

THIRD ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

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RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume IV, Number 1

April 2013

An Unwelcome Tourist Moves In

PREPARE TO KISS YOUR ASH GOODBYE

By Tom Ryan, DCR Service Forester



In your travels throughout Berkshire County last summer, you may have seen purple box-shaped objects hanging in the trees. They are still there and will be around a lot longer. They are insect traps designed to detect the presence of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), an invasive insect pest that is native to Asia.

Those odd traps worked. Unfortunately. Now we know that EAB is in Berkshire County, unwelcome news for our ash trees (genus *Fraxinus*).

EAB was first detected in Michigan in early 2002 and has since spread like an ash

wildfire to a total of 18 states (so far). The State Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced the most recent EAB spotting was last August in the central Berkshire town of Dalton. The trapping of this single beetle triggered an intensive survey of the surrounding area to determine the size and degree of the infestation and resulted in a state and federal quarantine of Berkshire County that was imposed on March 1 this year.

It is now illegal to transport any ash products out of the quarantined Berkshire county unless under special permit. As of May 1 this year, the state of New York is slated to expand its quarantine to encompass all abutting counties with Massachusetts. There is, however, free movement of the so-called regulated articles within the quarantine area. Regulated articles include the following: any part of an ash tree from leaf tip to root tip including any ash logs, lumber or nursery stock, all hardwood firewood

Cont'd p.6

The Country Store

Public Meeting April 8

By Simon Winchester

With a growing sense of urgency about our town's need for a new general store, the Sandisfield Selectmen have scheduled a required public hearing to consider the matter. It will be held on Monday April 8th at 8 p.m. in the Town Hall Annex, and officials have asked that as many townsfolk as possible try to attend.

The meeting is specifically called to discuss the recent application by Connie D'Andrea for a so-called Special Permit – allowing her to add to the current bar and restaurant license that allows her to run her existing SilverBrook Café, new licenses for “the Operation of Grocery license, Frozen Food Retail License, a Bakery License, & an Operation of Antique-Craft/Gift Shop.”

It may take weeks for the various separate approvals to come through, if at all. But Ms. D'Andrea is confident that all will be settled later this summer, and that she will then be able both to remodel the existing building at No. 57, Sandisfield Road, and rename it The SilverBrook Cafe and Country Store.

She has recently formally told her immediate neighbors of her plans – under regulations that require all the unhappily-termed ‘abutters’ to be informed of changes of use to any existing nearby business. The strength and tone of their views – which will presumably be presented vocally at the public hearing – will be crucial to the town's decision on whether to allow her the special permit, and thus set the town en route to getting the kind of new store and coffee shop that this burgeoning community believes it now so dearly needs. ♣

“There is no substitute for a local newspaper that is doing its job.”

-- Warren Buffett, New York Times, March 2, 2013



WiredWest Chairwoman Monica Webb and Sandisfield WiredWest/MBI rep Jean Atwater-Williams with Governor Patrick at the MBI Construction Kick Off event in Sandisfield, July 2011.

The Governor Returns

Farmington Elementary to be "Lit Up" Online

By Jean Atwater-Williams

On April 4, Governor Duval Patrick will be guest of honor at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the "lighting up" of the **fiber-optic** connection to the Farmington River Elementary School. The governor last visited Sandisfield in July 2011, to kick start the Massachusetts Broadband Institute's "middle mile" construction.

Now that the middle mile – which connects "community anchor institutions" – is nearly complete and will soon be lit, the MBI has turned its attention to the "last mile" of connecting homes and businesses. The Patrick administration has proposed a second \$40 million bond for the MBI to complete the last-mile as part of an \$869 million information technology and innovation bond bill.

WiredWest, the all-volunteer municipal cooperative working on behalf of the residents of more than forty under-served western Massachusetts towns, supports the governor's efforts to fund this vital infrastructure. WiredWest remains committed to the creation of a state-of-the-art fiber-optic broadband network that will be both universally available and affordable, regardless of who ultimately builds it. The WiredWest board is exploring how it can best participate with the MBI to achieve this goal.

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And after all that, there is more. Town News, local Historical Commission is reconstituted with several good ideas for our town, a moose mother and son are captured on film ambling along Cold Spring Road, and still more things going on in Sandisfield.



If that's not enough, the Town Management Committee has opened an on-line Suggestion Box, page 8

COMING UP

Dates & Meetings to Watch for



APRIL

- 1 Last day to submit nomination papers.
- 8 Public Hearing, SilverBrook Store application, Town Hall Annex, 8p.m.
- 11 Town Caucus – Old Town Hall 7:00p.m.
- 16 Last day to object or withdraw nomination papers.
- 16 Special Town Meeting to consider two spending items (See page 13)
- 29 Last day to register to vote for the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Election. Town Hall Annex, 2:00 to 4:00 and 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- 30 Primary for US Senate seat vacated by John Kerry's resignation to become Secretary of State. Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko considered combing the primary with the annual town election, but determined there would be no savings (each election requires eight monitors which would have meant 16 monitors on one day).

MAY

- 18 Annual Town Meeting. Town Hall 10:00a.m.
- 20 Annual Town Election. Town Hall 10:00a.m. to 8:00p.m.

OFFICES UP FOR ELECTION THIS YEAR:

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



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Congratulations to The Times for reaching our third anniversary. Simon writes below that we've published as many pages as *War and Peace*. Maybe not quite, but granting him his exuberance the truth is for sure we have published more pages than most American or even Russian novels. And we're still publishing and growing while many American newspapers are diminishing and, sadly, disappearing.


That we've been able to find enough to write about, month after month, when our subject these three years has been nothing more than the goings-on in a small hilltown in a mostly overlooked corner of Berkshire County, is remarkable. That we've been able to write about that singular subject with a modicum of dignity, without embarrassing ourselves or our Town too much, is beyond remarkable.

We're glad to do it and are proud of our Town. You have all helped us enormously, and all the early volunteers – the editors, designers, photographers, writers, delivery folks, and, yes, readers – built a tremendous platform on which The Sandisfield Times now stands.

When I began working with the Times last June, I wondered in these pages if the paper could be edited with me in Minnesota during the winter. (Some folks go to Miami for the winter, some to Minneapolis. Who's to say what's right?)

But Times volunteers and friends in Town have kept their eyes open and ears to the ground. Because of them it has been possible to edit the paper from far out of town, at least part of the year. There is a great benefit, of course, to being able to drive up Beech Plain or down New Hartford Road or along Route 57, the Jeep windows open even in winter, just seeing and feeling what's going on. But others have filled in some of those blanks. While there is great benefit to being able to drop in at A&M Auto for June's coffee, for stopping for a garlic pizza at Villa Mia, a beer and burger at Tuckers, for taking a chance on a winning ticket at the SilverBrook, there may also be a benefit to getting out of Town awhile, getting a renewed long view of our Town.

So my thanks to all those who keep their eyes open and ears to the ground for the paper. They're doing it for you, our readers. And how

about you, our readers, sending even more ideas for the paper? How about you sending a story idea now and then or even a story? You pick up the phone and relay a tip or a piece of what might be gossip but might really be news? What do you know that we don't? Let us know, and we'll get it into the paper. 

Bill Price
West New Boston

The Sandisfield Times

Three years ago
In one small town,
Writhing and rivering
With a snowstorm of stories to tell
A paper was born.
And it bent to the wind of the people
Finding its place
In among the trees and the tears.

And now we could read about our storms
And find old friends
And talk boldly about gardens and dying
And figure out the smaller things
That sweeten up the day.

When you think about it
Things can happen right down the street
Next to the three rivers
Or on one morning up the Tolland hill.
And someone needs to tell us
Because everything's important
On a country day.

And now we can see things
That should be remembered:
An old barn falling,
Fireworks, an anniversary
A new baby, an old bridge
A fire truck or a square dance
Or just the graven image of the sky.

Three years ago
In one small town
Writhing and rivering
With a snowstorm of stories to tell
A paper was born
And it bent to the wind of the people
Finding its place
Among the trees and the tears.

Val Coleman
Town Hill Road

Tiger Paper Three Years On

By Simon Winchester
Founding Editor


Who, to use the vernacular, would have thunk it? Back in January 2010, a group of us gathered for a pot-luck supper at Liana Toscanini's cottage. Presumably well on in wine and not wishing to venture out into the cold, we asked, half rhetorically of each other: Why don't we start a newspaper?

And so we did: the first issue of The Sandisfield Times appeared at the beginning of April 2010 – eight pages only, with a headline about the impending demolition of the Route 8 houses. Since then, with some thirty-four issues and almost seven hundred pages under our belt – taken together, the size of *War and Peace* – here we are still, unbloodied and unbowed, ready to begin our fourth year of informing, amusing, inspiring, entertaining, titillating (and occasionally infuriating) you, our readers.

Still today, as we wanted to be back when we first launched ourselves into the unknown, we are

determined to be a reflection of you, the members of our treasured small community. We are your monthly bulletin-board, your eagle-eyes, your watchdog and your guardian and your gossip-sheet, always here to say farewell to the passed and departed and welcome the newcomers and the newborn. If we have been at all successful in this venture, it is because of you, the people of Sandisfield – for we have been no more than a mirror, held up to reflect who we all are and what we do, what we wish for and demand. No more than that, and certainly no less.

And it is with this guiding philosophy that we begin yet another year on the grand adventure that is our existence and our presence. We know from what we hear that things are about to change in Sandisfield – major things on which we have yet to report and about which it will take more time (and maybe even more space than another Tolstoy epic) to understand and explain.

But please do be assured that we will be here to do precisely that: to show and tell all of the hundreds of us here what exactly is going on, as our dear old town treads cautiously and warily into its future. Tribuneus Plebis – the Tribune of the People – is here for you, another year on, doing what a tribune does, here under the now venerable masthead of The Sandisfield Times. 



BRIDGE WATCH

YET ANOTHER BRIDGE

CLARK ROAD BRIDGE IS A BRIDGE IN OUR FUTURE. IS IT A BRIDGE TOO FAR?

The replacement for the failing bridge to Willard Platt's home on the west bank of the Farmington will be "free" to the town, but not exactly. This is the bridge that crosses the river off Roosterville Road. The bridge will cost the state about \$1.5 million, but there will be some expense to the Town.

Sandisfield will be responsible for rental for the "landing" zone where construction teams stack equipment and bridge hardware and for some legal and other fees. It is estimated these expenses will cost the Town about \$10,000 per year for three years.

A temporary footbridge will be installed for Willard's use during the construction period.

A public hearing will be held before the construction is put out for bid in September. Anyone in Town can attend and comment, as was done for the bridge planning across the Farmington at Rts. 8 and 57. The hearing date has yet to be announced. ♡



The southbound lane is nearly complete and will soon be carrying all traffic over the Route 8 & 57 Bridge enabling work to begin in April on the northbound side. By the beginning of May traffic crossing over the Route 8 and 57 Bridge will switch over to the southbound lane, according to J. H. Maxymillian (JHM), managers of the Bridge Replacement Project for Mass DOT. A new concrete bridge deck, supporting wing-walls and a concrete safety curb were poured and vehicular rails were mounted to the safety curb. Once drainage and a temporary pedestrian walkway on the bridge's south side are installed, the southbound travel lane will be paved for the traffic switchover.

Photo: Sandy Parisky, Bill Price

WHETHER IT'S A NEW HOME, ADDITION OR COMPLETE REMODEL

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Insult to Injury

Down at the New Boston Store, Again

By Bill Price


Alert readers will recall what's been happening at the New Boston Store. Most recently, the west side of the former store was taken down in February due to a dump truck running into the place last October. This "taking down" reduced the building's size by about a third.

Now more drama. Pete Murray, owner of the store, parked his red '06 Chevy pickup overnight in front of the garage on the east side of the store, the side that faces down Route 8.

One morning early March, about 3 a.m., an automobile heading north approached the store. It was moving much too fast. With a driver possibly under the influence of a legal or illegal substance, the automobile failed to negotiate the bridge construction complex

that makes that corner a bit dicey. Possibly the driver was racing to make the green light that controls the one-way traffic over the bridge.

In any event, the driver crashed his car into the back of Pete's truck and pushed it through the garage. The garage door, Sue Murray reports, is now in the back of the garage and where the garage door should be is now covered with yet another sheet of plywood. The driver, unhurt in the accident, may have been charged with some infraction of the law. We don't even want to know.

Pete's pickup was totaled and has since been hauled away. The Times did not get a photo of Pete's pickup pushed into the building. If we did, we might not have the heart to print it. 

Arrests in Local Burglaries

It's not over yet

By Bill Price




In mid-March, Massachusetts State Police took the unusual step of using reverse-911 calls in order to warn residents of a wave of burglaries taking place across southern Berkshire County. Anyone with a landline telephone received the calls. It was unsettling to many of us – but also reassuring – to receive an automated call that we should be on the lookout for burglars and take precautions to protect our property.

Sandisfield has had its own problems with break-ins and residents were just starting to think the case had been solved. Brian Snow of Otis and Meghan Bartini of Lee were charged late February with breaking into a home on Highland Way in Otis, reported Fred Lanz of the Berkshire County District Attorney's Office. This came after a series of eight break-ins in the Otis/Sandisfield Woodlands, all since January 18.

Sandisfield Police Chief Michael Morrison reported that two other Sandisfield break-ins, on Town Hill and Hammertown Roads, were being looked at as having been done by the same suspects. "There were no Sandisfield B&Es since these arrests," Mike said.

The unsettling phone call from the state police was in response to a wave of burglaries that took place primarily in Richmond, but also Lanesborough, Stockbridge, Otis, and Becket, as well as Sandisfield. Mostly houses that were unoccupied between 8:30 and 5 were targeted, with stolen items including jewelry, electronics, tools, garden equipment, and even, well, lawn furniture.

State police asked the public to report suspicious vehicles in their neighborhoods. The burglar's method was to knock on the door and if someone was home they would ask for directions or say they were searching for a lost dog or looking for work. Police arrested two suspects in this series, both of Pittsfield, so maybe the problem is solved for the time being. It is believed the stolen items would be sold or traded in order to buy drugs.

Last month's Times included two websites for tips for homeowners to help keep their homes secure. We repeat them here as a public service: www.police.brkely.edu/documents/campus-safety/HomeSecurityTips.pdf and www.securitychoice.com/20-tips-for-home-safety.html 


Lock Your Cars!

SANDISFIELD ROAD BREAK IN/ROBBERY

By a Concerned Resident

On the night of March 4/5, a Monday night/Tuesday morning, two of our cars were ransacked in our driveway on Rt. 57, Sandisfield Road. Several items were stolen.

My daughter's car was trashed (glove compartment gone through) and cash stolen along with two new bags of clothes and a GPS unit. My car was also gone through, with two BIC lighters stolen from my ashtray (really!!). We hope and pray that this was not done by someone locally. Maybe it was a random drive-by.

We would be appalled if the person who did this was someone who lived in Town and knows us. We have lived here for over 22 years and never had a problem such as this. We haven't locked our cars for years, but will from now on. We wanted to alert everyone that this is happening and if this notice helps, our worries may be put to rest. 

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Unwelcome Tourist

Cont'd from p.1

(defined as any piece of hardwood less than 48 inches in length), and any life stage of the EAB insect.

Regulated articles may legally leave the quarantine only under strict adherence to an official compliance-agreement-permitting process developed by APHIS and DCR. That agreement stipulates what kind of approved sanitizing treatment or process must be utilized in the movement of regulated articles.



In plain English, to remove regulated ash product from the quarantine zone the wood must first be fumigated, kiln-dried, heat-treated, and/or have the bark and ½ inch of wood removed. Chipping is an acceptable treatment if wood chips measure less than one-inch square. The justification for the quarantine and the special treatments is to effectively sanitize the ash material and help slow the spread of this invasive insect.

Locally, some of the biggest impacts of this quarantine will be the restrictions placed on the movement of split firewood; all hardwood firewood less than 48 inches in length regardless of species (maple, birch, ash, oak etc) is considered regulated and cannot legally leave the quarantine. Sandisfield is on the edge of the current quarantine boundary, and this could impact many of our neighbors in town who have established split-firewood businesses.

Currently there are only two legal options to deliver firewood to clients living in towns outside the quarantine, even as close as Tolland and Blandford in Hampden County and Winsted, Colebrook, and Norfolk in Connecticut. The two options are to either adopt a certified heat-treatment process or move firewood in log-length form (with, of course, no ash on the load!).

The heat-treatment certification is an expensive process, which very few dealers in the state have opted to employ and currently none are located in Berkshire County. The movement of log-length (over 48 inches in length) non-ash

firewood is an option in Massachusetts but not the case if transporting wood to Connecticut. Connecticut has adopted a firewood policy that essentially restricts the movement of any wood intended to be used for heating purposes.

Although there may be some consolation for small businesses in the news that the EAB quarantine boundaries have expanded annually after each summer's trapping/detection season, this is something we hope to avoid by stopping the ash borer from spreading by use of the quarantine and awareness education.

Unfortunately, this little green juggernaut has evaded multiple eradication attempts in other states and regions. Subsequently, the quarantine is designed to slow the spread of this insect. The quarantine effort provides hope to contain the bug and prevent the unnecessary spread of EAB through our ash population. The root cause of the rapid expansion from Michigan is believed to be the human transport of this pest on infested ash wood. Awareness education is designed to prevent human-caused insect dispersal. Studies show EAB can naturally fly about a half mile from an infested tree but prefers to stay local, attacking trees in close proximity. In Asia where this insect is native the pest is actually not a problem with Asian ash trees and studies are currently under way to develop control strategies here in the states. The gradually expanding quarantines are designed to provide communities not already infested with EAB a greater opportunity to develop control measures to keep this pest in check.

The unfortunate reality is that this insect has the potential to affect ash trees on the magnitude that elm trees were affected by the Dutch elm disease and chestnut trees were affected by the chestnut blight. That said; don't take this as an obi-tree-ary. Spread the word to help slow or halt the infestation. The good news is that at this time surveys conducted in Dalton indicate a very low-level of infestation.

In my next article I will discuss ways that we can prepare for the Emerald Ash Borer should we start experiencing widespread ash mortality. 🍷

Questions? Contact the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Forest Health Program at 413-253-1798 ext 204 or me at 413-784-1828 ext 123 or tom.ryan@state.ma.us

What the Quarantine Means

The quarantine order means that certain wood products will be regulated from moving outside the regulated area, including all hardwood firewood (any piece of wood smaller than 48"), all ash nursery stock, and any ash lumber that has not been treated. Proper wood treatments include the removal of bark and half an inch of wood, dry kiln sterilization, fumigation, and heat treatments.

It is allowable, however, to move wood from quarantined county to another quarantined county, which should relieve some of the financial pressure on the wood industry in Berkshire County. The state of New York recently added 22 new counties to their EAB quarantine, including counties that abut the Berkshire County border. This will allow the moving of regulated wood from Massachusetts to the mills that are just over the border in New York.

Plans for future surveys are currently being discussed and EAB traps will be utilized again this summer in Massachusetts, as well as the girdling of approximately 100 ash trees to continue to help narrow the infestation. 🍷

Sentinel Ash

By Brigitte Ruthman



The ancient sentinel ash, the large tree on the left of this Joshua's Farm photo of a calf being released into the fields, did not succumb to the Emerald Ash Borer, but its demise can symbolize the potential slow death of many of its younger siblings across the Berkshires.

The sentinel ash was better than 114 years old when it thundered to the ground in February. I counted each uneven ring as they swerved artfully around and finally merged into a rotten core – thin rings for lean, dry years and thicker ones for years as lush as the one when the tree became “my” tree 16 years ago.

Sprouted before the turn of the last century, its branches had reached wide early in life to absorb abundant light in an open field, a true “wolf tree” of the New England landscape. Somehow, it survived grazing cows and cutting implements or maybe a farmer protected it with a piece of mesh, wanting a sentinel for the sake of shade. I have found lengths of split-rail chestnut used to outline pastures beyond it, from a time before rot resistant chestnut trees were wiped out by an imported blight.

The first airplanes flew over the tree in the ‘30s, around the time the first tractors would have replaced the horse-drawn implements that wound round it. Deer returned as the forest reclaimed the monoculture of agriculture and followed cow trails as deep as wagon wheel ruts.

The tree still owned the sky as beech, maple, and birches quickly grew to claim the abandoned open ground.

A kid climbing the tree would have been able to

see Mt. Adams from its lofty branches before the fields gave over their wild roses and viburnum to trees that grew fast and straight to reach a sliver of light.

The forest was cut back into pasture in the 1990s, returning the old giant to its sentinel pose.

After the sentinel ash became “my” tree, I hung a swing from a perfect horizontal branch that itself was the girth of most other trees. Cows returned to graze and often spent hot afternoons in the sentinel's shade.

It was healthy for a while, arching as high as a cathedral against the setting sun and the moonlit sky. Its gnarly branches were the last to disappear in a snowstorm, the first to take form at dawn. I heard it groan as it leaned against winter winds.

But its canopy began to wither four or five years ago. