

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



Plebis

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume IV, Number 8

November 2013

Riding to Work

THE BEST COMMUTE IN SANDISFIELD

By Bill Price

Teresa Bills rides to work the old-fashioned way. On horseback.

From her home on New Hartford Road, a stone's throw north of the Connecticut line, she saddles her black gelding "Happy" and rides twenty minutes up the road to where she is training four horses. Horses have been Teresa's passion since she was a teenager and she feels very fortunate to be able to do what she loves so close to home.

Like many others in town, Teresa works a second job. She doesn't have far to commute for that job, either, just downstairs to the basement. There, Teresa creates machine-pieced cotton quilts of any size, occasionally from photographs provided by customers.

A dozen of Teresa's hand-made quilts were on display at the Arts Center over the summer. Other exhibits of her work were at the Lowell Quilt Festival in August and at Hancock Shaker Village in September.

Most of her quilt sales are on-line, which suits Teresa just fine. "I seem to be home all the time now," she says. "Then I think, why would I want to go anywhere else. I love it here."

Times: How long have you lived in Sandisfield?

My family built a small cabin on New Hartford Road 27 years ago. We needed a home where we could keep our horses, keep my small pack of dogs, and raise my young boys. We lived in a *Cont'd on p.6*



Photo: Jean Atwater-Williams

"Our Town" Comes to Our Town Don't Miss It.

By Ben Luxon

The cast of "Our Town" has been rehearsing now for five weeks. It sounds a lot but that really means only four hours a week arranged as two two-hour sessions. Even with this little time it has been extremely difficult to organize rehearsals with a cast of 25 players, all with very different commitments and with those 25 actors coming from Sandisfield, Otis, Lee, Norfolk, and Egremont.

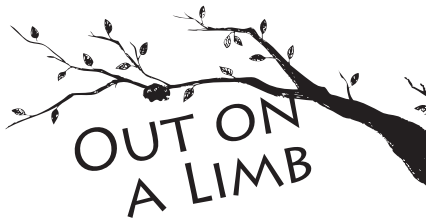
The last act of this very moving play takes place in 1913, exactly a century ago. Yet, in spite of the amazing changes that have taken place over those 100 years, we can still identify with those people and their *Cont'd on p.3*

Meanwhile, at Town Hall . . .

At the Select Board meeting October 28, selectmen discussed next steps in the process of hiring a part-time **town administrator**. A decision has been made on which of the four candidates interviewed in mid-October is the choice of the Board and the three members of the interview committee. Following reference checks, the new administrator will be introduced to the town at the Select Board meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 12.

At a Special Town Meeting, the town passed a warrant to spend \$16,000 to complete the body, equipment, and snow-removal equipment for the town's recently purchased one-ton pickup truck.

The Strategic Planning Committee, co-chaired by Kathy Jacobs and Ralph Morrison, is waiting for delivery of the recommendations from the consultants hired to assess town buildings and whether the town should repair or replace the buildings. The consultants are expected to suggest alternative uses for the buildings in case a new municipal center is recommended. Informational meetings for town residents will be scheduled after the reports are received and reviewed by the committee.



A CHOICE FOR SANDISFIELD

By Bogart Muller

The recent article about the store wars heating up should be quite the wake up call to townspeople who drive Rt. 8 and enjoy the pristine landscape we all pride ourselves in as we leave the Connecticut border, heading into the private forests we call home, thinking of the simple life as we know it out here.

You pass nothing but woods as far as the eye allows. You see birds and other wildlife in their natural habitat, a huge body of water, rivers, cliffs, and old logging roads. You have time to think about what you want to do for the upcoming weekend like split wood or mow the grass or some other outdoor activity you almost can't wait to get to. This is why you live here. To get away from it all.

Oops! You forgot milk! @\$#@%! Outta cigarettes, need coffee, low on gas, just remembered we have no beer, I'm feeling lucky and want to play a scratch-off ticket, who sells that really good maple syrup? I could go for some ice cream ... Xtra Mart is 8 miles back and Otis is fifteen minutes away. What to do?

A store in this area would make things a lot easier for the people asking this question. We are all grateful for the Silverbrook Store, and we should be. Connie has stepped up to the plate in her busy schedule and took a bar/restaurant business to the next level. But, more importantly, she has helped us out by stocking her shelves with the things we could use from time to time and bailing us out from having to travel back to Winsted or up to Otis when that "oh @\$#" moment happens. Her approach is a classic example of those who are innovative and use what resources are readily available. She has a steady flow of people who walk through the door knowing the product they need is already there, including an ATM. The only thing she does not have is the Rt. 8 traffic.

In October, Foresight Land Services surveyed the property along Rt. 8 south of MJ Tuckers where Chandru and Kim Paspuletti plan to construct a gas station and country/package store.

It is believed a store on Rt. 8 would do well with all the cars and trucks that use the busy north/south highway. MJ Tuckers certainly draws a crowd as does Villa Mia on any weekend. New Boston Crane does very well because people driving Rt. 8 see those really cool machines. The New Boston Inn houses travelers from all directions. These are all destination places. People come from near and far just to be at one of these locations for whatever reason. Nowhere on Rt. 8 can you just swing in and grab something and go as you would on the Mass Pike. That may change.

