

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume IV, Number 9

December 2013

AVIAN NOTES 2013: A Year in Birds

By Margaret O'Clair

We have come to that time of year when people like to take stock and look back at the momentous events of the last year. Birders are no exception, although for them "momentous" may be a stretch.

Far and away, the most exciting event in 2013 was the arrival of four Sand Hill Cranes on Susie Crofut's property last spring. None of the authoritative maps indicate Sand Hills anywhere on the east coast, not even during migration.

"Birds of New England" mentions a nesting pair in northern Maine years ago, but four healthy birds doing their famous mating dance on Susie's lawn (she has photos, one of which appeared on the front page of The Sandisfield Times in June) is truly unexpected.

What's more, a pair, probably two of Susie's, were seen throughout the summer on private property in South Sandisfield, though no youngsters were spotted. Last fall Laurie Foulke-Green took wonderful videos of the pair strolling along the Phelps Flats on Rt. 183 in Colebrook, pecking in the grass for bugs and seeds, getting ready for their long flight to the Gulf Coast. *Cont'd on p.5*

Town Administrator Already at Work

TO BE WELCOMED AT ALL BOARDS MEETING

By Bill Price

The newly hired Town Administrator will begin her duties in December. Lisa Blackmer of North Adams was hired to fill the role of part-time town administrator in November. She comes with an impressive resume and years of experience in municipal government and community organizations.

She told the Times, "I'm really looking forward to working with all of the people and organizations in Sandisfield as we embark together on this new chapter in town government."

Select Board chairman Jeff Gray said, "I hope everyone will join me in welcoming and supporting Lisa as she becomes acquainted with our town government and the community." *Cont'd on p.3*

Building Consultant's Initial Report

The Strategic Planning Committee meeting November 20 was attended by the consultant who had been hired to assess town buildings. Bryarly Lehmann of Bryarly Consulting presented the committee with an initial draft of the building evaluations.

She documented building code issues and compiled the results of the building questionnaires completed by town staff and other users of town buildings. She has not made recommendations yet on whether to repair or replace the buildings or on possible alternative uses for the buildings.

The committee, co-chaired by Kathy Jacobs and Ralph Morrison, voted to have Ms. Lehmann to proceed with the next step of obtaining preliminary costs of bringing the town buildings up to Massachusetts building codes.

Bryarly Consulting will attend the next Strategic Planning Committee meeting, tentatively scheduled for mid-January. The public is invited.

An informational meeting for town residents will be scheduled once further reports are received.

The Cast of "Our Town" takes a bow. See photos pages 9-11.



Photo: Richard Migot



The Gas Pipeline Expansion

How It May Affect You

By Hilde Weisert

The letters in the November issue from long-time Sandisfield residents Thelma Esteves and Roberta Myers add to concerns about the negative impact of the proposal to expand a gas pipeline across the northern section of town.

A little research into Kinder Morgan, the parent company planning the expansion, further adds to the concerns. In only 15 years, Kinder Morgan has become the fourth largest energy company in North America (revenue \$110 billion last year). It got that way by quietly buying up sleepy transmission and other energy companies and then reorganizing them using clever tax-avoidance schemes to make them vastly profitable. Make no mistake: this is no regional public utility.

For years, Tennessee Gas paid federal corporate income taxes on its earnings (about \$107 million in 2011). When Kinder Morgan Energy Partners acquired them last year, a tax subsidy dropped Tennessee Gas's bill to zero. It's not surprising that KM Chairman and CEO, Richard Kinder, is a billionaire. In fact, he is the 36th richest person in the country. We are dealing with a giant company with giant resources.

While my Sandisfield property is near the pipeline but not directly crossed by it, I believe this expansion will affect all of us, not just the property owners in the crosshairs.

We should expect higher taxes town wide to compensate for reduced property valuations across the Beech Plain. We should expect significant environmental degradation with unknown consequences, for example to wetlands and rivers and streams.

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



The pipeline now, November 2013

And we can expect permanent destruction of the landscape even as the town struggles to attract economic activity based on our single best feature – pristine woodlands. This project is a serious threat to our way of life and to Sandisfield's future.

KM proposes to build one or more “loops” in the existing right of way, at least doubling its width. An ambiguous term like “looping” (when one pipeline is added parallel to another to increase capacity) sounds better than calling it what it is: underground storage. But if loops are added here, as proposed, Sandisfield will not only have a third even larger pipeline running through town, but also a huge amount of gas stored under high pressure in our very soil.

And what about what's in the pipeline? Kinder Morgan's description of the “Northeast Expansion” of the Tennessee Gas Pipeline refers to “new diversified natural gas supplies.” What does that mean? Hopefully not what Kinder Morgan has proposed for its Bluegrass Pipeline expansion: to convert an existing natural gas pipeline to carry natural gas liquids. These could include ethane, propane, butane, isobutene, and methane. No matter, we'll be living on or near a potential bomb.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) will hold a public meeting here, possibly early next year, when the town will hopefully learn specifics about the company's intentions. Kinder Morgan's application with FERC will of course promise to restore the trees it will raze and the land it will dig up. Even if such a thing is possible, what we need to be concerned about is their performance record.

An independent, nonprofit research and communications center, Sightline Institute, issued a report on Kinder Morgan's pipeline and coal export operations in the Northwest. The report concludes that they “are well known for blighting neighborhoods

and fouling rivers. In fact, the company's track record in the Northwest and beyond is one of pollution, law-breaking, and cover-ups.”

At the FERC public meeting, we will have an opportunity to voice opinions and ask questions. Before that meeting, if we care about our town and our neighbors, we all need to become educated about the facts and implications as well as our rights and responsibilities in this major expansion.

Hilde Weisert, a visitor to Sandisfield since the 1980s, has co-owned a residence on upper Hammertown Road since 2000.

Rabies Warning Continues

Kim Spring, Sandisfield Animal Warden, reports that the rabies outbreak from last month is continuing. Wild animals and domestic livestock have been involved. The public is warned to stay away from wildlife that may appear in any way out of the ordinary, particularly lethargic, aggressive, walking in circles, or falling. If you see an animal that seems to be acting unusually, call Kim at 258-4450 or Police Chief Michael Morrison, 258-4742.

An Easier Way to Support the Times
New! The Sandisfield Times is now accepting online payment on its website, www.sandisfieldtimes.org. You may make donations or purchase subscriptions via credit card or PayPal. It's fast, free, secure, and, most of all, convenient!

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Our Thanks to All of You

The Times is grateful to donors who have responded so far to our 2013 appeal. We extend to all our readers the best holiday wishes and an excellent 2014.

Axel Aldred
Mark & Donna Amenta
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Liana Toscanini
June Wink
John Yaeger



Christmas in Illinois, 1944

(It was always a feather mattress
 And a sack of songs.)

The whole Wilson family showed up
 With stories about how their chickens
 Went crazy when they turned on
 The new electric lights at the farm.
 Their arms were full of gifts,
 Fat and skinny boxes covered
 With gay red paper,
 Oh so mysterious.

Dr. Trellace from across the street
 Brought a slightly pornographic cake
 To shock my mother
 But I fixed it,
 Changed the sexy frosting with my thumb
 Before she saw it.

Mrs. Conrad came over to tell us
 That her son George had died
 In a Belgian forest
 In the Battle of the Bulge.
 So we sat her down
 Next to the popcorn tree
 And she tried to cry.

Later on, we sang carols anyway,
 Right or wrong.

(It was always a feather mattress
 And a sack of songs.)

