decided there might be something for them to do, after all. At the next meeting of the STA, they proposed that the association publish the town's tax rolls. The trouble was no one seemed to know whether the rolls even existed nor where they might be found or how to get at them if they did exist.

Willard and Jack ultimately learned that tax assessor Bill Rowley, who lived near Spectacle Pond, kept the tax rolls at home, there seeming to be no other safe place in town. Willard and Jack were also informed that the rolls were open only two weeks every year and the two weeks most convenient to Mr. Rowley for a public viewing happened to fall during mud season. Thus, anyone who wanted to see the list had to go to Rowley's house, provided a car could make it to the pond.

To Rowley's surprise, one spring day who should show up but Jack and Willard, who had plowed and slithered up muddy Cold Spring Road, loaded with paper and pens. Day after day they



The Constant Bosworth House, in 1964. Built about 1764, the house once owned by actor Richard Widmark was later owned by the Newsoms, then Curnins, Suzanne Frankfurt, and now Lynn Galler.

laboriously copied down every owner's name and taxable property in town. By the end of their stint, they'd put the list in shape for publication.

Getting to know Bill Rowley during the open-books holiday, the two amanuenses were curious about how the assessment system worked, how come some seemingly comparable properties showed up with different numbers, and who made the decisions.

"Well," said Rowley, "the policy is that I just keep raising the assessment until the owner screams. Then I know it's about right."

We can't remember if publishing the tax rolls made any difference to the Rowley policy. Nor do we remember what happened as the result of the Taxpayers Association sunshine effort at transparency. All we know is that the tax rolls became part of the town's annual report, and no one seems to have had to drive Cold Spring Road in mud season to copy them again.

[The Newsoms now live in Florida and follow town events with a Times subscription.]

### What was the Sandisfield Taxpayers' Association?

According to *Sandisfield Then and Now*, the STA was formed in 1946 as a local organization that sought improved services for our then economically exhausted town. An "energetic blend of old family names and committed part-time residents," the STA became "an effective and accepted advisory group for town government." It continued supporting the town until it ended activities in the late 1990s.

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# Sandisfield Resident on Today Show



How often does a Sandisfield resident show up on TV morning shows?

The founding editor of this newspaper, Simon Winchester, did just that last month – appearing on NBC's "Today Show" to kick off his efforts to de-stigmatize electroconvulsive (electro-shock) therapy.

Speaking with David Gregory, Simon recounted his traumatic experience as a young man nearly 50 years ago when he suffered periodic episodes of confusion and extreme disorientation, which led him and some of his doctors to the belief he might become mentally ill.

When his doctors recommended a series of electro-shock therapies, Simon reluctantly agreed. Once highly stigmatized and still controversial, these treatments, Simon thinks, saved him from possibly losing his mind. He now believes the therapy "cured" his brain. He says it was not unlike "re-booting a computer."

Since the broadcast Simon has been speaking and writing about the subject. The interview can be seen on NBC/Today's web site at this link: <http://www.today.com/books/author-documents-his-struggle-madness-man-electrified-brain-6C10883533>

– BP

## Council on Aging Catching Up

By Susan Galik

By the time you read this, we will have raffled off another basket, filled to the brim with goodies. We really have to make a special award for Judy Deming. She and her husband, Francis, sold more than half of the tickets at their farm stand. You can find them on Thursday afternoons at the CHP health clinic in Great Barrington, on the weekends at Halls Store, Rt. 23, up the hill from the lake in Otis, or at Terranova's in Otis Center. They tell me Terranova's has wonderful sandwiches. Our other thanks go to Connie at The Silverbrook Country Store. She has been selling tickets for us for years. We hold these raffles twice a year at the Historical Society fund raisers, the Christmas Bazaar in December, and the Historical Society's Fair in July.

I've been gone and have a lot to catch you up on. The COA has gone on several trips, which usually involve a casino and a show. Coming up is a trip in December to see the Duprees. The cost of \$37 is amazing. You get the bus trip to the southern tip of Connecticut, \$10 in slot money, and a buffet meal. And least I forget ... you get a show. Quite the deal.

Along with the casino shows the COA had a delightful evening at the Gilson in Winsted.

They have a dinner theater, with usually a dinner and a movie. I joined the gang for dinner at Noli's in Winsted. Good Italian food. The best part of the luncheon was desert. We were talked into Bombes. Try to image this: on our plate was a chocolate ball the size of a baseball. When you cracked the chocolate glaze, you had half-vanilla and half-chocolate ice cream. There were hazelnuts sprinkled underneath the glaze and in the middle a maraschino cherry. Oh, what fun.

Starting in September, we will be showing a movie on the fourth Wednesday of the month, which is our blood pressure clinic day. And we will not be playing Bingo. Please join us and help us to decide what movie to watch each month. We would also like your suggestions as to what else we could do instead of playing Bingo. We meet each Wednesday at the Town Hall Annex basement. We have a pot luck lunch at noon and then we do something .... you tell us what.

One last thing. If anyone has a large, huge basket in excellent condition that they wish to get rid of please consider giving it to the COA. Thank you. 🍷

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# Speak, Eat, Watch

## SANDISFIELD HAS A BUSY SATURDAY

By Larry Dwyer

Who says there's nothing to do in Sandisfield? Saturday, August 10, for instance, was a full day.

The first event of the day was a lecture by Val Coleman at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Val's speech was par excellence as he spoke about the now forbidden topic of socialism. No password was needed to enter and the downstairs hall was nearly full. I never would have thought there were so many brave people in Sandisfield that would attend a lecture on socialism. While McCarthy is gone, the NSA is listening.

No need to worry. For the most part Val was neutral on the subject. He wasn't trying to win over any converts to join the cause or even go into the whys and hows of why people chose to be socialists. He spoke about its history, its people and places that were part of the movement. It's a complicated and controversial subject, especially when given that our political climate is so polarized today. It was an interesting and well researched presentation and at the end, there was great applause. Based on the audience's reaction, I'd say he was preaching to the choir. Val's lecture is available at the following web site. [sites.google.com/site/lpdwyr/](http://sites.google.com/site/lpdwyr/)

Next on the agenda was the Sandisfield Fire Department annual steak roast. Some commented that the crowd was not as big as in the past, but for those who did attend, a good time was had by all. The steaks were excellent and it was partnered with a healthy side dish of a baked potato, local sweet corn and salad. There was a full stacked bar and drinks were aplenty, although most drank in moderation.

I could have danced all night, if only I knew how. The band was excellent and had a wide repertoire of blue grass, country and rock music. While not many folks hit the dance floor as is typical today, a few people did strut their stuff and there were some surprisingly excellent dancers on the floor. Dancing with the Stars, get ready for Sandisfield! Later in the evening, prizes were raffled off that were donated by local businesses.

As is this wasn't enough to do, a small crowd assembled at York Lake to watch the annual Persied meteor shower. It was a dark and clear (not stormy) night. York Lake is an excellent place to view the stars, but not for



At the Firemen's Annual Steak Roast. Photo: Larry Dwyer

seeing where you're going. I forgot to bring a flashlight, but luckily my wife brought her cell phone which makes for a handy standby to see your way in the dark. There weren't as many shooting stars as were advertised, but it was good to see the few that we did. The cutoff time was 3:00 a.m. but we packed it in early and left at 1:30. Needless to say when we got back home, we didn't have any trouble at all with falling asleep. 🍷

## WHAT IS IT WORTH?

By David LeBeau  
Certified Appraiser of Personal Property

Previously we have examined two different forms of antique furniture. The item this time is a soft paste porcelain platter of the English transferware type. The pattern should be familiar to most of you, as it is one of the most often employed.



The focus of the illustration on the platter is the pair of birds, located top center. The origin of the story of the two lovers comes from China and it



is similar in theme to Shakespeare's "Romeo & Juliet." The birds are the reincarnated pair of lovers after their suicide due to the refusal of the parents to allow them to marry.

The platter is 12½ inches by 10 inches wide. The color is a fine cobalt blue on a white ground, as is the mark on the back. In the photo you can see where the blue glaze has drifted to the side. This mark indicates that the platter was manufactured in England sometime after 1922.

If the mark said simply "England" it would indicate an earlier manufacture date, which is a clue to the value. This one would sell for about \$200 while an early English platter could bring three to four times as much. A platter with an unglazed back and no mark would indicate the it was made in China in the 18th or 19th century and would be in the Chinese Export class of antique and consequently would sell for considerably more. Maybe as high as \$2,000 or \$3,000.

So go take a look in your kitchen or china cabinet and see what you have. If you have one of the Chinese Export type, contact me at [djlebeau@verizon.net](mailto:djlebeau@verizon.net) and it might be our next subject. 🍷





# BRIDGE WATCH:

## NORTH-BOUND DECK NEARING COMPLETION

By Sandy Parisky

Construction of the north-bound lane of the Route 8 and 57 Bridge is progressing rapidly, according to J. H. Maxymillian (JHM), project managers for Mass DOT. JHM completed the abutment work on both sides of the bridge and are currently forming and tying steel rebar for one of two remaining deck pours. Once the pours are in and allowed to set for 28 days, JHM will undertake full-depth excavation work on the adjacent roadways leading to the bridge.

Full-depth excavation requires removing the old black top and excavating to a specified sub-grade depth, then installing a gravel road base, and repaving blacktop up to the bridge deck. JHM will be adding the curbing, sidewalks, and guardrails to the new deck before motorists can cross the Farmington in both directions later this fall. The work crew will return next spring to put a final coat of black top on the bridge and finish remaining landscape work. ♣



*A JHM truck unloads sand at the bridge abutment by Tannery Road. JHM explained that construction of this section took longer than anticipated due to the number of large rocks encountered. Much of the work occurred directly in front of the former New Boston Store.  
Photo: Bill Price*

# Sandisfield Historical Society



By Josephine Freedman

If you missed Ron Bernard's talk about the Sandisfield meeting houses last June, here is another chance. On September 14, Ron will discuss the history of the churches in Sandisfield at the Historical Society. The presentation includes a slide show of vintage photographs and information not included in the book, *Sandisfield Then and Now*. The event will be held at the South Sandisfield Meeting House, Rt. 183, Saturday, Sept. 14 at 10:30 a.m. Donation \$5.00.

On Saturday, October 5, the Society will hold its annual Apple Fest Fair at the South Sandisfield Meeting house from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. We will have a tag sale, baked goods, lunch fair, raffles, and vendors. If you would like to be a vendor at the fair, please contact Marcia Ignace at 258-2898. Thank you for your continued support and hope to see you at the events. ♣

Contact: Jo Freedman at 258-4786

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## SEPTEMBER

**SAT, 7<sup>TH</sup> 10 AM**

Ron Bernard, Historian  
SANDISFIELD'S  
NATIVE SONS &  
NOTABLES

**\$5**



**SAT, 7<sup>TH</sup> 8 PM**  
COMMON  
THREAD

John Sellew, guitar, Eric  
Martin, fiddle, viola and  
foot percussion and  
Jamie Vleck, harmonies.

**\$10**



**SAT 21<sup>ST</sup> & SUN 22<sup>ND</sup>**  
**10AM**

Dianna Smith  
MUSHROOM  
HUNTERS  
WORKSHOP  
**\$5 per day**

# Where Does the Money Go?

## A FABLE OF ONE LITTLE BUMPER

In a small town, you never know where the next expense is going to show up. You just know it will.

The impact attenuator – protective bumper, really – at the west end of the iron bridge on Rt. 57 at Sears Road was destroyed last December when a limo stuffed with Sandisfield party-going loggers crashed into it. The town, you and me, replaced it at a cost of about \$7,200. Why it cost \$7,200 is the same reason your new shoes cost whatever they do.



*The costly impact attenuator, busted again.*

A couple weeks later a second car smashed into our newly replaced impact attenuator. The town, you and I, replaced it once more for another \$7,200. You can see we're getting into real money. We get to chase insurance companies in both cases, but even that has a cost to it.

Late July our impact attenuator was smashed again, its third time in 2013. We might have charged the perpetrator, except that – thanks to the sand-filled bumper – he or she was able to drive away and forget all about it, except for the big dent in the front of their vehicle.

Now the town, you and I, have the opportunity to replace it again. It was suggested at a recent Select Board meeting (not by a Selectman) that we not replace the impact attenuator this time. At least the next perpetrator could be identified because his or her car would be so damaged they couldn't drive away.

Steve Harasyko and the road crew have completed a partial, home-made repair of the bumper, reassembling it for the most part without spending the full \$7,200. They have asked the state highway department for better warning signs. 🍷

– BP

## OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

**Riiska Brook Orchard** on New Hartford Road will open their apple sales room on Friday, September 20. At first, Macs, Cortlands, and possibly some Honey Crisps. After the first of October will come all their other varieties.



The Sandisfield book group on Wednesday, August 21, hosted author **Miriam Karmel** at a pot-luck dinner and discussion of her novel, *Being Esther*. The group meets monthly at the Sandisfield Library.



**Connie D'Andrea** and her **Silverbrook Café and Country Store** were featured a story in the Berkshire Eagle on August 4.

## Sandisfield Times Approved as Non-Profit

The US Internal Revenue Service has approved the Sandisfield Times as a Federal tax-exempt "public charity" under IRS Code section 501(c)(3). With approval retroactive, contributions made since inception, April 8, 2010, are Federal tax deductible under section 170 of the Code.