We have a choice, the way I see it. We could go down the road of a chain gas station with flashy

What if things don't work out?

lights and plastered with ad boards or we could have a quaint country store with a little open sign.


Sure, both places would provide us with gas for our cars and diesel for our tractors, but should we give our hard-earned money to a chain outfit from out of town or to someone from the community who knows your name and may allow you to start a "slip" if your cash is running low, like Pete and Susan used to do?

Do we allow the big chain and their bottomless checkbook to bring in out-of-state contracting to develop the site or put the job out to bid locally so some nearby construction company who could really use the work gets the dibs? Are we going to allow the super gas depot to put 30,000 gallons of environmentally unfriendly gas into the

ground when the Farmington West Branch is only a few hundred yards away or would we rather see a smaller tank holding less and be easier to contain should the worst happen? Should we allow Dunkin' Donuts or Subway to lease out real estate and sell us the same exact stuff you can get only a few miles down the road or should we allow a local baker to provide us with one-of-a-kind wholesome foods?

And, in the long run if things don't work, do we see an ugly, abandoned gas station that the boardroom corporation decided to close due to poor numbers and now stands empty because no one wants the pre-fabricated, sheet-metal, brown-field property with 6-foot weeds everywhere? Or do we see a building that could be adapted into another type of store or property because it was built in such a way to accommodate the New England stereotype?

This is no joke, people. Just because you may not live or drive near the new store doesn't mean it won't have an impact on you. If you are that person who forgot Band Aids and you stop at Mighty Mart and they have none, you are out of luck, buddy. If you stop into the classic New England general store and they have no Band Aids on the shelf, I bet they will go into the backroom first aid kit and dig until they find one for you.

Sandisfield, we have a choice. 

Out on a Limb: an op-ed

Subjects should be interesting to most of us and have a strong link to Sandisfield, written by and for Town residents. Address either PO Box 584, Sandisfield, or email editor@sandisfieldtimes.org



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

We enjoy writing, editing, designing, proofing, printing, and distributing the Times every month. We get a kick out of producing the paper and are glad to donate our time and effort.

But the printer, post office, and a couple others want and need to be paid regularly. We have loyal advertisers but, as a tax-exempt organization, we're supposed to live on donations. Please see our Founding Editor's letter inserted into this issue and send us what you can. If the paper used to irritate you and still does, send something anyway. If you like it a little better than you used to, send more. But send something.

Be aware that sending a donation does not automatically get you a subscription. Plus, a subscription is not tax deductible, while a contribution is. Please designate on your check if the amount is for one or the other. If you send one check please indicate the split. Thanks for the help with our bookkeeping.

Our professionally-run website – www.sandisfield-times.org – allows free and easy access for residents who winter part-time elsewhere. As well as a library of every

issue since we began in 2010. The web charges a nominal fee for that. Another small expense.

So please support the paper, which is essentially the only venue in town for regular and detailed news – news that is about to become even more important. For instance:

1. The town is hiring a part-time administrator for the first time in over two centuries. How will that work out for us? And for the new administrator?
2. The town is facing critical expenditures for long-postponed repairs or replacement for all town buildings. We haven't faced a challenge of this magnitude since the New School was erected in 1949. Decisions will affect all of us and our quality of life.
3. The gas pipeline across Beech Plain is threatening a 3-year expansion project that will affect property values, the landscape, and perhaps our safety. The paper will keep you informed as this big story looms closer and more ominous.

Bill Price
West New Boston



When the Leaves Go

When the leaves go,
Taking their bright brass with them
The clarinets remain,
Tall and naked avenues of them
Standing by the side of the road,
The skinny black bishops of winter.
A silent frightening ministry
Of sermon trees
That occasionally will play for me.

Val Coleman
Town Hill Road



"OUR TOWN" *Cont'd from p.1*

lives in a small New England town. Maybe we even wish we had not gone quite so far down the path to our present-day culture. Well, this is one of the aspects of this great American play – it is both moving and thought provoking. We feel confident our amateur cast will do it justice.

**At the Sandisfield Arts Center
November 9, Saturday, 7 p.m.
November 10, Sunday, 3 p.m.**

Our cast ranges in age from 8 to 83 and covers a wide range of professions (we're not all retirees!) It's a very eclectic group of people who are getting a big kick out of being on stage, learning basic stage craft, and becoming one or other of these small town characters. Oh, and having fun!

Central to the play is the story of George and Emily. Act I sees them at high school. Act II they realize they love each other and get married. Act III, well, you should see the play to know what happens in Act III.

The roles for the two young actors who play Emily and George are very demanding. We are so lucky to have two 16-year-old actors, Sasha Nader from Lee as Emily and Reid Sinclair from Norfolk as George. While rehearsing "Our Town" they are also both rehearsing separate high school productions of "Midsummer Night's



Ben Luxon, who plays the role of the Stage Manager and also directs the play, with Sasha Nader in the role of Emily.