Val Coleman
Town Hill Road

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Cont'd from p.1

While the position is part-time (20 hours per week), hopefully the added value in terms of efficiency and savings in town operations will become apparent and lead to full-time conversion at some point. In the meantime, part of the challenge of the job will be scheduling Lisa's time within the allotted hours.

The role was created last summer on the recommendation of the Management Review Committee. With town business growing increasingly complex, the committee determined that an administrator was needed to support town employees, to help execute policies and procedures, and to "ensure adherence to the budget by all departments." The position reports to chairman of the Board of Selectmen.

Sandisfield will not be the only town with a claim to Lisa's time and efforts. She was recently re-elected to the North Adams City Council where she has served as vice president, as well as on most of the Council's committees. Lisa is also a member of the board of the Massachusetts Municipal Association and sits on the Policy Committee.

Lisa brings expertise in grant writing, fundraising, and financial record keeping and reporting. Familiar with municipal issues, FEMA regulations, and Chapter 90, she writes that she "has worked in many capacities, including finance, human resource management, and operations in businesses of all sizes." She says that she "looks at issues from all viewpoints, is capable of changing her mind, and listens well."

Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko said, "Lisa comes in with no ties and an open mind. She sounds extremely well organized, and I just hope we can

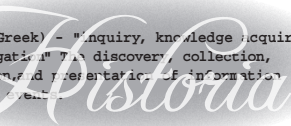
prioritize her time to the best advantage. I'm looking forward to working with her."

Lisa is also a member of the Northern Berkshire Regional Emergency Planning Committee, serves on the board of the Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts, and is a board member of the Steeple Cats baseball team in North Adams. She works part-time as Human Resources Manager at the Wheatleigh Hotel in Lenox.

She will be introduced to the town at the All Boards meeting on December 9, Monday, at 7 p.m., at the Old Town Hall. There will be an opportunity for residents to say hello over coffee and cookies before the meeting. All residents are invited.

An interview with Lisa will appear in the January/February issue of The Sandisfield Times.

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



The Town Seal Embosser

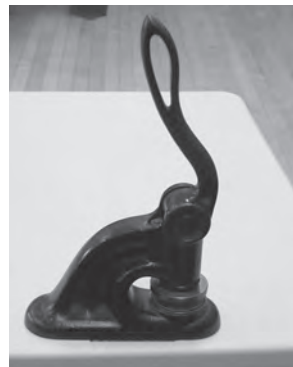
By Ron Bernard

Just before a recent Select Board meeting, I observed a certain mundane duty that town clerks have performed since Sandisfield was incorporated in 1762.

Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko was affixing the town seal to a document with an embossing device. On average, every week Dolores has a couple of occasions to imprint this or that piece of paper with the official seal. It could be a birth, marriage, or death certificate. It might be a tax document or financial instrument such as a bond or a loan, or a paper required in order to comply with state regulations. The sealing validates that a transaction is official as far as the town is concerned. It's been done thousands of times here. Yawn. I know.



Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko uses our historic embosser for official documents.



But wait.

Noticing me among the audience, Dolores said, "I'll bet that Ron over there would be interested in this old thing." She meant the embosser. She was right. I love old stuff like this because it represents some greater story. According to the delightful hand-painted patent inscription on the bottom of the embosser, it dates to 1888, "May 8th" to be precise. Hand-painted! Really.

This curious and graceful apparatus, a relic of a long-ago era, is, improbably, still in everyday use. I see it as a metaphor for Sandisfield's own longevity as a municipality and rural society. Over the many years our town is little changed, fundamentally.

And like our reliable little embosser, Sandisfield is a sturdy, curious place that retains an old-time, honest character. Lightly populated and criss-crossed with 18th century dirt roads and the ghosts of old farmsteads, any visitor will perceive an early New England atmosphere and more relaxed pace of life here. It is part of our charm and should be cherished. And this will not be found in many other locales.

Someone in the room suggested to Dolores, "Maybe it is time to get a new seal device," to which Selectman Patrick Barrett replied, with tongue-in-cheek but wisely, "Not so fast. A new one will last only a few years, most likely."

Yes, there are sleek new designs available. You can even buy replicas. But it would not be the same. Our sealer is authentic and has been on continuous duty for 125 years, exactly one-half of the history of this town. Used probably 10,000 times by the hands of the succession of 13 town clerks, it remains in service, faithfully, just as Sandisfield does.

Sandisfield Town Clerks, 1875-2013

Town Clerk	Service Period	Years
George Shepard	1875-1887	13
Wesley Clark	1888-1914	27
H. M. Ward, MD	1915	1
Edmund Strickland	1916	1
E. L. Sawyer	1917	1
Arthur Strickland	1918-1922	5
Edson Twining	1923-1926	4
Jason Sears	1927-1945	29
Mary Campetti	1946-1947	2
Zoa Campetti	1948-1959	12
Anita Wirth	1960-1971	12
Flora Rhodes	1972-1996	23
Lori Wilkinson	1997	1
Dolores Harasyko	1998-Present	15

Source: Town Reports



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It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

The lyrics to this familiar Christmas carol were written by the Rev. Edmund Hamilton Sears, the son of a Sandisfield farmer. A graduate of Harvard's School of Divinity, Sears wrote the poem around 1846. When published a few years later, the poem was seen by composer Richard S. Willis, who put the words to music. It has been reported that the hymn was first sung at the 1849 Sunday School Christmas celebration in Quincy, Mass. The Times reprints the original poem here as a Christmas present to our readers.



*It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
From Heaven's all gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.*

*Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains,
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever over its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.*

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;*

*And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring;
O hush the noise, ye men of strife
And hear the angels sing.*

*And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!*

*For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet-bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.*

A YEAR IN BIRDS

Cont'd from p.1

Curious about this unusual event, I contacted Thom Smith, columnist for the Berkshire Eagle's Nature Watch. I was surprised to learn that a pair of Sand Hills had been nesting in Sheffield for several years. This fact has been kept quiet to avoid disturbing the birds. Could our cranes be the offspring of the Sheffield pair?

Cranes mate for life, so perhaps our young couple will come back next spring and try again. Could we be seeing the start of something big? We will have to wait and see.

I also had some excitement last spring with the arrival of an Indigo Bunting at my backyard feeder. I have had three or four sightings over the years, but this little fellow stayed more than a week. His stay allowed me to really appreciate his plumage in all shades of light. Sometimes he seemed black, sometimes blue, sometimes deep, deep blue, occasionally iridescent. I kept an eye out for the rather drab brown female Indigo in the hope I would have a summer-long visitor, but none showed up and he took off, possibly in search of her.

At the beginning of June, I received a phone call from a very excited Kim Spring. Kim swore she had just seen a Loon on West Lake. We raced up there and, sure enough, a male Common Loon was coasting along the lake shore. He seemed curious about us and did all the loony things Loons do, diving, bobbing up, standing up, walking on water. With the exception of the female nesting period, Loons spend their entire life on water, so we wondered if there was a female nesting nearby. Along with Sand Hill Cranes, could we soon be

seeing Loons in Sandisfield? We will have to wait and see.

Speaking of lakes, Sandisfield is blessed with numerous ponds, lakes, plus the Colebrook River Reservoir, all of which are excellent year-round birding spots. The best time, however, is during spring and fall migration.

Bird identification is fairly easy in the spring. The bird in the bush looks like the bird in the book. In the fall, identification can be challenging. Many juveniles have yet to look like their parents.