PLEASE NOTE: Money sent to us for a subscription is not tax deductible. Mail subscriptions, including gift subscriptions, are not considered contributions and therefore are not tax deductible. We recommend that contributors check with their tax advisor.

Also, there has been some confusion about contributions vs. subscriptions. A contribution does not a subscription make. Please designate on your check whether the amount is for a subscription or a contribution. If your one check includes both, indicate the split. And please keep both subscriptions and contributions coming! 🍷



# TOWN BUSINESS

*Submitted by Dolores Harasyko, Town Clerk*

*Edited by Bill Price*

*Selectmen's Meeting Agenda and Minutes are available at the Town website: [www.sandisfield.info](http://www.sandisfield.info). Go to Meetings, then to Board of Selectmen.*

## Selectmen's Meetings

### June 10, 2013

*Present: Jeff Gray, Patrick Barrett, Rosario Messina, Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent, Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant*

Steve reported that Sandisfield may only receive \$249,000 for Chapter 90 funds this year, rather than \$340,000 as in the past. There is a bill in the house for \$500,000, but it has yet to be funded. Steve presented chapter 90 project request paperwork for the engineering work for the West St. culvert.

Discussed the bidding process. Rosario has questions on the process and does not feel we have used the correct process. Steve explained that we use the process that has been approved by Mass DOT, the Auditors, DOR and Town Counsel. Mass DOT will not approve funding for projects improperly bid. We will follow up with Mass DOT on clarification.

David Hubbard in from the Strategic Planning Committee to provide an update on marijuana dispensary sites. Extensive discussion followed. Discussed the proposal of having a special town meeting to appropriate money for a permit application and the consultant to make the application. Rosario feels we owe it to the town to go forward with a special

town meeting. David will set up a conference call for the Selectmen so they can be more informed on the site proposal.

Patrick asked about a reserve fund transfer to cover some of the repairs for the Library and some additional repairs at the Town Hall Annex.

Joe Zeller in to respond to his letter from the Selectmen about the clean-up of his property. Extensive discussion followed. Joe commented on several other dilapidated buildings in town and wanted to know if the Selectmen are following up on them. Patrick responded that we deal with them as a written complaint comes in. Joe will continue to work as the weather allows.

Reviewed the Storm Nemo FEMA reimbursement. Dolores and Steve have been working with FEMA and are applying for 75% reimbursement for that storm which amounts to approximately \$17,000.

Discussed the town counsel position for the proposed convenience store. Due to a conflict with town counsel also representing parties involved in the convenience store we will have to hire a lawyer specifically for this process.

Discussed the request for a clothing recycling bin for the transfer station. Patrick will contact the requestor to allow them to proceed.

Motion by Rosario, second by Jeff, passed unanimously to appoint Susan Galik to the Counsel on Aging and Mary Turek to the Conservation Commission.

### June 17, 2013

*Present: Jeff Gray, Patrick Barrett, Rosario Messina, Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent. Absent: Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant*

Steve provided Highway Department updates. Work continues North and South Beech Plain Rd. and South Sandisfield Rd. He presented a Chapter 90 project request to purchase a steel plate, which we've had to borrow from other towns. It would be an asset to have our own materials. Roadside mowing

continues. Kathy Jacobs asked about replacing a culvert on Hammertown Rd. Discussed culverts on West Hubbard Rd.

Rosario said he still had business to discuss regarding last week's Selectmen's meeting. Rosario made a motion to have a letter of reprimand added to Steve's file for leaving last week's meeting in the manner he did. Jeff responded that Steve apologized for that and that is good enough. Patrick expressed his opinion that everyone has a bad day and he stands behind Steve. Both Patrick and Jeff agree that this type of action is absolutely not necessary and they did not support the motion.

Discussed the fuel system. The police department still needs to supply codes and pin numbers.

Rosario asked about the bridge at River Road and South Beech Plain Road. Steve has been in contact with Mass DOT regarding materials to use for replacing the railings. They will be working on brush cutting starting next Monday.

Rosario asked Steve if he had medical clearance after his shoulder surgery. Treasurer Teresa DellaGiustina responded that she has been in continuous contact with the Town's insurance company and that she has a letter on file listing his ability to come back to work with restrictions listed.

Rosario made a motion requesting daily reports from the Highway Department showing what work is being done and who is doing it. Jeff responded that a motion is not necessary, Steve has done these in the past and can start to supply them again starting in July. Discussed equipment log.

Kathy Jacobs would like to have a farm stand in front of her house. She will also be supplying produce grown at her property and jams and jellies to Connie D'Andrea's store. The Selectmen approved the license for the farm stand. Kathy will see the Town Clerk next week.

Kathy Jacobs presented an update on the 250th committee. They are turning in the balance of their account of \$5,378 and would like the availability of



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the funds in the future. The Selectmen all agree that they would support accessing this money for a future event.

Bethany Perry, Kathie Burrows and Teresa DellaGiustina in representing the Board of Assessors. Bethany spoke on behalf of the board. The Strategic Planning Committee has requested from the Assessors maps with at least 23 different color coded items identified on the maps. The Assessors have explained to them on several occasions that they do not have anything close to enabling them to create such a map. It would take forever for them to attempt to color code such a map. Bethany can supply all the data they are requesting but not in the format they are looking for. They can get a basic map from Cartographic, which is the company that actually owns the maps, but there would be a charge. These maps would still not contain all the data they are looking for.

Rosario asked where the Strategic Planning Committee got the idea for these maps, Ralph responded that it is a mapping company from Avon, Conn. Rosario suggested they take the data available from the Assessors and ask that company how to go about creating such a map. The Assessors have provided information on various chapter properties.

Discussed stumpage fee changes. Patrick suggested contacting the governor to set up a meeting with regional Selectmen and local boards to explain how the state cuts are affecting the Berkshires.

John Skrip in representing the Town Management Review Committee. He presented a job description for the Town Administrator. Teresa reviewed information she obtained at the Treasurer's conference regarding town administrators. Discussed possible salary. The Select Board is happy with the job description as presented. Discussed advertising.

Discussed Town employee benefits. Rosario has questions on what employees get for time off. Teresa explained that the Highway Department is union and get what is in the contract. A copy of the contract has been supplied to Rosario. She explained that for everyone else time off is based on years of service and appropriate hours worked. Rosario asked who keeps track of time off. Teresa responded that she and Dolores do as well as the department heads. Teresa has available starting in FY2014 a program that will keep track of the time off.

Discussed the employee benefits budget. Discussed why some boards and committees get paid and some don't. Discussed chair positions on boards. Kathleen Segrin presented her board reorganization forms for Board of Health and Planning Board.