Photo: Bill Price

Dream," Reid playing Oberon and Sasha, Puck. The unusual acting talents of these two young people are already in considerable demand. Many of you will have seen Sasha performing a number of witty skits in Anni Crofut's Cabaret evenings during the last couple of years.

Last year the Art Center's play "Rascals" was a large-scale production celebrating the 250 years of Sandisfield's history. It was enjoyed by all who attended. "Our Town" is a very appropriate

follow-on to the history of our own town and is the most ambitious theatrical venture the Center has ever undertaken.

So please do your best to support us and we assure you of a heart-warming evening in the theater, and not at the Mahaiwe, the Barrington Stage, the Berkshire Theater, or Shakespeare and Co., but right here on your own doorstep! 🍷

Since last year's performance of "Rascals" sold out, the Center is offering "Our Town" on a Saturday night and a Sunday matinee. Tickets are available online at www.sandisfieldartscenter.org or at the door on a first come-first-served basis. Online tickets are recommended for both performances.

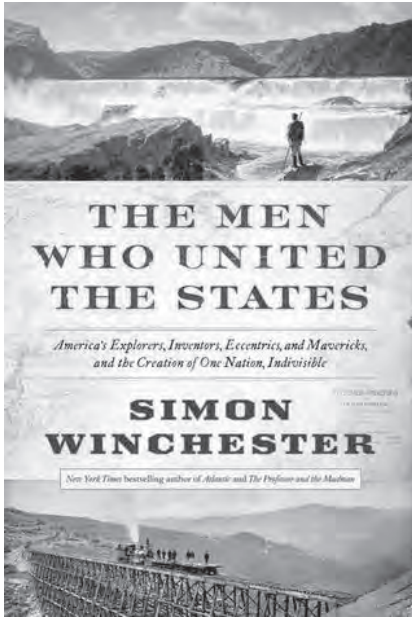
Rabies Outbreak

Kim Spring, Sandisfield Animal Warden, reports a current rabies outbreak involving wild animals and domestic livestock. She warns the public to stay away from wildlife that may seem to be acting unusually: lethargic, aggressive, walking in circles, falling, etc. If you see something unusual, call her at 258-4450 or Police Chief Michael Morrison, 258-4742.

Local Author on Bestseller List

By Bill Price

Simon Winchester's new book, *The Men Who United the States*, published mid-October, has debuted at #13 on The New York Times best-seller list for November 3. It will climb from there.



That's real potatoes for any writer, especially a writer from Sandisfield. We'd have to reach back to Edmund Hamilton Sears to find a writer from Sandisfield as successful. Sears, you'll remember, wrote "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear," a carol which has been sung every Christmas since 1850.


A U.S. citizen for only two years, Simon has written nearly two dozen books about almost everywhere else in the world, but not America, until now.

The Men Who United the States happens to be a very readable look at how the country became united almost in spite of itself. Focusing on the achievements of unexpected individuals, Simon details how the work of explorers, strivers, inventors, thinkers, outsiders, and innovators brought the country together in unanticipated and unexpected unity.

He says, "Norway is united because everyone is Norwegian. Japan, the same. It's the same with most other countries. But the United States is a mishmash of Americans of all backgrounds and complexions. How was it possible that this group of people actually united themselves to form a unified country?"

Many of the individuals outlined are famous; most are not: From Lewis and Clark finding their way across the country to Eisenhower stuck in American mud on a 1919 cross-country military trek that 35 years later helped spur the interstate highway system; from the individual who proposed the construction of the Erie Canal from his jail cell to the building of the transcontinental railroads; from radio and television to today's constantly expanding internet system. Simon's book is a reminder in a time of apparently irreconcilable differences that we are all of one country, one people, and how we got that way.

In the epilogue, he turns local, writing of the founding and growth of *The Sandisfield Times*, the paper you hold in your hands, and how the paper "is now popular, needed" and that it has brought the town "a common sense of unity."

He writes that the story of the U.S. – like the *Times* – is still developing. "After all, the very notion of change informs the Preamble to the United States Constitution: 'We the people ... in order to form a more perfect union ...' The union, it was recognized back in the late eighteenth century, has to be made ever more perfect all the time. Our small-town newspaper is just one more step on the way. This is how it is done – our way, the American way." 

The Men Who United the States is available at the Sandisfield Library.

Simon will discuss the research and travels that went into writing his book at the Arts Center on November 30, 4 p.m. Tickets online at sandisfieldartscenter.org.

You can hear Simon talk about his book in a recent interview with Scott Simon on NPR at www.npr.org/2013/10/12/230492239/from-divided-states-a-united-nation-thanks-to-these-men.



Sandisfield Historical Society Christmas Fair

Join in the Fun & Excitement

Sat. December 7
10am- 2pm

Vendor Set-up Time: 8 AM

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Sandisfield Historical Commission

PROGRAM FOR OLD HOUSE NAME PLAQUES ANNOUNCED

HISTORICAL COMMISSION TO COORDINATE

By Eric Pachulski




An example of the sign designed for local antique houses.