Photo of Common Loon, Wikipedia Commons

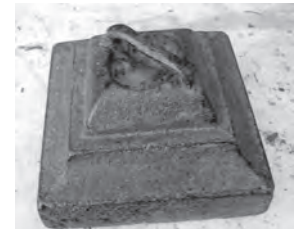
Such was the case this September when another call from Kim summoned me to the reservoir and to "bring some books." We were able to identify, with confidence, Juvenile Green Heron, Black Crowned Night Heron, Least Sandpiper, and Greater Yellowlegs.

While we were busy looking at birds we noticed a sharp eye was kept on us by a Bald Eagle looking at us from a nearby tree.

Sandisfield had a lot to offer birders in 2013. Let us hope for another good year in 2014.

WHAT IS IT WORTH?

*By David LeBeau
Certified Appraiser of Personal Property*



This indispensable part of a doctor's gear – in the horse and buggy era – was made of cast iron and is 4 inches tall and 6 x 6 inches at the base. When the doctor made a house call he needed to keep his horse from wandering off and taking the buggy with him. So if it was not convenient to tie the horse to a post or fence, the doctor took the weight, or buggy brake, out and hitched it to the bridle by means a long strap. Then he placed it where the horse could move a bit without hurting himself or the buggy. Value? Do you collect horse equipment? If you do, then you tell me "What's it Worth."





TOWN BUSINESS

Submitted by
Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko.

Edited by Bill Price

Selectmen's Meeting agendas and minutes are available at the Town website: www.sandisfield.info. Go to Meetings, then to Board of Selectmen.

Selectmen's Meetings

September 16, 2013

Present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Rosario Messina, Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent, Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant.
Members of the Town Administrator Interview Committee: Mark Newman, Ralph Morrison, John Skrip.

Reviewed and discussed the four applications for Town Administrator. Interviews will be held October 15, starting at 5:00 p.m. There will not be a regular Selectmen's Meeting that week. Interviews will be set up in the order they were received.

Richard Campetti in at the Selectmen's request to review plans to update the transfer station grounds. Richard had recommended raising and leveling the back of the yard and adding ramps by the bulky waste and metal bins so that articles don't have to be raised overhead possibly causing injury. He recommended starting the process

by having an engineer design the best use of the area. The Selectmen will contact an engineer to get started.

Discussed the use of the funds generated from the sales of dump stickers. There is approximately \$12,000 available in the account. This program has been very successful covering all recycling. We have provided recycling for electronics, hazardous waste, tires, metals, and bulky waste. All costs have been covered from the dump sticker revenue. In order to save funds for ground improvements we will cut back on tire collection next year. We have not increased the fee for the dump stickers since 2006. Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff, passed unanimously to increase the annual fee to \$25.

Steve provided highway department updates. They will continue cold patching until the plant closes. We received notification from Mass DOT regarding speed limits on Sandybrook Turnpike. They have requested the Selectmen adopt the Special Speed Limit Regulation No. 7923. Copies were sent to the police chief and highway dept. Selectmen reviewed and signed adopting the recommended speed limits. New signs will be posted.

Follow-up on concern regarding solar panels at an address on New Hartford Road. Rosario contacted the building inspector and all permits had been applied and paid for.

Patrick received and reviewed an email he received from Lauri & Jeff Freedman regarding a letter they received from the company which owns the gas pipeline that crosses Beech Plain. The company seeks to expand their easement and are seeking permission to perform an archeological survey. Patrick will contact our state representatives for more detailed information.

Ron Fortune, agent for Happy Banga, would like to be placed on the Select Board agenda to obtain a license for a convenience store and gas station. Fire Chief Ralph Morrison present asked Mr. Fortune if they had gotten the engineered design that is required to show where the buildings, gas tanks, pumps, and distribution center would be located. They have not. Dolores explained the special permit process again to Mr. Fortune and provided him with another special permit packet. Mr. Fortune will be in touch.

Ralph asked about the former Toplitz property on Route 8 near the site of the derelict buildings that were demolished by the town. He asked permission from the Selectmen to begin clearing the property, which the town owns. The Selectmen agreed and thanked him for his offer. Ralph and Gary Bottums will remove the brush and cut trees.

September 23, 2013

Meeting postponed.

September 30, 2013

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

At the tax classification hearing, Assessor Chair Bethany Perry reviewed the different classifications. The hearing notice was posted in the Berkshire Eagle for the required 3 consecutive days. Based on the recommendations from the Board of Assessors, motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to keep the residential factor at 1, voted no to "was a discount granted to Open Space," no to "was the residential factor exemption adopted," no to "was a small commercial exemption adopted." The tax rate, currently at \$12.06, will increase to \$12.07.

Treasurer Teresa DellaGiustina in to review the gas account. The DOR will not set the tax rate until the readings are correct. Teresa suggested using figures from two years ago to get an idea of how much diesel each department uses, explaining that the gas readings have been inaccurate for several years and she needs to get it zeroed out. The Selectmen agreed to allow the Treasurer to take the amounts she comes up with out of each department's operating budget this year.

Steve supplied highway department updates. The fall grading continues. Culvert work on Silverbrook Road is in progress. Steve met with Mass DOT at the Route 8 and 57 bridge to discuss Tannery Rd. The foreman for Maximillian will work with Steve using our blacktop and their paving box, if it is available.

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Steve did an audit on damaged guardrails throughout town. Discussed the culvert that needs to be replaced in front of 182 Sandisfield Rd. John Burrows asked about the status of New Hartford Rd. Steve explained that the state did not approve our Chapter 90 until September, and he could not count on the state money until it was approved. He will plan the work to be completed in the spring. Steve reviewed the only bid received for the one-ton pickup truck. The bid meets all the specs and he recommended the bid to the Selectmen. Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to award the bid to Brewer Brothers.

Patrick reviewed information regarding the gas pipeline expansion. The information is very preliminary. He spoke with a representative from the pipeline who said they had contacted all the abutters but that they only gave out a portion of the information. Some abutters signed permission for the company to access their property to do the archeological study, and others did not sign. There will be an informational public hearing called by the pipeline company in the first quarter of 2014.

Reviewed and signed the one day all-alcoholic beverage license for the American Legion. Motion by Jeff, second by Patrick to re-appoint Elaine O'Brien to the Board of Registrars.

October 7, 2013

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

Steve presented Chapter 90 request for purchase of materials for a culvert replacement at 182 Sandisfield Rd. The road will be one lane while work proceeds, and two lanes at night. Pothole patching continues. Steve reviewed Chapter 90 paperwork for the remainder of North Beech Plain Road which has been approved by Mass DOT; the Selectmen approved going forward. Steve has been in contact with the supervisor of the bridge job regarding Tannery Road and will proceed as soon as he can without getting in the way of the bridge work.

Discussed the equipment contract and the use of Chapter 90 funds. Steve explained again that all the Chapter work must be preapproved before he uses it. He has asked the Selectmen to come to an agreement on the procedure they want him to use, adding that he has lost a lot of time this summer due to disagreements on the board.

Update on gas pump. There was a combined meeting with our IT person, the treasurer, highway department, and the person that installed the program. Discussed having a special town meeting to cor-

rect the wording for the new one-ton pickup truck to include equipment. The special town meeting will be Oct. 28 at the Old Town Hall.

Discussed the storage unit for the Town Hall Annex. Ralph Morrison researched and obtained three quotes. He recommended Aron Storage. Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to purchase the unit from Aron.

Dolores read aloud a disclosure from Ron Bernard regarding his position on the Historical Commission with regards to the gas pipeline project. Ron is a direct abutter. The disclosure will be forwarded to Town Counsel for review before voting on it.