Rosario addressed the appointment of Town Counsel. He researched the process of appointing a new Town Counsel. Per Rosario in order to notify the previous town counsel we need to send him a letter to let him know his services are no longer needed. Rosario made a motion to hire Ed McCormick [new town attorney] for the new fiscal year. Patrick responded that we have in the past discussed doing something different with town counsel. Patrick would like to allow time for us

to do our due diligence and hold proper interviews.

Discussed town counsel salary. McCormick would charge \$175 per hour, although he normally charges \$225 per hour. Rosario will contact Mr. McCormick to come to the next meeting to answer any questions we have. Teresa suggested we follow the same process we do when hiring for any town position and suggested posting the job. Rosario responded that he checked into this and it is not necessary. Jeff stated that he likes our current town counsel. Kathie Burrows asked if there were problems with current counsel. Pat explained that in the past there have been a couple instances of slow response time. The Selectmen did have him in to discuss these problems. There was a motion in the past to replace him but the motion was not moved. Ralph questioned the increase in salary for town counsel. Patrick responded that it was for all the extra things that have come up such as upcoming special permits and the Clark Road Bridge project. The motion was not seconded and so not moved.

Patrick addressed that Strategic Planning Committee regarding the marijuana dispensary site. Discussed confusion between Ralph Morrison and John Burrows regarding meetings for Finance Committee and the Strategic Planning Committee regarding the dispensary site and requirements.

### June 24, 2013

*Present: Jeff Gray, Rosario Messina, Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent. Absent: Patrick Barrett, Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant*

Steve provided Highway Department updates. He presented Chapter 90 project request paperwork for the culvert replacement on West Street. Rosario still feels it should be bid out. Steve explained the breakdown of the cost of the project. The total cost included contracted work, blacktop, gravel, and the culvert. Jeff explained that the 3-year equipment bid contract with Tryon also includes emergency work which this culvert falls under. Steve explained we have already bid out the work and materials legally and have 3-year contracts which he has used for several jobs in the past. He explained the process of getting approval from Mass DOT when using Chapter 90 money, adding that he estimates the job high and the unused portion goes back into the Chapter 90 account. It can never be used for anything other than which it is applied for. Jeff does not want to prolong the job but Rosario would like to wait and have the new town counsel review the contract.

Discussed the bridge on River Road. They are removing the rotting rails, brush cutting, and replace the rails with heavier iron guardrail. Also working on the bridge by Route 57 and Silverbrook Road. Steve is seeking guidance from Mass DOT on the structure. Discussed daily reports, Steve will begin to submit them in July.

Richard Hamilton, Sr., in to express his concerns with the roadside mowing on River Road. Discussed mowing, grading, and ditchwork.

Attorney Ed McCormick introduced himself to be

considered as town counsel for Sandisfield. Municipal laws and permits are a large part of the work his firm does, and they have no conflicts at this time in Sandisfield that precludes them from representing the town. They would like a policy in place that there is one designated person from the Board of Selectmen who would serve as contact person between all boards and town counsel. All questions would be brought to this designee and run through the Selectmen first, in order to prevent calls from every board. It will be up to the Selectmen to determine what is covered legally. Jeff asked about experience with procurement laws and permits. Mr. McCormick responded that they have quite a bit of experience. Rosario asked how should we notify the current town counsel. Mr. McCormick responded that a letter needs to be drafted to the current town counsel stating that his services are terminated and that he needs to turn over all files to McCormick. Mr. McCormick will draft the letter. Rosario made a motion to move forward with Mr. McCormick as the new town counsel. Jeff had more questions before moving the motion. Jeff asked how Mr. McCormick would handle a conflict of interest. McCormick stated that the town would come first. His daughter can also fill in, they also have eight paralegals available. Rosario and Ralph have known Mr. McCormick for many years and recommend him. Discussed salary. The town will be granted a reduced rate of \$175 per hour billed in ten minutes increments. They will advise in advance if additional charges apply. Emails would also go through the Selectmen. Motion by Rosario, second by Jeff to hire Ed McCormick as Town Counsel, effective July 1, 2013.

Robbin Campetti and Tina Ferry in representing the Recreation Committee. They would like to relocate using the American Legion. They currently have no place to hold events or store all equipment. The American Legion is struggling financially and have offered a rental agreement to the recreation committee \$3,000 per year for two years for a total of \$6,000 but to have use of the building for 10 years. Discussed liability insurance. Robbin will provide an agreement for review by Town Counsel.

Fire Chief Ralph Morrison in to discuss encumbrances for the Fire and Police Departments. Some of the computer equipment is installed and some isn't in the new ambulance. Not all members have been trained. Dolores left a note on Ralph's encumbrance request that it does not have to be encumbered as it is set up as an account that rolls over. Ralph disagreed and wanted the Selectmen to vote to encumber the money so that he does not lose it. Motion by Jeff, second by Rosario to accept the encumbrances.

Barbara Cormier and Linda Riiska in representing the COA. They would like the Selectmen to reconsider their switching buildings with the Planning Board and Board of Health. They could use grant money to renovate the Old Town Hall. Ralph responded that the Strategic Planning Committee is looking into building use and replacement and asks the COA to give them a little more time. The committee is currently in the process of assessing all town buildings to see if they can repair the buildings or replace them.

Discussed wells and septic systems. Ralph said there are grants available but we have to have the buildings evaluated. Discussed the need for a project manager. Jeff said he would like the COA to hold off moving until the assessments have been done. Barbara is asking permission to have a contractor remove moldy boards and repaint their center. Permission given by the Selectmen. Mary Turek suggested looking into temporary portable buildings. Kathleen Segrin from the Board of Health asked that a mold certified specialist advise on the procedures before work starts. Motion by Rosario, second by Jeff to encumber whatever money the COA has left in their accounts to pay for the repair work.

### July 8, 2013

*Present: Jeff Gray, Patrick Barrett, Rosario Messina, Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent, Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant*

Discussed the structure of the Selectmen's meetings. Patrick addressed this item first, explaining that in his tenure as Selectman he has always invited the public to attend the meetings and encouraged input from the public, however the meetings have gotten away from an orderly structure. We need to move into a structure so that everyone can still have their say but in an orderly manner. We do not want to derail the good work we have accomplished. We will take questions and comments once the person has been recognized by the chairperson. Jeff responded that he takes part of the responsibility for the meetings getting out of hand. He is new as chairperson and is learning the process. Jeff invited Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko in to review the Open Meeting Law.