Last year's 250th celebrations and historical education programs increased awareness, interest, and pride about Sandisfield's rich heritage, especially in view of the many antique homes here. As a result, several residents have expressed a desire to install name plaques on their houses and have sought guidance from the Commission.

After researching possible styles and formats and suppliers, the Commission recommends Ghi Sign Service of Canaan, Conn. A family business for more than 50 years, the company makes all kinds of signs for commercial, municipal, and residential customers and comes highly recommended. Owner Phil Ghi's old house name-plaques are common on homes in Litchfield County as well in parts of the Berkshires, for example in Egremont.

Under an informal agreement with the Commission, Ghi will produce high quality plaques for Sandisfield customers for \$47.86 (includes sales tax). This reasonable price is a substantial discount to what an individual might otherwise expect to pay.

The plaque comes in one size of 12 by 10 inches with scalloped corners. The background is slightly off-white for best effect. The lettering is New Times Roman, all capitals, approximately 1½ inches high (see example). Letters are made of black vinyl-adhesive which is the material most commonly used on exterior commercial signage today. The plaques resemble wood but are in fact made of PVC and extremely durable. They require no maintenance and will retain a sharp look for many years. Most home owners will prefer to affix the plaque to their house's facade. Pre-drilled holes make for easier application, especially to the clapboards on the many early houses in Sandisfield.

The Commission believes that standardization of such plaques around the community is important to convey a uniform and connected image for the Town. The program is available to any home owner regardless of the age of a house. In New England the custom for house naming typically employs the first known family's patriarch's name although there are many exceptions. Most of the oldest houses in Sandisfield have been researched and are already named. For information about particular houses, refer to the town section histories in *Sandisfield Then and Now: 1762-2012*. 

If you are interested or wish more information please contact Commission member Ron Bernard at 413 269-0012 or by email at Ronbernard@aol.com.



AT THE MARKER CEREMONY AT SANDISFIELD CENTER

Among those who attended the September 7 ceremony were: standing left to right: Barry Freedman, State Representative Smitty Pignatelli, Ron Bernard, Selectman Patrick Barrett, Eric Pachulski, Don Peet, Alice Boyd, Flora Parisky, and Sandy Parisky. Seated: Ellen Croibier, Jo Freedman, June Wink, Val Coleman, Susie Crofut, Ben Luxon, and Dassy Herman.

Photo: Peter Levine

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Lauren Paul, Dipl. Ac

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Acupuncture and Shiatsu

RIDING TO WORK

Cont'd from p. 1

tent for the first four months. Living so close to nature definitely suited me, and the beauty of the Berkshires helped inspire the artwork that was brewing inside.

Times: How did you learn quilting?

Actually through the Sandisfield Cultural Council. I attended a quilt class taught 26 years ago by Jeanne Buck that was sponsored by the council. Jeanne taught us to do all the piecing and quilting by hand. I began to learn all the traditional blocks and methods of quilt making. I was hooked!

Jeanne taught a second class in which we made a sampler, learning all of the techniques that we would ever need. Well, I hit the ground running, almost always keeping a project with me whether sitting at little league games or watching TV at night. The beauty of hand work is that it travels so well!



"Unbridled"



"In Flight"

I am forever in debt to Jeanne Buck and the town of Sandisfield for opening this door for me. I cannot imagine my life without quilts. In

the beginning, I just wanted to learn how to make a simple patchwork quilt and now I feel that if I can imagine it then I can sew it!

Times: How do you make the quilts?

I realized that if I was ever going to complete all of the ideas that were swimming in my head, I would have to embrace the sewing machine. I purchased one and proceeded to learn every new technique that I came across. About 6 years ago, I took my first class with Ruth McDowell, the guru of the pieced art quilt from photographs. I finally found my passion and all of my work is now in this style.

Times: Horses and nature are important features of many of your quilts.

Having trained horses for the better part of my life, they are naturally one of my favorite subjects. And many of my art quilts were inspired by photos that I have taken while riding Happy on the incredible trails and dirt roads of Sandisfield. Happy likes these excursions in search of art in nature because he stands around munching leaves while I draw or take photographs.

During one of our more amusing sessions, Happy looked on while I tried to get the little red efts that were crawling on a log to hold still so that I could draw them. Efts are the small creatures that we often mistake for a redbacked salamander. It was a tricky, but I was very pleased with my quilt of newts that resulted from my sketches.

For years, I would take in the breathtaking scenery that surrounds us and imagine the landscapes in blocks of fabric. In the beginning, I didn't have the technical ability to sew the quilts that I imagined, but I kept at it and now feel that I have achieved a level that allows me to express myself artistically. It can be a painstaking process of drawing, drafting into sewing lines, making templates, and sewing one piece at a time until I have a finished top. I then draw with thread on my piece to quilt it. I sometimes embellish with a little textile paint. It is a true labor of love and I thoroughly enjoy every part of the process.