Patrick followed up with Ben Downing and Smitty Pignatelli regarding the pipeline proposal. Neither office had been aware of the proposal from Tennaco which would include a large area of state-owned land.

Patrick asked Ralph if he had followed up on whether he was approved to pay himself a salary as fire chief and also hourly payment for responding to fire and EMT calls. Pat's understanding was that the fire chief salary included response to calls. Ralph said it had been discussed at a Selectmen's meeting and that it was OK for him to be paid for both. Ralph will follow up with Town Counsel. Dolores suggested calling the Ethics Commission.

Discussed the Town Administrator interview process.

October 15, 2013

Present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Rosario Messina, Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent, Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant.
Members of the Town Administrator Interview Committee: Mark Newman, Ralph Morrison, John Skrip.

Interviews for the Town Administrator position were conducted as follows: Terry Walker, Eve Kummel, Lisa Blackmer. One additional interview will be held next week at 6:00 p.m., after which the Selectmen will review and discuss their decision.

Steve provided highway department updates. Fall grading continues. Rosario and Patrick complimented the department on grading work and the work on West Street and Silverbrook Road. The West Street culvert is now complete. Rosario commended them on the work done on Dodd Road. Steve will follow up on two additional problem culverts on Dodd.

Discussed the equipment bid contract. Patrick suggested to Steve that when the contract is up that he and the incoming Town Administrator review the contract with Town Counsel. Patrick

discussed the truck driver position with Town Counsel regarding the need for a hydraulics license. Steve has discussed this several times with the employee, who will be asked to come into an executive session to discuss.

Town Counsel reviewed the Conflict of Interest disclosure presented to the Selectmen from Ron Bernard regarding his position on the Historical Commission and also being an abutter to the gas pipeline proposal. Ron also had a lengthy discussion with Town Counsel. Counsel advised the Selectmen to not accept the disclosure. Ron agreed to recuse himself from any discussion regarding the pipeline during meetings of the Historical Commission.

Reviewed and signed the annual Council on Aging Grant for FY2014.

Discussed the Town Counsel invoice for the first quarter of the year. All boards must contact either Jeff Gray or Dolores before contacting Town Counsel, and Dolores will contact Jeff for approval before contact is made. Rosario will contact Town Counsel Ed McCormick to reiterate to him that he is only to discuss town matters with preapproval from the Selectmen. Patrick expressed his concerns with moving from a salaried account to an hourly rate account for the Counsel.

Discussed a request from the Board of Assessors to contact Town Counsel. The Selectmen would like the board to attempt to resolve the issue through contacts with the state forester.

October 21, 2013

Present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Rosario Messina, Dolores Harasyko, Administrative Assistant.
Members of the Town Administrator Interview Committee: Mark Newman, Ralph Morrison, John Skrip.

Discussed the next step in the Town Administrator interview process. Each member will research each applicant and discuss at the next meeting. We will follow up with Town Counsel as to whether this discussion needs to be in an executive session.

Discussed electrical issues at the town hall annex. Dolores reviewed some needed fixes and upgrades. Selectmen granted approval to go forward with the work.

Jeff gave an update on the transfer station. He met with an engineer last week who will work on a design for the best use of the area.

Reviewed the estimate to repair the ramp at the town hall annex. We will follow up with the building inspector before starting.



**FARMINGTON RIVER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BULLETIN**

By Tara Beardsley

As part of the school's Wellness Policy and to highlight an awareness of diabetes, an "All School Walk" was held early in the fall term. Students were brought into the gym for warm-up exercises and then led outside to walk the school grounds for 30 minutes.

The event was such a hit with the kids that they suggested the walk be a monthly event. And so it is.

On the October walk, students wore pink to support breast cancer awareness. November's walk was sponsored by the Dairy Council as part of their "Fuel Up to Play for 60" kick-off. December's walk will be held, warm or cold, on December 13. The school staff is pleased by the students' enthusiastic response to the event.

Last month's Harvest of the Month Farm-to-School Project, which lasts the entire month, highlighted apples. During December, the Kid's Cafe will feature kale. Kale? Can't wait to hear about the cafe's creative uses and how the kids liked it!!!

Farmington River thanks When Pig's Fly Farm, Riiska's Apple Orchard, both from Sandisfield, and Nestrovich Farm in Granville for their donations of fresh veggies and fruit for our school. Their generosity is very much appreciated!

Students will be performing at the Annual Holiday Extravaganza at the Sandisfield Arts Center on December 14th at 4:00 p.m. Tickets are available online by visiting sandisfieldartscenter.org or purchased at the door on a first-come, first-served basis. Tickets are \$5, with children 12 and under admitted free.

Please note the following dates:

- Dec 4 Picture Re-Take Day
- Dec 5 Assembly – Food Play, 1:30 p.m.
- Dec 9 Report cards go home
- Dec 12 PTA Meeting, 3:15 p.m.
- Dec 12-13 Holiday Shop
- Dec 13 All-School-Walk
- Dec 14 Holiday Extravaganza at SARc, 4:00 p.m.
- Dec 19 Winter Concert, 6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 23-Jan. 1 Christmas Break, school closed

Brrrrrr! It's cold out there! Please make sure your children are prepared for the weather by wearing warm jackets, boots, hats, and gloves to school!

OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Pete and Sue Murray, owners of the former New Boston Store who have been in Florida for the last few months, are returning home as of early December.



Postmaster Karen Cooley points out that it is important to do all holiday mailings from our local PO. "The central post office," she said, "counts everything that goes through small post offices. That's why there's no more 'local' window." Stamps, mail, packages, everything counts toward keeping a small PO open these days.



Connie D'Andrea at the Silverbrook Café & Store and Ron Whelpley donated full Thanksgiving dinners to two needy Sandisfield families. Connie intends to make this a Thanksgiving and Christmas tradition at the Silverbrook.

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“Our Town” in Our Town

SANDISFIELD PLAYS ITSELF ON STAGE

Both productions of Thornton Wilder’s “Our Town” at the Arts Center in November were performed before sold-out audiences. Directed by Ben Luxon, who also played the role of Stage Manager, nearly forty individuals from Sandisfield and surrounding towns worked hard over the summer and fall to put the play on our local stage. Following are Richard Migot’s photographs from the final dress rehearsal and selected comments from performers and audience.

I think “Our Town” is by far the best thing we’ve ever done at the Arts Center. The audience was silent in a special, almost exotic way – following each turn of phrase,

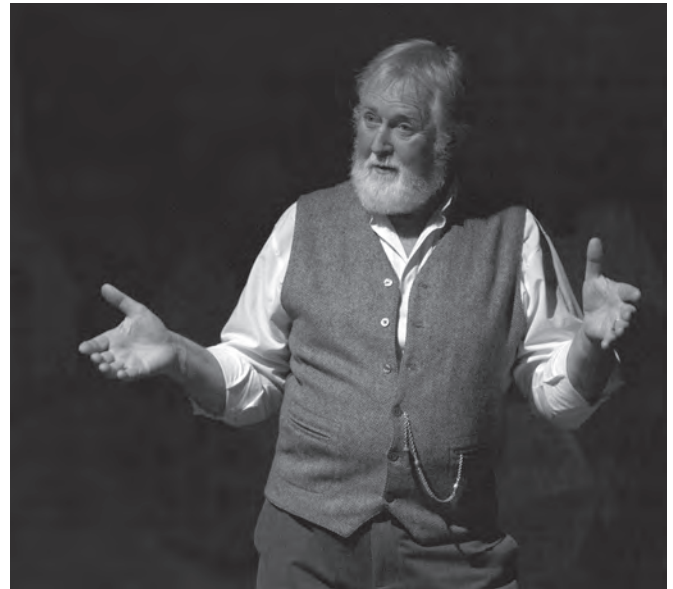
each gesture, alert to nuance and change of fortune. It was some sort of theatrical love affair that Wilder, Ben Luxon, and the cast had managed to bring into that old room down on Hammertown Road. Bravo!