Dolores reviewed the most updated version of the Open Meeting Law, presenting a copy of the law plus checklists for preparing agendas, minutes of meetings, and executive sessions. She explained how the agenda is created, that the chair of each committee approves the agenda. All items to be added to the agenda get approval by the chair, and the agenda must include the date, time, and location of the meeting. The agenda must reach the Town Clerk's office 48 hours before the meeting, excluding Friday, Saturday and Sunday and legal holidays, which means that if a meeting is to be held on a Monday the posting must reach the Clerk by Thursday. The agenda must contain all of the topics to be discussed. Any votes or action must also be included on the agenda.

Discussed minutes of meetings. The minutes should track with the agenda and include all votes, motions, and names of persons making motions and votes. They should include an accurate summary of the discussion of each item. Discussion followed regarding executive sessions. Dolores reviewed penalties and fines for not following the Open Meeting Law.

Steve provided Highway Department updates, presenting his weekly progress report. Rosario would like a little more detail, Jeff and Patrick are good with the report as submitted.

Reviewed and signed Chapter 90 final reimbursement

for North and South Beech Plain Road. Discussed the road status report being worked on by Berkshire Regional Planning which will be a definitive document on the status of all town roads. Steve reviewed his philosophy regarding the town's roads. He has been working on the dirt roads to get them in good shape so that during an emergency you can get from the dirt road to the paved road. He reported that drainage and grading of the dirt roads has been greatly improved.

Discussed Strap Grants. Alice Boyd commented that she has worked on three grants for other towns and explained that they are very difficult to obtain. Sandisfield does not meet a lot of the required criteria. We have applied twice in the recent past unsuccessfully.

Patrick commended Tryon Construction Co. for their diligence in appreciating the dirt roads and the passage of their equipment on the dirt roads.

Reviewed follow up letter from Kathy Stevens from Mass DOT confirming the bidding process the Town uses. She also stated the same exact process is used in several other towns in her area. Rosario will follow up with town counsel.

Mowing continues, and beaver problems continue. The Highway Department spends two days a week with a machine fixing the problems created by beavers. Steve is working on getting a permit from the Board of Health to trap and relocate problem beavers.

Discussed the Town Administrator job description. Dolores asked that the Selectmen consider adding to the job description that this person be the liaison between the Selectmen and Town Counsel and also be the person in charge of bidding and purchases. All Selectmen are agreeable to this. The Town Management Review Committee will not be involved in the interview process. It will be up to the Selectmen to interview for the job. Rosario will have Town Counsel put together the ad for the job.

Discussed an issue that occurred at the transfer station. The issue has been addressed.

Discussed Town Counsel. Patrick was not present at the meeting in which a new counsel was voted on and would like to know who was selected. Rosario and Jeff made a motion at a previous meeting to hire Ed McCormick.

Alice Boyd in to review a grant opportunity for the town through Massachusetts Housing Authority. The grant will be to help to educate residents on starting new businesses, which could help create jobs in town. She is fairly certain we would get the grant, which she will write at no cost to the town. The Selectmen agree that this is a terrific project and thank Alice again for her work. She presented a letter for signature allowing her to go forward with the grant. Her letter was reviewed and signed.

Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to appoint Lisa Leavenworth to the Recreation Committee and Donald Peet to the Historical Commission.

Reviewed and discussed the report from the Building Inspector listing areas of concern on town buildings.



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Some issues are currently being addressed. Copies of the reports will be given to the Strategic Planning Committee.

Reviewed and signed one-day alcohol permits for the American Legion and for the Sandisfield Arts Center. Reviewed and signed Farm Stand license for Kathy Jacob. Maria Domato dropped of a draft of the rental agreement between the American Legion and the Recreation Committee. Barbara Cormier discussed work to be done in the COA center.

### July 22, 2013

*Present: Jeff Gray, Patrick Barrett, Rosario Messina, Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent, Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant*

Jeff and Dolores reviewed the open meeting law. Dolores reviewed an email received from Town Counsel confirming Dolores' review of the open meeting law that she presented at the last Selectmen's meeting.

Ron Pachulski in to review his concerns with his neighbor George Munson. George and Eleanor Munson present. Ron addressed Police Chief Michael Morrison regarding his many requests for a police report from a call he made regarding the Munson property. Chief Morrison explained that he has responded and explained on multiple occasions to Ron that there was no criminal violations, that the complaints were of a civil nature and did not require a report. Chief Morrison reiterated that this was a civil dispute that would need to be pursued in the court system. Ron explained that when he was at the Oct. 9, 2012, Selectmen's meeting that we discussed what was considered external evidence of a business. Mr. Munson has cleared all materials and only has the one allowed sign showing his business. Ron feels that Mr. Munson still has a satellite dish in his front yard that needs to be removed. George explained that there has been a dish in that same spot since 1992 and that it is connected to his house for personal use. Chief Morrison questioned why this has come before the Selectmen. Patrick explained that the bylaws refer to "external evidence of a business" and since the Selectmen received this complaint they are required to follow up and address the complaint. Several local businessmen were present at this meeting and expressed the need for bylaw changes, that we have many home-based businesses in town with signs on their vehicles and some equipment in their yard needed to operate their business. Discussed signs on vehicles. It was pointed out that there are people who work out of town with the business sign/logo on their vehicles. Ron Pachulski feels this is an additional sign and should not be allowed. Kathy Jacobs responded that the Strategic Planning Committee is looking into Zoning Bylaw revisions that would accommodate business in town. Jeff is okay with the permitted sign in the yard and the signs on vehicles. He will also follow up with the Planning Board as they are in charge of the Zoning Bylaws. Jeff asked Ron Pachulski if he understood that the satellite dish he is concerned about is indeed for the Munson's home personal use. Ron confirmed that he did.

Marie Domato in to request that the War Monument

at the Old Town Hall be moved to the town property on Route 8 near the American flag. Jeff would also like to add monuments to honor all veterans of all wars. All the Selectmen agree and will proceed with this once the Route 8 bridge project is complete. Ralph Morrison will contact the person in charge of the bridge project and ask if they would pour the pad for the monument with excess concrete they may have from the bridge. Patrick commented that this would also fulfill the Wilbers' request to mark their donated property. Maria is also looking into a military appropriation from the American Legion.

Marie Domato and Robbin Campetti in to present a rental agreement between the American Legion and the Recreation Committee. The agreement will last 10 years, with a cost of \$3,000 for years one and two and \$1,000 for each of the remaining eight years, plus the cost of electricity and trash removal. The agreement will be void should the American Legion unit cease to exist. We will forward the agreement to Town Counsel for review.

Steve presented Highway Department updates, presenting a Chapter 90 project request for the West St. culvert. Rosario confirmed that after discussing with Town Counsel that we have indeed been using the correct bidding process and use of the contract. Project request reviewed and signed by all. Chapter 90 project request for re-lining the large culvert on New Hartford Road has been reviewed and approved by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Ralph asked about completing New Hartford Road. Steve explained that in the beginning of this year the state was appropriating \$500,000 for Chapter 90 for FY2014, an amount that has now been cut to \$128,000. Therefore, there is not enough to finish New Hartford Road. He will do the best job he can with the available funding. Last year's Chapter 90 appropriation was \$362,000. Steve explained how he is prioritizing the work due to the delay and lack in funding and also the delay in the Selectmen approving the Chapter 90 request for the West Street culvert. He will now have to deal with school buses and summer traffic.

Discussed the impact attenuator barrier at the bridge at Sears Road on Route 57. It was hit again by a vehicle that left the scene so we have no one to go after to pay for the repair. Steve has placed new arrow signs and will add a few more.

Jeff discussed with Mass DOT the bridge railings on the Clam River bridge near the Silverbrook store. They suggested replacing the rails with wooden rails for now. Mass DOT reviewed the bridge. Since it is in worse shape than they originally thought, Mass DOT may be putting it on a list to repair.

Rosario asked about Fox Road speed limit.

Discussed the answering machine at the Town Garage. The message does include a cell phone number to call if no one answers at the garage. Rosario would like a copy of Steve's daily record book of work.

Discussed having a Special Town Meeting to appropriate money from the Stabilization Account to replace the roof at the Town Hall Annex. A Special

Town Meeting will be scheduled for August 14.

The Strategic Planning Committee requests an article on the warrant to appropriate \$30,000 to pay for the hiring of a consultant to fill out the application for the license to have a medical marijuana dispensary site and to pay the application fee. David went into detail on the application process, that the \$30,000 is a one-time non-refundable investment and followed by a detailed presentation of the entire process. Dolores suggested they have an informational meeting before the Special Town Meeting as this is a very big move for the town. The Board agreed.

Teresa DellaGiustina asked if other towns around us are applying for this permit. David does not know of any other towns, which he feels would increase our chance of getting approval for the license. Kathy Jacobs emphasized that there are no guarantees that we will get the license but feels it is worth trying. Jeff reviewed some of the items from the conference call that involved the Selectmen and the committee. He appreciates all the work the committee has put into this project, but he wants to make sure we present the pros along with the cons of having this facility in town. At some point the town will have to produce 70 percent of the marijuana for the dispensary, which will involve building a facility, security, and additional town employees. Patrick addressed the comment David Hubbard made about Town employees needing to perhaps give a little more of their time and not have an "it's not my job" attitude. Patrick expressed how dedicated our employees are and how much they actually go above and beyond their duties for the Town. We will add an article to the warrant for \$30,000.

The Strategic Planning Committee would like an additional article for \$10,000 to hire a project manager who would be charged with following through all projects and work with contractors and sub-contractors. The \$10,000 would be for a scenario estimate for building repair or replacement.


Reviewed and signed a one day all alcohol permit for the Sandisfield Fire Department, Inc., for their steak roast.

John Skrip reviewed three replies in the websites suggestion box. One was for ideas for the Green property, one was for a seasonal camp ground at Yanner Park, and one regarding the gas station/convenience store.

Discussed the billing for Town Counsel. Rosario explained that we will be billed quarterly.

### July 29, 2013

*Present: Jeff Gray, Rosario Messina, Stephan Harasyko, Road Superintendent, Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant. Absent: Patrick Barrett*

Reviewed and discussed the warrant for the Special Town Meeting to be held on Wednesday, August 14, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall. Warrant approved and signed by the Selectmen. Dolores will contact the Constable to post. 

## Stones on Stones

Cont'd from p.1

*At the top of a windblown, rock-strewn Sandisfield hill, the land has been restored to some sense of fertility by cows. These pastures are good for just that, cows. They can't be tilled, except to build rock walls.*

Photo: Brigitte Ruthman



An excavator buried one wall to allow a more important crop of grass a few years ago. Its demise was only temporary though. The rocks resurface every spring. A tractor, rather than a stone boat, is employed to move them. But I wonder if maybe the piles that accumulate might just spill back over the ground. And I wonder if the manure pile could keep up with it. Snow erases the competition, creating a perfectly flat white plain.

I rebuilt one of the stone walls around the flower garden. It keeps cows out and serves an aesthetic role after the blooms have died back. I wondered as I unearthed the deeper portions of the old wall what hands might have held and fitted them.

I understand the value of thick, flat granite and quartz. Fitting them together is like toying with a boxed cardboard puzzle – each piece needs to fit correctly to the one beside it. The rock must be angled slightly inward and over the joint below it. But unlike the boxed puzzle, there is never a single correct piece. It's best to have a pile to choose from.

A nice rock that catches my eye is worth the effort to move it – even if it's in the woods by itself. Once Chuck Nelson hauled for me just such a rock that I had found by chance while

turkey hunting. It had served as a perfect flat step for a building long gone and now serves as the step at my back door.

Tree roots and heaving ground have sent many of the old walls asunder. Thieves occasionally make off with the easily accessible cap rocks – the flat stones used to top the walls and keep moisture from penetrating. Sometimes they steal entire walls. A few towns have enacted laws to forbid their removal.

The old walls that wind through this farmland seem random, though each was laid by design. A small enclosure cleared of bigger rocks at one end of the woodland once surrounded a school yard. The well is there, and a few old apple trees. Deer wander through a low point in the wall to find the gnarly fruit.

The rocky land beyond the enclosure was likely left to pasture and not crops. One old wall courses through the middle of it. Winding down the hill, it sets atop a foundation of huge, partially buried rocks that still hold it straight and firm.

Stones seem to grow in these fields as readily as grass. Jewels maybe. Mostly, I just want to stack them in piles. ♡

*On Sunday morning August 25 we met in the Arts Center for a first reading of "Our Town." It is a splendid play, a great gathering of innocence and dreams.*

*I was reminded of a summer I spent 63 years ago in an old barn in the Maverick woods outside of Woodstock, New York. It required a poem.*

### *The Maverick Theatre*

I slept on a hay bale,  
My ear cocked  
To hear him dancing  
To "The Four Seasons"  
Just next door  
In the big gray barn.

It was the summer of 1950  
And we had gathered  
In the pause just after the war  
To find ourselves a new piano  
On which to play  
Some brave new songs.

The forest was very deep  
Full of poetry and drums.  
Holly Cantine, the anarchist  
Made raisin wine  
And lived in a cave  
With a black flag.

Jock Stockwell and Tiny Weber  
(Lincoln Brigade, so they said)  
Stole some thick sheets of cardboard  
From a New York warehouse  
So we could dress up "Alice In Wonderland"  
In the big gray barn

Everyone was in love  
With someone else that summer.  
I fell right down for Lois Kallen  
So frail,  
Curled up in her cabin,  
Dying of the sugar sick.

Jose Quintero,  
At the very beginning of his day in the sun  
Had brought us together  
To make plays,  
Filling up those thirsty days  
After the war.

Not only was the dancer dancing  
To Vivaldi.  
He had poured a pint of olive oil  
All over himself  
While dancing  
In the big gray barn.

*Val Coleman  
Town Hill Road*

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# A Brand-New Electric Idea

By Larry Dwyer



Here's a new device that might be coming your way, but don't expect to find it at Home Depot. It's a new type of electrical plug being installed by utilities to connect power to your house.

Normally when a tree falls on a power line entering a house or building, the wires either break or pull apart, tearing the wires and conduit (pipe) off the house. Instead of breaking wires or conduit, this device acts like a wall plug inside your home. Tug on the wires, and they disconnect without any damage.

Restoring downed power lines after a storm is a time-consuming and expensive process. By keeping power lines from being damaged in the first place, this device will allow power companies to restore power faster. In the meantime, when the power goes out (which it will, sometime or another), read a book or talk to your family. But most of us in Sandisfield probably already know that. ♡

music and more 13

Saturdays at 4:30 pm

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~ Letters, Lyrics and Music from Chaucer to John Donne

Free pre-concert talk at 3:30pm  
Actor Jonathan Epstein with Calliope, A Renaissance Band

**Sept 21 The Apollo Trio**  
Curtis Macomber, violin; Michael Kannen, cello; Marija Stroke, piano.  
Mozart, Rachmaninov, Schubert

**Sept 28 Anything Goes!**  
Karen Akers sings Cole Porter with Don Rebic, piano

**Oct 5 Award-Winning Authors**  
Hosted by Mitchel Levitas of the NY Times.  
Elizabeth Graver, Robert K. Massie and Katherine Hall Page

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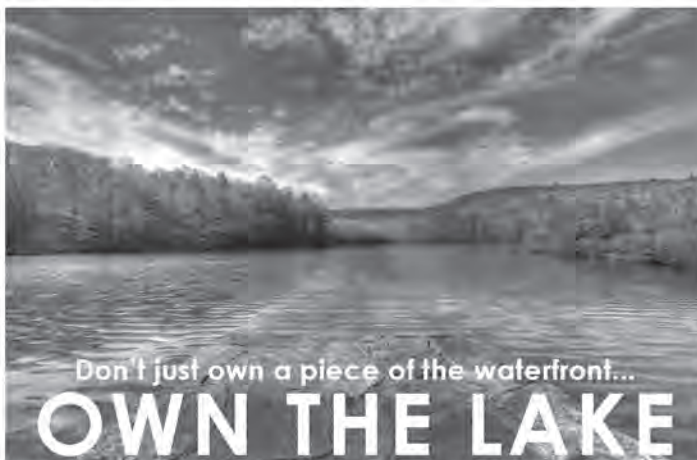
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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## THANKS TO CONNIE

I want to thank Connie for taking on the new Silverbrook Cafe and Country Store. She's working hard to fill a much needed void left by the destruction of the New Boston Store and already the new space has taken on a warmer and more inviting feeling.

And personally, I might add just in time for my grandson who is on his way from Houston who I know will miss his trips to Pete's for his favorite cheese Goldfish. We're already planning on blueberry pancakes at the Silverbrook!

Karen Luks  
Sandisfield Road

## OTIS POULTRY FARM LEFT OUT

I was sorry to see that the Otis Poultry Farm, located on Route 8 in North Otis, which provides poultry products, baked goods and much more, was omitted from the article, "Where can I buy milk or eggs?" in the August issue.

In addition, I thank you for the article about singing at Ron Myers' memorial and want to thank everyone who made this such a wonderful tribute.

Roberta Myers  
Cold Spring Road

P. S. I love The Sandisfield Times!

*Editor's reply: Two favorite destinations were not included in Sandy's map: Otis Poultry Farm and The Other Brother Darryl's fish market. Both are beyond the 5-mile radius for our map and north of our Rt. 23 cut-off. When we repeat the map early next summer (adding more locations, we hope) we'll include a summary list of suppliers close by but not on the map.*

## "BLACK SNAKES" MEAN GONE GEESSE

Thanks for your nice article. I have been Seasonal Supervisor at York Lake since 2010, and I acquired artificial black snakes from Tom Ragusa, DCR waste water supervisor at Tolland State Park. For four years now these black "snakes" have eliminated our geese problem which York Lake had for years.

One correction re fees: there is a \$5 parking fee, but Massachusetts residents over 62 can obtain a senior pass free for life at any DCR park for parking. Season passes are also available. Both can be obtained at York Lake facilities and staff are available Memorial Day to Labor Day. Thanks again, and call 229-8212 for more information.

Bernie Gocłowski  
York Lake Seasonal Supervisor



By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

Our next genealogy assistance class will be Wednesday, Sept. 25, at 6:30 p.m. A special "thank you" to the Sandisfield Cultural Council for making possible our subscription renewal to Ancestry.com International service.

We recently researched a resident of early Sandisfield, Chandler Stratton (1830-1889), for a library patron. Stratton went west with Timothy Babson Smith and his brother Cyrus "Dobie" Smith. With cowboys in California, Stratton helped push cattle through a mountain pass into Utah Territory (later Nevada). Drought in California caused them to drive the cattle into "Smith Valley," which they were the first group of white people to visit. (*Information from Mary Ann Miller.*)

## NEW BOOKS

The Lincoln Deception/David Stewart  
Nowhere Safe/Nancy Bush  
The Mayan Secrets/Clive Cussler  
The Quest/Nelson DeMille  
The Longest Ride/Nicholas Sparks  
Subtle Bodies/Norman Rush  
A Man of His Own/Susan Wilson  
Songs of Willow Frost/Jamie Ford  
Damned if You Don't/Robert B. Parker  
Deadly Heat/Richard Castle  
Killing Custer/Margaret Coel  
Something Borrowed, Someone Dead/M.C. Beaton  
W is for Wasted/Sue Grafton  
Declan's Cross/Clara Neggers  
Deadline/Sandra Brown  
The Final Cut/Catherine Coulter  
Gone/James Patterson  
The Kill List/Frederick Forsyth  
Never Go Back/Lee Child  
Jimmy Stewart: The Truth Behind the Legend/  
Michael Munn  
National Geographic Concise History of the World:  
An Illustrated Time Line/Neil Kagan

Library hours: Mon-Tues: 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.,  
Wed: 6:30-8:30 p.m.; Thurs. 2:00-5:00 p.m., Sat:  
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# Comings and Goings



**IRVING SARNOFF**

1922 – 2013

Irving Sarnoff died August 11 in Charleston, South Carolina, after a long illness. In retirement he and his wife Sue lived in Sandisfield where they had owned a home at the foot of South Beech Plain Road since 1973. Sue died in 2008; declining health resulted in Irving's move to Charleston three years ago.

He had a distinguished career in New York City as a psychology professor, receiving Guggenheim and Fulbright Awards as well as a career award from the National Institute of Mental Health. Irv's work included research, teaching, mentoring graduate students, and writing. He wrote several academic psychology texts and co-authored four books on sexuality, marriage, and creativity with his wife. He wrote poetry, stories, essays, and novels.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1922, Irv married Suzanne Fischbach in 1946; they were married 61 years.

At a graveside service at Sandisfield Cemetery, August 15, Irv's daughter Sara described her father as "a humanist, a pacifist and an atheist, a challenger of authority, and a critic of the establishment. In New York he was able to put his ideas into action, participating in the civil rights and peace movements of the '60s and embracing the counter-culture movement in the '70s."

Sara said: "My father started out as a city boy," but after his retirement and move to Sandisfield he "traded his love of people watching and cultural critiques for watching flowers grow and immersing himself in the changing seasons and cycles of nature. His poetry reflected his love of plants, animals, insects, weather events, stars and other natural phenomena. Irv became a country boy."

Irving is survived by his son David (and his wife Pepper) of Charleston, SC; his daughter Sara (and her husband Jeffrey) of Baltimore, MD; grandchildren Joshua (and Eleanore) Palmer, Noah (and Hana) Palmer, Ayla Sarnoff, and Kia Sarnoff; and great-grandson Lev Benjamin Palmer. He is also survived by his brother and sister-in-law Norman and Ruth Sarnoff, and many nieces and nephews. His brother Paul Sarnoff predeceased him.

In her eulogy Sara said of Irv: "He truly mellowed with age, his relationships with his children and grandchildren deepened over time, and his sense of humor and wonder at the beauty of life never left him. His life was good to the last drop."

Donations may be made to the HHT Foundation International or to the Alzheimer Association through Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, 426 Main St., Great Barrington, MA 01230. Remembrances may be sent to the family through [www.finnertyandstevens.com](http://www.finnertyandstevens.com).



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# NOW HEAR THIS!

*Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.*

*Please send notices for Now Hear This! to [calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org).*

## SEPTEMBER EVENTS

**Sandisfield's Native Sons & Notables Talk** presented by local historian Ron Bernard at the Sandisfield Arts Center on Saturday, September 7 at 10:00 a.m. Come meet prominent, even celebrity, personalities among Sandisfield's native sons and daughters. (\$5)

**Historical Markers Unveiling Ceremony** on Saturday, September 7 at 1:00 p.m. at Sandisfield Center (top of the hill on Route 57). Town officials and State Representative Smitty Pignatelli will attend. Public welcome. Information contact: Ron Bernard, 269-0012.

**Common Thread** a trio of gifted musicians perform guitar, fiddle, viola, and voice at the Sandisfield Arts Center on Saturday, September 7 at 8:00 p.m. (\$10)

**Planning meeting to rescue the American Legion Pavilion.** At the Pavilion, Wednesday, September 11 at 7 p.m. Casual food and soft drinks available. Public welcome. Contact: Maria Domato, 413-258-4578

**History of the Sandisfield Meeting Houses** presented by Ron Bernard on Saturday, September 14 at 10:30 a.m. at the Sandisfield Historical Society, South Sandisfield Meeting House, Route 183. Slide show of vintage photographs and information not included in *Sandisfield Then and Now*. A donation of \$5 is requested. For more information, contact Jo Freedman at 528-4786.

**Mushroom Hunters' Workshop** with Dianna Smith, an internationally known mushroom enthusiast, at the Sandisfield Arts Center on Saturday, September 21 AND Sunday, September 22 at 10:00 a.m. (\$5 per day).

## SEPTEMBER EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

**VFW Events in Winsted** Benefit Dinner on September 18 at 5:30 p.m. (\$7.50); POW MIA Ceremony on September 20 at 6:00 p.m.; Road Kill Games on September 20 at 7:00 p.m.; Steak & Lobster Dinner on September 28 (\$18-\$40). The VFW Post 296 is located at 114 Colebrook River Road.

**Music and More Festival** at The Meeting House in New Marlborough on Saturday, September 7, 21, and 28. The festival features various musical events. September 7 will feature "License My

Roving Hands," letters, lyrics, and music. For more information and price details, visit <http://newmarlborough.org>

## SAVE THE DATE

**Apple Fest Fair** of the Sandisfield Historical Society, South Sandisfield Meeting House, Saturday, October 5, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tag sale, baked goods, lunch fair, raffles, and vendors. If you would like to be a vendor, please contact Marcia Ignace at 258-2898. Hope to see you at the fair.

## 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.

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

**Historical Commission:** Regular meeting, Wednesday, September 25, 7 p.m. at Library.

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Myrna Rosenberg*



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**Donations of all sizes are needed to ensure the continuation of this newspaper.** Please send checks to: *The Sandisfield Times*, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255. For more information visit our website [www.sandisfieldtimes.org](http://www.sandisfieldtimes.org).

Copies of *The Sandisfield Times* are available in Sandisfield at A&M Auto, the Arts Center, the Dump, Post Office, the New Boston Inn, the Silverbrook Café & Country Store, Villa Mia, MJ Tuckers, When Pigs Fly Farm and Town Hall. Copies are also available in Otis at Katie's Market, Papa's Fuel, Otis Library, the Farmington River Diner 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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We welcome submissions, comments and suggestions, including letters to the editor **BY THE 15<sup>TH</sup> OF THE MONTH PRIOR**. We may edit for space, style or clarity. We will try to publish Public Service Announcements when we have room, with priority given to Sandisfield organizations. No portion of the *The Sandisfield Times* may be reproduced without permission.

### Editorial Staff

*Editor: Bill Price, 413-258-3308. Email: [w.billprice@gmail.com](mailto:w.billprice@gmail.com)*

*Production, Distribution, Advertising: Ron Bernard*

*Graphic Design: Tina Sotis*

*Founding Editor: Simon Winchester*

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

*Now Hear This! Laura Rogers-Castro*

*Contributors this issue: Jean Atwater-Williams, Ron Bernard, Alice Boyd, Val Coleman, Larry Dwyer, Dolores Harasyko, Barbara Newsom, Sandy Parisky, Brigitte Ruthman, Simon Winchester*

*Columnists: Tara Beardsley, Laurie Foulke-Green, Josephine Freedman, Susan Galik, David LeBeau*

### How to Contact Us

Letters to the editor:.....[letters@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:letters@sandisfieldtimes.org)  
News, ideas, tips & photos:.....[editor@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:editor@sandisfieldtimes.org)  
Advertising questions: .....[advertising@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:advertising@sandisfieldtimes.org)  
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