When I am out in the woods on my horse I am in such a peaceful and centered state that I sometimes feel that I am a part of the art that I am trying to create. Being in such a state of



Teresa Bills, horse trainer and quilter, with her horse, Happy

quiet, connected with my horse and connected to myself, lets the art flow when I get back to my studio. It's a bit difficult to describe, but I believe that it's the magic of our Sandisfield forests. Sometimes I feel like I have left the planet. It's a wonder that I ever make it home! 🐾

For more information, see Teresa Bills' website www.tearosequilt designs.com

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HUNTER'S CHECKING STATION



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Still Breathing After All These Years

BAD NEWS AND THEN MORE BAD NEWS

By Larry Dwyer

This past September, I had my birthday and got the worst present ever.

I had a heart attack. We were back in the city. After waking up from chest pains at midnight and not being able to sleep by 3:00 a.m., I said to wife, Jane, "I think I'm having a heart attack." So we went to the hospital and after a few tests I got more bad news. I am diabetic.

I've had bad hair days in my life, but this was worse than that. To make a long story shorter, I had a clogged artery in my heart and had a stent put in. That wasn't too bad, but the next four days in the hospital being stuck with needles and tied to an EKG monitor got old fast. Then the pills started coming. When I finally went home, I started feeling miserable and sorry for myself. My life had changed, new diet, new regimen, "Who needs this? My life is finished." I thought.

I saw several doctors during the next few days, and I had my meds adjusted. I finally felt well enough for us to come up to Sandisfield. The day before we left the city, I took a 20-minute walk and it felt like I had run a marathon. That was not a good sign. After we arrived in Sandisfield, I felt better than I had in a long time. Was it the fresh mountain air, or was it because the cardiologist changed my medication? Maybe it was a little of both.

So I took a 20-minute walk to West Lake and back and felt pretty good. Then my wife and I drove to Lee to buy some groceries, and I got a haircut. I had been looking pretty shaggy by this time. Of course I told the barber what happened, and I guess he's heard the same story many times before. A good barber doesn't mind

hearing about your heart attack.

So we drove home and on the way, I told Jane to leave me by Bosworth Road. "I'll walk home from here," I said. It was a 20-minute walk to the house. On the way I noticed these black and orange woolly caterpillars on the ground. When I got home, I looked then up on the internet. They're called Woolly Bear Caterpillars. They're the larvae of the Isabella Tiger Moth and can be found in many cold regions. In the spring when they pupate, they only have a few days to mate. "I'm glad I'm not one of those," I thought. I'm looking at years to live, not days.

You know, I wanted to write a column about bugs. There are 900,000 different kinds of insects in the world so I figured I'd never run out of something to write about. I pitched my idea

After we arrived in Sandisfield, I felt better ...

at one of the Sandisfield Times meetings, but the editor said, "No bugs." Well, I guess I'll have to scratch that idea.

Lately I've been thinking about the movie, "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" where a man walks through street with a cart load of dead people and calls out, "Bring out your dead." If it's me you're looking for, keep moving. I'm getting better.

By the way, if it wasn't for my wife Jane, I wouldn't be getting better. Thank you, Jane, for standing by me. I know it was difficult, but I couldn't have done it without you. Love, Larry. ♡



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Shooting the Farmington

Kayakers and canoers raced down the Farmington River through Sandisfield on Sunday, October 20. Taking part were individuals from the Appalachian Mountain Club from points in the Berkshires and New England and from New York City and Boston. About 30 boaters took part in a slalom race organized by the New England Slalom Series at the turnout at Mile Marker 7 on Rt. 8.



A highlight for many participants was shooting "the washing machine" rapids about a quarter mile north of New Boston. At the end of the day, the participants gathered south of Sandisfield where the Farmington empties into the Colebrook River Reservoir. In years past the group has gathered at the American Legion Pavilion for a rendezvous and cookout.

The river-running event is planned to coordinate with the annual lowering of the Otis Reservoir (for cleaning), which assures plenty of water for rapids. 

Photos: Bill Price

Through the Washing Machine






BRIDGE WATCH: OUR NEW BRIDGE

Both lanes have been completed on the new bridge across the Farmington at Rts. 8 and 57, and within a few weeks it is possible the traffic lights will come down.



Meanwhile, "2014" has already been inscribed on one corner of our bridge, anticipating it's completion next year. 




Grants to be Announced by Local Cultural Council

By John Skrip

The Sandisfield Cultural Council received 25 grant applications from Sandisfield and surrounding towns and organizations. Since the applications totaled almost \$14,000 and the council is operating with a grant from the Commonwealth of \$4250, we will not be able to fund all the applications. Those that have been refused will be notified by Nov 18.

The applications that were accepted in whole or in part will be notified by January 1, 2014. Successful applicants will then be asked to complete the grant in accordance with their application and submit final documents for payment. All payments are made through the Sandisfield Treasurer's Office and approved by the Board of Selectmen.

The council is seeking additional members. Some of our current five members have served for many years. Please contact any council member if you would like to help Sandisfield in this way. We encourage all residents to consider joining us. The council meets about four times a year to review applications and make decisions regarding the grant process. Current members are Nina Carr, Connie Canty, Clair English, Peter Levine, and John Skrip. 

OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

At Salem State University, **Katrina Rock** received the Hyman S. Kramer Memorial Scholarship awarded to a student enrolled in the School of Nursing.