Val Coleman (Professor Willard)



Who could imagine a more perfect location for Grover’s Corners than Sandisfield. Here were the people of the town looking at the stage populated by more people from the town and seeing themselves, their lives, their family dramas coming to life in such an immediately recognizable way.

*John Cheek
(in the audience, for many years a principal bass soloist with the Metropolitan Opera who also has a distinguished international career)*



Most memorable for me was watching Ben during rehearsals, seeing him coax performances from all the players, continually shaping the entire performance with the utmost kindness, understanding, brilliance, and talent. Ben understood every character.

Mary Anne Grammer (Mrs. Soames)

Most of us were total amateurs and, at first, shaky and insecure. The truth is we were terrified. But everyone overcame the jitters and slipped into their roles with aplomb. Being part of this cast was a true gift.

Ron Bernard (Mr. Morgan)



"Our Town" taught me so much – that even in the simplest of places, the smallest of towns, life's most profound moments can take place. And its lesson is clear and timeless: in a world full of strife and loss we only have each other and moments of beauty to keep the darkness at bay. "Love each other," it whispers. "Pay attention."

Tina Sotis (Mrs. Webb)



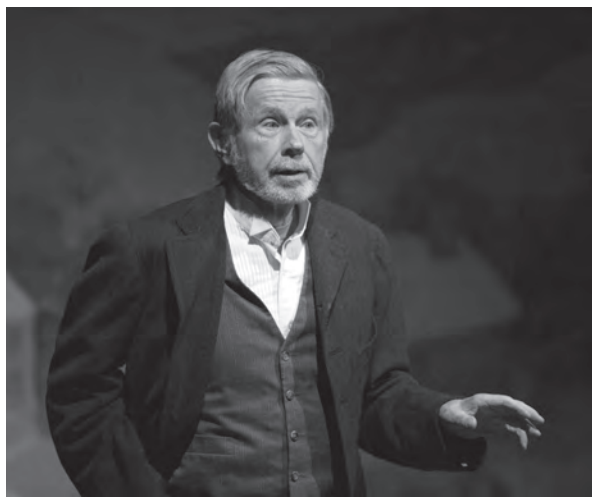
Bravo(!) to the cast, director, and crew of Our Town! The balance of humor and professionalism was just right; it was a great pleasure to be a part of it. My daughters have not stopped talking about how much they miss you all, and how much they loved the experience.

Evers Whyte (Dr. Gibbs), Pia Whyte (Rebecca Gibbs)
Chloe Whyte (Wally Webb)



After a fifty year hiatus from the stage, becoming the undertaker was indeed a thrill, albeit somewhat nerve wracking at first. Under the professional and gently guiding hand of our director, this misbegotten thespian plodded through each nerve wracking trial and nailed it. Great group of people you have up there.

John Funchion (Joe Stoddard), Norfolk, Conn.





It was a joy to be part of such a great community effort. Ben and Susie led us to a very high standard and worked oh so hard (as did we all) to produce something that two house-fulls were thrilled to watch. Hooray!

*Lauren Paul
(among the dead)*



My sons played the "paperboys." They were openly and graciously invited into the "Our Town family" and made to feel as though their parts were every bit as important as the lead roles. The atmosphere of the production had an overall balance of high expectation while not taking oneself or the play too seriously, making the experience truly enjoyable.

*Kenly Brozman (stage mother)
Haven Westcott (Joe Crowell)
Keller Westcott (Si Crowell)*

Thanks to brilliant casting, craft-full stage direction, supportive producers, visionary set decorators, techies, a wonderful audience with the gift of listening, and an extraordinary company of intergenerational players, I can't imagine a more genuine experience of live theater than this "Our Town."

Charles Fidler (Mr. Webb)

Photos by Richard Migot



Town Business

Cont'd from p.7

October 28, 2013

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

Contracts for the COA and Cultural Council reviewed and signed.

Patrick discussed an issue at the transfer station in which the operator is having a difficult time with residents not having dump stickers. Dolores explained that she sends out the mailer in November the year before to every household and also posts the information on the website.

At 8:10 p.m., a motion to enter into executive session for the express purpose of discussing a town employee job requirement. Roll call Rosario, yes, Jeffrey, yes, Patrick yes.

At 8:18 p.m. a motion to enter into executive session for the express purpose of discussing references and background checks for the Town Administrator job and to adjourn afterwards. Roll call Rosario, yes, Jeffrey, yes, Patrick, yes.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

November 4, 2013

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

Steve presented Chapter 90 reimbursement paperwork. Selectmen commended Steve for sending all employees to a class for Boom Mower Training Safety. Discussed the barrier on the bridge by the library. The last two times it has been damaged, the person that damaged it drove away without reporting it, with the cost for repair

then passed to the town. This cost is not covered by the town's insurance. Repair cost this time is \$9,100. Steve has met with Mass DOT Kathy Stevens to review options. Steve has doubled the arrow signs, installed a "Slow" sign, added strip reflectors to sign posts, and ordered a light to be installed on the utility pole. Steve suggested the police put out a speed limit sign before the bridge to possibly slow traffic. Ralph will follow up with Police Chief Mike Morrison.

Jean Atwater-Williams in to review the gas pump program. She has been working on creating an Excel report that would total fuel usage by department, vehicle, operator, and type of fuel. She discussed and offered suggestions for a more secure system, and also suggested each department head review the proper operation of the system and codes. Cards will be ordered for each person to be used with their own PIN number. A major part of the problem has been power surges from the inadequate electrical system at the highway garage. Jean stated that she will continue to work on the program but that department heads are to deal with the Treasurer if they have a problem with the reports. The Treasurer will supply copies of the reports upon request. The Selectmen thank Jean for her work on this project.

Reviewed and discussed fees for annual business licenses. We will ask the Town Administrator to do an analysis of surrounding towns to see if we are comparable in what we charge, since the fees have not changed since 1980.

Discussed the handicapped ramp at Town Hall Annex. After reviewing with the building inspector we will proceed with the temporary repair.

Discussed the furnace report received from the inspector from the insurance company for the Town Hall Annex. There is a problem with the fresh air exchange. We will have this fixed and all the town's furnaces serviced.



By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

Our Next Genealogy Assistance Class will be Wednesday, December 18, at 6:30.

The library will be closed December 24 and 25, and also Saturday, the 28th. Over the winter, if you're planning to visit the library when the weather is particularly bad, please call ahead to make sure we're open: 258-4966.

New Books

Lake of Tears/Mary Logoe

Rituals/Mary Anna Evans

Hazardous Duty /W.E.B. Griffin

The Housemaid's Daughter/Barbara Mutch

Hunted/Karen Robards

The Dead Trade/Jack Higgins

The Gods of Guilt /Mickey Haller

Innocence/Dean Koontz

Hunt The Falcon-Seal Team Six/Don Mann

The First Call From Heaven/Mitch Albom

The Valley Of Amazement/Amy Tan

Stella Bain/Anita Shreve

Ghost Medicine/Aimee & David Thurlo

The Minor Adjustment Beauty Salon/Alexander McCall Smith

King & Maxwell/David Baldacci

White Fire/Preston & Child



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Sandisfield Historical Society



By Josephine Freedman

We had a great turn out of community members at the Society's Annual Wine and Cheese reception last month. Many said that they'd spent a most enjoyable afternoon at the "Meeting House."