If the weather holds, **Riiska Brook Orchards** will be open until the weekend before Thanksgiving. The Columbus Day holiday was "one of our best weekends ever," Barbara Riiska said. "The combination of a 3-day weekend, beautiful weather, and plenty of fall foliage brought out a lot of people who wanted to pick apples."



A town resident of Country Circle Estates off Rt. 23, **Aimee Raifstanger**, had a too-close encounter with a moose October 8. While driving her 2013 Subaru Outback east on Rt. 102 near the Big Y supermarket, she saw a bull moose crossing the road in front of an on-coming car which hit the moose and knocked the animal into Aimee's path. Aimee said, "I saw the moose trot in front of the other car. Neither of us could miss it. I've seen moose in my driveway, but this one seemed a lot bigger coming toward my car." The Outback won't be out of the repair shop until December. No people involved were seriously hurt, but the moose was killed on impact.

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A JAZZ AND POETRY EVENING IN SANDISFIELD

By Hilde Weisert

The best events, in my memory, are the small and unexpected gems: “Once on This Island” and “Driving Miss Daisy” in their debuts in the tiny, rickety, up-a-steep-and-winding staircase of the first Playwrights Horizons space; “A Chorus Line” at the Public Theater before the buzz and Broadway; and, on October 5th, “Jazz & Poetry/Poetry & Jazz” at the Sandisfield Arts Center.



Thanks to a small number of passionate and capable local arts lovers and citizens, the Center has been evolving for nearly two decades. It has now really arrived as a first-class venue for music and theater. I hadn't been there since recent improvements – a bright, welcoming vestibule

when you enter, then in the upstairs theater space new and comfortable chairs have replaced the hard pews, and the new floor shines. The place looks like a million dollars, and even includes a handicap lift.

So the surroundings raised my expectations a little – I'm a poet myself and a jazz fan, but I never expect much out of “Jazz and Poetry” type events, fearing someone snapping their fingers while reading Ferlinghetti, backed by a saxophonist wandering off into an unintelligible solo. But the lighting was just right, warm and glowing, and on stage were simply a piano, a bass, and a drum set, plus the two readers, a woman and a man, seated, looking well prepared, books in their laps.

Skimming the program raised my expectations even more – some of my favorite jazz tunes mixed with some of my favorite poems, and others that had promising titles or authors (the song “Je Ne T'Aime Pas” by Kurt Weill; poems “Some Days the Sea” by Richard Blanco, the young poet from President Obama's second inauguration, and “The Wind One Brilliant Day” by Antonio Machado). The poems spanned centuries and cultures (Rumi, Neruda, Kabir, Hafiz, along with our own Roethke, Collins, Bishop). Clearly an interesting, knowledgeable, eclectic mind was at work here.

From the first notes, the program didn't disappoint. The piano was perfectly in tune and rich

beyond its baby grand size; the bass and drums came through perfectly, whether as part of the trio or in solos. The acoustics were so good that all the sung and spoken words were crisp and the music enveloping without being harsh – a full dynamic range from soft parts soft but clearly audible to rousing climaxes that didn't tax the eardrums.

The musicians, The Sir William Trio – William Stillinger, bass; James Argiro, piano; Gregory Caputo, drums; and vocalist Stacey Grimaldi – more than lived up to their impressive bios. Ben Luxon and Anni Crofut, the local readers, were intelligent in their reading, doing justice to a wide and not undemanding range of poems, subjects, and styles, projecting them in the best tradition of the spoken word without being theatrical or, even worse, sing-song poet-y. William Stillinger of the Trio was the eclectic person who put the program together.

So thanks to them, and also to the directors of the Arts Center and to Sandy and Flora Parisky, the program coordinators who first heard the program in Connecticut and brought it here – people who believe that small and first-class can go together, that a little town can do big things, that art matters.

I could easily imagine this program in a large venue with an audience of over a thousand, but it was even more fun to find it under the roof of our own Arts Center, in the company of neighbors. ♡

For those who might want to revisit the evening's pleasures or were unable to attend, links to some of the poems can be found at Hilde Weisert's [Veterinary Medicine and Literature blog](http://veterinarymedicineandliteratureblog.blogspot.com), <http://veterinarymedicineandliteratureblog.blogspot.com>.



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Sandisfield Historical Society



By Josephine Freedman

The Apple Fest was held on Saturday, October 5. After a few morning clouds we had a perfect autumn day.

We want to thank Riiska Brook Orchards for their generous donation of apples. Likewise, thanks to everyone who baked the cookies, pies, and cakes that were sold at the fair. The proceeds will help support the maintenance of the historic Meeting House. Many Sandisfield and Connecticut residents stopped by to purchase pumpkins and tag sale items while they had a hamburger or hot dog lunch under the tent. We thank you all for your support.

Our Annual Wine and Cheese reception will take place on Sunday, November 3, from 2 to 4 p.m., at the South Sandisfield Meeting house on Route 183. This will be an opportunity to meet your neighbors as well as visit an interesting and historically important building. A new permanent historical sign has been installed there. Have you seen it? The event is fun and free and open to the public. Please stop in and meet your neighbors and new friends and show support for the Society.

The final regular board meeting of 2013 will be on November 9 at 11:00 a.m.. A by-laws revision committee will propose changes to be voted by the membership in attendance. All members in good standing (paid-up dues) are requested to attend this important meeting.

Mark your calendars for the annual Christmas Crafts Fair on Saturday, December 7, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., at the Firehouse #2 on Route 57. The event is sponsored by the Historical Society.

Information: call Jo Freedman, 258-4786

THE SANDISFIELD LIBRARY



By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

Our next genealogy classes will be November 20, Wednesday, and December 18, Wednesday. Both classes at 6:30 p.m.

NEW BOOKS FOR NOVEMBER:

- Candlelight Christmas/Susan Wiggs
- A Seaside Christmas/Sherryl Woods
- Four Doors/Richard Paul Evens
- Just One Evil Act/Elizabeth George
- Silencing Eve/Iris Johansen
- The Men Who United the States/Simon Winchester
- Dust/Patricia Cornwell
- Sycamore Row/John Grisham
- Take Down Twenty/Janet Evanovich
- Cross My Heart /James Patterson
- Miss Kay's Duck Commander Kitchen/ Kay Robertson
- DVD: Behind The Scenes at Downton Abby/ Season 4

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 Directed by Benjamin Luxon



SATURDAY, 30TH 4 PM

Simon Winchester



The Making of
The Men Who United the States

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PROPOSED PIPELINE EXPANSION ACROSS BEECH PLAIN

NOTHING IN IT FOR THE TOWN

When I bought my home on Beech Plain Road in 1964 I noticed the markers for the Tennessee Gas pipeline. I was curious but unconcerned. But readers of Rachel Carson's famous book, *Silent Spring*, were put on notice that business interests can endanger public health with impunity. Up to that point the public had rarely opposed "progress."

But why did Tennessee Gas come here in the first place in the early 1950s? Was it because they knew the opposition would be weak. Of course they did. And now they are back. Again.

I suspect that originally only local landowners raised concerns but their feeble protests were ignored. They had to stand by and watch as countless beautiful trees and venerable old stone walls laid by the hands of their ancestors were destroyed. They had to witness acres of their land ripped up to be forever occupied by giant pipes lying just a few feet below the surface restricting future building or usage of virtually any kind

while they continued to pay the property taxes. They later would learn first-hand that the threat of escaping gas and possible explosion was not so hypothetical after all. In 1981 there was in fact a near-explosion while the company was installing another line.

By then, however, I was here to see the invasion of dangerous huge machinery and the arrival of workers from the South. I was astonished as these strangers under the cover of some law violated our property rights, in effect commandeering the land for their own profit. Note well, this major construction job hired no local workers for the short term or the long term. They brought their own crews. They did not even patronize businesses in town. The company pays little if any taxes to the town. There has been no gain for Sandisfield, only loss and regret and the promise of more of the same.

Now it appears that we are doomed to relive this monstrous experience. Once again an even more powerful, arrogant, and determined company will target more of the landscape for permanent destruction. Oh sure, they'll offer the land owners a one-time 'take-it-or-leave-it' token payment for their trouble. Then outside crews and their huge excavators will proceed to obliterate public roads and private property and wreak havoc on the environment. When they are done, we'll be left with a horribly scarred landscape and greatly diminished property values (and therefore lowered tax receipts) across the entire vicinity.

And who benefits? Not Sandisfield. Not Massachusetts. Perhaps not even the country if the gas is shipped overseas. No, the only winners are Kinder Morgan executives and their shareholders. And where will it stop? Four pipelines? Ten of them? Quarter mile-wide grotesque strips of useless desecrated land? Why not? Who's to stop it?

Maybe this time something can be done if our Town and State and Federal elected officials,

who are supposed to represent us, will defend their constituents and save this beautiful land. Enough is enough.

Thelma Esteves
Beech Plain Road

WE WERE VERY LUCKY LAST TIME

The article in the October Times concerning a proposed expansion of the gas pipeline and the recent surveying activity around here reminds me of the unfortunate rupture incident the last time this pipeline was expanded about 30 years ago. We – and I mean the entire Beech Plain section – were very fortunate not to have been blown to bits that day.

George Etzel, who was acting as a town official, called urgently and said I was to evacuate immediately to Otis until the problem was dealt with. At that time our Cold Spring Farm was a working farm with 50 sheep and 50 chickens as well as pigs, a cow and calf, geese, ducks and a couple of dogs and cats. My concern was not so much for our house, or its antiques, but for these animals in my charge. It took all George's persuasive powers to convince me that I MUST go immediately, abandoning my animals. So together with the dogs and cats, at least, I went to the Otis safety point with the others.

Fortunately, no spark ignited the escaping gas. Certainly back then the company assured the residents and the Town that safety was foremost. Just as they will this time. But this is dangerous business and sometimes things go wrong with potentially disastrous consequences. Sandisfield was incredibly lucky that we suffered no loss of life or even injury. One does not forget such a terrifying experience.

Roberta Myers
Cold Spring Farm, Beech Plain

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The Villa Mia Moose

“LOOKING FOR LOVE?”

This moose greeted us upon entering Sandisfield late Friday afternoon, September 10, on Rt. 8 in the marshy area just south of Villa Mia. Perhaps related to the one in the October issue? 🍷

Submitted by Joanne Olson. Photo by Dennis Olson.



Comings and Goings

The Times reports the death on October 24 of Bill Powell of New Boston and Palm Beach, Florida. An obituary will appear in our December issue.



TOWN BUSINESS

Selectmen’s Meeting minutes will resume next month. Agendas and minutes that have been posted online are available at the town website: www.sandisfield.info. Go to Meetings, then to Board of Selectmen, and scroll down for the most recent postings. 🍷

w.m.

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NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

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

NOVEMBER EVENTS

Historical Society Wine and Cheese Reception on Sunday, November 3 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the South Sandisfield Meeting House. All welcome.

Scholastic Book Fair on Wednesday, November 6 from 12:30 to 6:30 p.m. and Friday, November 8 from 2:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Farmington River Elementary School.

Bubblemania on Friday, November 8 at 6:30 p.m. at the Farmington River Elementary School. Bubblemania is a bubble show to keep 5 to 85 year olds mesmerized! Free!

"Our Town" will be performed on Saturday, November 9 at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, November 10 at 3:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. The play is directed by Ben Luxon and features local actors. Tickets are \$10 and are available online at www.sandisfieldartscenter.org or at the door. Online tickets are recommended for both performances.

Community Development Public Hearing on Tuesday, November 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex.

Tai Chi and Qigong for Everyone taught by Sandisfield resident Barbara Penn on Mondays through November 18 from 6:45 to 7:45 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. For more information, contact Barbara at 269-0233. (\$8 each class)

Genealogy Class on Wednesday, November 20, at 6:30 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library.

The Making of "The Men Who United the States." A discussion by Simon Winchester on Saturday, November 30, at 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Tickets are \$20 and are available online at www.sandisfieldartscenter.org

SAVE THE DATE

Sandisfield Historical Society Christmas Fair will be held Saturday, December 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Fire House #2. Vendors, baked goods, lunch, and Santa! Vendors can reserve a table by contacting Marcia, 413-258-2898.

NOVEMBER EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Community Italian Dinner on Thursday, November 7 at 6:00 p.m. at the Sons of Italy ITAM Lodge at 93 Waubeek Road in Pittsfield. This is a benefit for the Low Income Fund at Porchlight

VNA/Home Care in Lee. The cost is \$25 for adults and \$10 for children. For more information call 413-243-1212.

Progressive Art Curriculum after school and Saturdays at the Granville Art Center, 1487 Main Road. For information and dates, call Kate at 413-357-0016.

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: Third Wednesday, 7-8:30 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

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258-4578 (April-October) or rainbow2498@embarqmail.com

ANIMAL WARDEN/DOG OFFICER:
Kim Spring: 258-4450

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Office Hours: Tues, Wed, Thurs. 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Meets 2nd Tues: 5 p.m.

BOARD OF HEALTH: Kathleen Segrin: 258-4053
Meets 2nd Mon: 6 p.m., Old Town Hall.

BUILDING INSPECTOR: Eric Munson Jr.: 258-4590

CONSERVATION COMMISSION: Richard Campetti: 258-4901
Meets 3rd Tues: 7 p.m.

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

COUNCIL ON AGING: Linda Riiska: 258-4816
Wed: 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Senior Center/Town Hall Annex
Business Meeting 1st and 3rd Wed: 10 a.m.

DUMP HOURS: Wed: 2 p.m.-5 p.m. Sat/Sun: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOL:
North Main Street, Otis
Jo Ann D. Austin, Superintendent: 413 269-4466

FRRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEES meets 1st Mon: 7 p.m.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Kathy Jacobs: 258-4487
Meets 2nd Wed: 7 p.m., Library

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Emergency: 911
Ralph Morrison, Fire Chief: 258-4742

HISTORICAL COMMISSION: Ron Bernard: 269-0012 or
ronbernard@aol.com. Meets 3rd Wed: 7 p.m.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY: Josephine Freedman: 258-4786
Meets 2nd Sat (in season): 11 a.m., the Society's building

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE:
Elaine O'Brien: 269-4465 or John Skrip: 258-4788

LIBRARY: 258-4966 sandisfieldlibrary@yahoo.com
Monday & Tuesday: 9-12:30 p.m.
Wednesday: 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Thursday: 2:00-5:00 p.m.
Saturday: 9-12:00 p.m.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE: Kathy Jacobs: 258-4487
Meets 3rd Wed, 7 p.m., Firehouse #2, Rt 57

PLANNING BOARD: Gary Bottom, Sr.: 258-4053
Meets 2nd Mon: 6 p.m., Old Town Hall

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Michael Morrison, Chief: 258-4742

POLICE-STATE: Lee Barracks: 413 243-0600

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Secretary: 258-4711; Fax: 258-4225

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or sandisfieldtreasurer@verizon.net
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Now Hear This! Laura Rogers-Castro

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