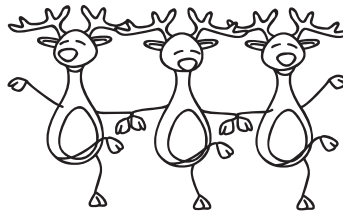
The last regular business meeting of the year was held on November 9. A good turnout of members gathered to discuss and vote on an addendum to the by-laws of the Society. This was a very productive meeting with everyone in agreement, voting unanimously for the added clause.

Our last sponsored event for the year is the Annual Christmas Fair, to be held on Saturday, December 7, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at Firehouse #2 on Rt. 57. Local community

groups and vendors join to display and sell their crafts and wares or services. There will also be delicious food and baked goods for sale by our local organizations, including the Congregational Church and the Council on Aging.

This is a great event for the children and Santa will be there. If whether permits, horse rides may also be available. Our thanks to Robin Campetti for organizing this part of the fair for the children.

Stop in at the fair between 10 and 2 on December 7 and support your community vendors. Tables for vendors are still available for only \$15 on first-come, first served basis. Contact Marcia Ignace at 413-258-2898 or Jo Freedman at 413-258-4786.



Extravaganza is Back!

Everyone is invited to the Sandisfield Arts Center for the annual Extravaganza!!! December 14, Saturday, 4 p.m.

This year we showcase the talents of the youth in our community. Children from the Farmington River School will bring us a mixture of instrumental and vocal numbers. The performers will be 4th grade beginners with the band, 5th and 6th grade band students, and a select group of instrumentalists and singers. The performers also include high school students of the Mt. Everett Madrigal Group singing an a capella program.

This will be a festive afternoon to enjoy the talent and initiative of teachers and students. And "veteran" Val Coleman will once again regale us with "this year's story."

Remember. December 14, 4 p.m. Tickets \$5 online or at the door.

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- ◆ Stone Bridge Farm: 4 bedroom colonial, barn, 24 acres, 2 rivers \$650,000
- ◆ 1850's farmhouse bordering Silver Brook. 3 bedrooms \$163,000
- ◆ Wooded 2 BR Contemporary - Very private and very affordable! \$200,000



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These are just a selection of our Sandisfield listings. We have nearly 60 listings worth over \$40 million Visit berkshiresforsale.com for many more properties! Nearly \$15 million sold just in 2013!

Chapin Fish, Broker-Partner 413.258.4777 2013 Berkshire County "Realtor of the Year"

Lion and Babe

SANDISFIELD STEERS IN TRAINING

By *Brigitte Ruthman*

Lion was born first, in the Ides, the darkness that is mid-March before the veil lifts on the mire and after the incessant cold of early spring.

There was no mistaking the calf's bold view of the snowy world. In this year of fickle New England weather he pranced in his second day of life through heavy mush as if he owned the field.

I had led his mother Daisy into a dry stall on the wintry night before, on a hunch it was time. The breeders wonder how I know when one of my cows is in heat or ready to calf. I just know my cows, I say.



Eight inches of snow still blanketed the pasture when I walked past the inside barn window the next morning. A pretty calf peered back, a young Lion with his delicate features. His red and white mosaic pattern matched his mother, who had already dried him off.

Six days later, Babe's birth was a bit more problematic. Born over the thermal heat of the manure pile, this new red calf with Bunyan strength was carried back to the barn.

His mother Thyme had suffered a pinched nerve as he crossed into the birth canal, paralyzing her hips. Her solemn eyes seemed to slip from life, lifted by a view of the calf and a will to live. A hip joint finally brought her up, and the calf to her udder.

Babe and Lion were thereafter inseparable. Half brothers born to the same sire by artificial insemination, they preferred each other's company during days with their mothers and spent nights together in the barn. Raised on real milk, not powdery replacer mixed with water, they had the benefit of the herd to learn social order, and could usually be found legs folded, noses nearly touching. Each soon learned to obey the halter.

When it came time to decide whether to turn them into veal or train them further, the answer came from a little boy who wrote a poem about Lion "flyin'." I couldn't have explained their fate to young Caleb any other way, though the decision came at a considerable financial loss and an investment in time I didn't have.

They grew fast and strong on grass and milk, at times speeding across the pasture as calves want to do, for the pure thrill of it.

Lion is defiant against the weather, but is the sweeter of the two. As they learn to be a team, Lion is the logical choice to be on the near side of the yoke to pull his stronger partner around – Gee to the right and Haw to the left. I wonder, calling the commands, how long it had been since the same words echoed across the land.

There was no resistance when a small yoke – probably 100 years old – was laid across their shoulders.

They are the first pair of working steers born in Sandisfield's hilly ground in many years. Sandisfield once boasted some of the finest teams in the Commonwealth.

Most farms in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th century had at least one team of oxen who worked the fields during the growing season and the woods in winter. The Hawley Farm at Spectacle Pond was noted for the teams they kept for logging and farming.

Steers in training, Lion and Babe won't be made to pull and given the lofty title oxen until they are three or four years old. Their testicles were tied to keep their focus on work and not pretty heifers, though not until their early growth went to a young bull's muscular frame.

Oxen are as important to New England history as the teamsters who trained them. Slower than horses, but less nervous and quicker and cheaper to harness to a yoke, oxen lumber through their tasks predictably and reliably.

They were the tractors employed by settlers to move stone boats, haul firewood, clear land, and power transportation. And when their tasks as engines were done, they performed a final duty as meat for the smokehouse.



The best of the young bull calves were chosen more carefully than today, matched for their temperament, size, and color. They were the lucky few of bull calves born to dairy cows and usually with no other purpose. Brothers like Babe and Lion, when they could be found, were preferred.

Before piston engine-fired Model T's rumbled down these dirt roads, farmers competed for the title of strongest pair after they emerged from the winter woods. Out of it evolved pulling contests that draw crowds even today at country fairs.

Lew Warner came up from Thomaston to look at Lion and Babe when I offered them up for higher training. He watched them for a while, silently, looking for their eagerness to work.

Brown Swiss, Holsteins, Randalls, and the huge Italian Chianina are also sought as oxen in training. Arguably, none can match shorthorns as kings in the pulling ring and the hilly woodlot, capable of more strength per pound of body weight and obedience than any other breed.

So at the unlikely old age of five months, Lion and Babe went off to Lew's steer/oxen training camp in August. By the time of the Riverton Fair, they were a respectable demonstration team. A delicate touch by a hickory whip on Babe's far shoulder brought them around to the left, a tap to Lion right. In tandem, they walked in a small yoke as perfectly as they had as month-old calves.

I went to the fair to see them, after not having seen them for a month. They were tied to a trailer. I called out, "Hey, girly girls," in the pitched voice that I use to greet cows in the morning. Their ears perked up, and they saw me.

The curious men seated nearby in lawn chairs looked at me. "That's how I address all my calves," I explained.

The connection between teamsters and their animals is timeless, the same as when earlier farmers delivered their trained young bulls to these native forests and together carved out their destinies, and a young country.

Lion and Babe held their heads high, as much to impress each other as any crowd. I know they are strong. I just know.

Brigitte Ruthman owns and operates Joshua's Farm on Dodd Road.

Comings and Goings



**GRAYSYN SHEA
HOLLAND**

Graysyn was born October 30 at 10:10 a.m. at Fairview Hospital. She was 8lbs 8ozs. Her parents: Amanda Leavenworth and Elijah Holland

Maternal Grandparents:

Ralph and Lisa Leavenworth

Paternal Grandparent: Lamia Holland

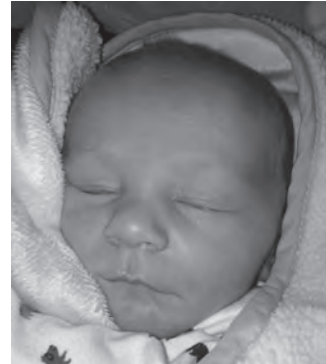
Maternal Great Grandparents: Ed and

Linda Riiska, Edna Leavenworth

Paternal Great Grandparent:

Nancy Holland

Aunt: Jenna Leavenworth



**WILLIAM HENRY
PERRY**

On Wednesday, October 30 at 7:59 a.m., William Henry Perry was born to William and Bethany Riiska Perry. He was born at Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington, 7 lbs. 15 ozs. His two older sisters, Emma and Valerie Perry, are very excited. As are his maternal grandparents, Bill and Barbara Riiska from Sandisfield, and his paternal grandparents, Ronnie and Barbara Perry from Otis.



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Comings and Goings



BILL POWELL 1937-2013

Bill Powell died on October 24, in Palm Beach, Florida.

With homes in New York City, Palm Beach, and Santa Fe, Bill and his wife Joanne felt a special kinship with their Sandisfield home. They rented the former Joseph Denslow place in 1990 from Betty Leech and bought the property in 1998. After bringing the kitchen into the 20th century in keeping with the rest of the house, they began renovating the barn.

Joanne writes: "Bill wanted that barn to stand for at least another 100 years. It will!"

She continues about their life together. "We spent many happy times in this warm and wonderful home, with family, friends and our three Wire Fox Terriers: Higgins, Molly, and now Béb . There were reunions, birthday parties, Thanksgiving gatherings, Christmas celebrations, Boxing Day parties, Fourth of July barbecues, dinner parties and lobster feasts (courtesy of Margaret) on the porch in summer and in front of the kitchen fireplace in the winter.

"Friends visited from all over the world. There were hikes along the trails or across the fields, tennis matches and even a swim in the Clam River. There was cross country skiing and from time to time snowshoeing. Charlie Pease hayed their fields, and Bill loved to see the bales coming up the pathway on the red truck.

"Bill happily supported all the local community efforts. Bob Green could always convince him to match whatever contribution he was making to the New Boston Congregational Church. Nancy Flack was able to do same for the Arts Center. He signed on for two new chairs for the Center just recently and supported The Sandisfield Times."

Bill graduated from Princeton University in 1959, Magna Cum Laude in Political Science. The majority of his career was with the Colgate-Palmolive Company, and he lived at various times in London, Paris, Zurich, Milan, St. Jean Cap Ferrat and Boston. He spoke French and Italian fluently.

He retired from Colgate in 1985 as a Senior Executive Vice President, having served as Chief of R&D, President of Colgate-Italy, and President of the Kendall Company. Bill's later careers took him to the United Nations Development Program and INSEAD in France. He was a board member for 15 years of the Palm Beach Zoo.

Joanne continues: "A world traveler who loved good food, wine, and conversation, Bill was a voracious reader and always interested in the news of the day. In a tribute, his friends wrote: 'Bill was a good and generous friend, and we will miss his intelligent input, keen wit, lively political debates and zest for life.' B b  will miss her very early morning walks with him. I and his family and friends will simply miss his presence and all that he was."

A memorial service will be held on Wednesday, December 11 at 4 p.m. at Saint James Episcopal Church, 71st Street & Madison Avenue, New York City. Donations in his memory may be sent to: Palm Beach Zoo, Presidents Office, 1301 Summit Boulevard, West Palm Beach, FL 33405.



LENA SANDLER 1917-2013

Lena Yetta Klein Sandler died November 11 at Kimball Farms Nursing Center in Lenox. At 95, Lena was one of the oldest, if not the oldest resident of Sandisfield.

Born in The Bronx, New York, Lena was the daughter of Molly and Pincus Klein. When she was a child the family traveled to Sandisfield in the summertime. At the age of 12, Lena lost her brother, Jacob; her mother passed away on the same day five years later when Lena was 17. When her father remarried, the family moved permanently to Sandisfield.

Here, Lena married Jack Sandler, her husband of 52 years. They had five children. From 1951 to 1967, their poultry farm prospered, and they were the only poultry farmers in Sandisfield whose farm endured. In 1965, lightning struck one of their buildings, and soon the farm was no longer a viable means of income.

As a side business, Jack and Lena had rented cottages to summer residents. After the farm closed, they winterized the cottages and became full-time real estate rental and personal property agents. They also spent many winters in New York City where they helped raise their granddaughter, Melissa.

After Jack died in 1990, Lena continued to manage the Sandisfield property, with the help of her son Marvin, until 2010. She continued visits to New York City, where she loved to window shop on Madison Avenue. She also helped her children with their business, Transceiver East, Inc., where she reconciled accounts. She wintered in Scottsdale, Arizona.

When the Town of Sandisfield renamed their streets, Lena was honored to have her cul-de-sac on Town Hill Road renamed "Sandler Lane." For over 30 years, Jack and Lena had maintained the Sandisfield Synagogue, taking care of all maintenance and insurance. When Jack hired a rabbi for the Jewish Holidays, Lena would provide lodging and meals for him. After Jack's death, Lena was instrumental in the transfer of the Sons of Abraham Synagogue to The Sandisfield Arts and Restoration Council.

Her family reports: "Lena was a fabulous cook! Family friends would often come for her Friday night dinners. Potatonic, pierogies and her infamous cookies were everyone's favorites."

Lena is survived by four children: Marlene Schiff of New York City, Marvin Sandler of Natick, Mass., Felice Lieberman and her husband Sheldon of Simpsonville, S.C., and Sharon Lewis and her husband Martin of Great Barrington. She also leaves several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Her son Paul Sandler predeceased her in 2010.

Funeral services were held on November 12, with burial at Sandisfield Cemetery. Donations in her memory may be made to either People's Pantry or Fairview Hospital in care of Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, 426 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230.



BETTY LEECH 1921-2013

A memorial service for Elisabeth Leech, known to friends in Sandisfield as Betty, was held at the Congregational Church in Salisbury, Conn., in November.

Betty died peacefully and unexpectedly September 1 in Fall River, Massachusetts, after a spectacular day visiting with family and friends at her beloved Westport Harbor family home. She was 91. She died in the same town where she was born, November 8, 1921.

The daughter of Dr. Frederick Barnes and Elisabeth Hill Barnes, Betty graduated from Mary C. Wheeler School in Providence, and Vassar College. She married Robinson Leech in 1945, and together they moved to Salisbury in 1950. They purchased their home in Sandisfield, the original Joseph Denslow farmstead, in 1971 and spent their summers and holidays there.

Her love of Sandisfield was a true joy in her life. Her countless small acts of kindness are remembered by many. She sold the home in Sandisfield in 1998 to Bill Powell, who coincidentally died the month following Betty's death (Bill's obituary is on the previous page).

Betty lived in Salisbury, Conn., where she was active in supporting the Housatonic Day Care Center, Planned Parenthood, and a myriad of local events. She loved the outdoors at all times of the year and was an avid gardener, skier, tennis player, and golfer. Her experience for many years as a real estate agent was enhanced by her firsthand knowledge of the area and all it has to offer.

Betty's sparkle, curiosity, and optimism were a gift to family, friends, and all who crossed her path.

She is survived by her daughter, Rosalind Barnes Leech of Salisbury; her son, Robinson Leech III of Sharon, Conn., her beloved Jack Russell terrier, Thatcher; and a wide and loving group of extended family and friends. Her brother, Frederick Barnes of Westport, predeceased her.

Memorial contributions in Betty's name can be made to NW CT OWL'S Kitchen, PO Box 705 or The Chore Service, PO Box 522, both in Lakeville, CT 06039.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Support for "Local" Country Store

Thank you for your continued and very important coverage of a projected store on Rt. 8 across from Tuckers. The town needs a gas station!

"A Choice for Sandisfield," by Bogart Muller, in November beautifully lays out the choice! I strongly support the points so well made: a store built and run from someone from our community; a "quaint" country store rather than a "chain outfit;" develop the site by bid locally; a smaller supply of gas and diesel than a "super gas depot;" a building that could be adapted into another type of store "if things don't work out."

Let's do this thing ... but do it in keeping with our proud, special, pristine, unique town.

I thank and admire Connie and the Silverbrook Store. I am sure a new facility with gas will hurt Silverbrook. I am sorry. But let us at the least have the Rt. 8 store be Sandisfield's ... not the macro corporate's "welcoming" to Sandisfield.

Lou Friedman
Atwater Pond, Sandisfield Center

My Thanks to the Times

Thank you for taking interest in my Mom's past history as a war vet and youthful resident/lover of the Montville/Sandisfield area! You graciously devoted a half-page to her obituary back in July

after she passed here in Dayton and after we buried her in Torrington six days later.

Steve German, my cousin, who lives in nearby North Granby, Conn., did the liaison with you (for me) which I also appreciated. Steve and I used to "stomp" the Berkshire area back in our teenage years (ahhhhh those wunnerful '60s), committed to getting into as much trouble as possible while having as much fun during those great summers.

We spent many a good time in the family home in Montville right at the corner of Town Hill and Rt. 57, as did my Mom when she was young and later. I even was lucky enough to attend 4th grade in the multi-grade school house (grades 1-8) back in '54-'55 while my Dad was attending an Army college during his career service years. My Mom and I weathered out that snowy Montville winter together, somehow. I read the article about the school being in dire repair and currently being used as a town hall. I also remember that we would go swimming each summer in the "falls" just slightly further down the road on Rt. 57 near the school and over the guardrail on the right headed towards New Boston.

Anyway ... please accept my belated "thank you" and I hope some of her friends in the area, if still alive, saw it!

Continued success!

Jay Vada
Dayton, Ohio

PS: I eagerly read each new issue of the ST (online) and enjoy it thoroughly. Brings back a lot of memories as the place has not changed "that" much in all those years! Please keep it that way!!

Glaucoma and Medical Marijuana

I was not at the recent special town meeting that discussed the establishment of a medical marijuana dispensary in Sandisfield but I would like to comment on an assertion in a follow-up letter that appeared in the October Sandisfield Times. The writer claimed that "glaucoma relief for some people is a fact." Some diseases and conditions might be helped by marijuana, but I don't believe glaucoma is one of them.

I am not a medical professional but the glaucoma assertion caught my attention because I too suffer from the disease. Glaucoma is a disease that causes irrecoverable damage to the optic nerve. The only treatment is to reduce the fluid pressure in the eye by medication or surgery. No treatment will repair the damage to the optic nerve or improve vision. Successful treatment can only reduce the pressure in the eye in order to slow down or retard further damage to the eye.

One of the arguments used in neighboring Connecticut to legalizing medical marijuana was the case of an elderly woman who claimed that the eye drops needed to treat glaucoma were not doing the job, and that she was reluctant to undergo laser surgery. However, that article never mentioned what success the lady had achieved by smoking her marijuana cigarettes. I checked with my eye surgeon and he indicated that marijuana does reduce the pressure but only for about an hour. People with glaucoma need permanent, round the clock, pressure reduction. Does anyone think it would be healthy for grandma to smoke 24 joints a day?

Glaucoma is serious business, and marijuana is not even a quick fix. Anyone suffering from this disease should consult a glaucoma specialist. In my case the glaucoma had progressed so far that eye drops were no longer doing an adequate job. On investigation I discovered that laser surgery was also not the best answer but that there was another surgical procedure that could and did do the job.

Francis P. DeStefano
Tannery Road

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NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

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

DECEMBER EVENTS

Church Service on Sunday, December 1 at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church. Pastor Brian and Linda Care. First Sunday of each month. Christmas Eve Service, December 24, 6 p.m.

Tai Chi and Qigong for Everyone taught by Sandisfield resident Barbara Penn on Monday, December 2 from 6:45 to 7:45 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. The last class until March. For more information, contact Barbara at 269-0233. (\$8)

Historical Society Christmas Fair on Saturday, December 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Fire House #2. Vendors, baked goods, lunch, and Santa! Christmas trees for sale from When Pigs Fly Farm. Penny Auction to benefit Sandisfield Scholarship Fund.

All Boards Meeting on Monday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex. Includes a budget discussion and "Meet the new Town Administrator."

The Holiday Extravaganza! on Saturday, December 14, at 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Choral Music! Bells and Baubles! Better than ever this year with plum wine and carols! Only \$5 for admission. For information, visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org

Genealogy Class on Wednesday, December 18, at 6:30 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library.

DECEMBER EVENTS

IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Holiday Stroll community event sponsored by the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce and Salisbury Bank on Saturday, December 7 from 3:00 to 7:30 p.m. in downtown Great Barrington. This family celebration features vendors, store specials, kid's crafts, North Pole Lane, music, caroling, face painting, hayrides. For young children, a story hour at the Mason Library begins at 3:00 p.m. All other activities begin at 4:00 p.m.

Stockbridge Main Street at Christmas Norman Rockwell Re-creation on Sunday, December 8 from ??????

Holiday Farmers' Market on Saturday, December 14, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Monument Valley Middle School. Holiday ingredients and gifts from local farmers and artisan producers. For more information, visit berkshiregrown.org/holiday-farmers-markets-2013.

Yoga on Tuesdays from 5:45 to 7:00 p.m. with Tracy Remelius at the Tyringham Town Hall. (\$10 per class). A gentle yoga for every body. For information, visit www.tracyremelius.com.

ZUMBA on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. with Michelle Theilig at the Tyringham Town Hall. (\$8 per class).

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., Sandisfield Library. (No meeting in December. Next meeting, January 15, 2014)



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EMS MEDICAL	7
MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	2

FIRE DEPT CALLS

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OUTSIDE RUBBISH FIRE	2
POWER LINE DOWN	1
MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	2
ASSIST PERSONS	2

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**Our next issue will be a combined
January/February**

The Sandisfield Times is an independent nonprofit organization staffed by volunteers from the Sandisfield community and funded by individual and business sponsors. Its mission is to connect the community through reliable, regular, and relevant information. The paper is published 11 times each year, with a joint January-February issue and monthly issues thereafter.

Donations of all sizes are needed to ensure the continuation of this newspaper. Please send checks to: *The Sandisfield Times*, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or donate online at our website: 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 Monterey General Store and the Southfield Store in New Marlborough. Back issues are available for purchase.

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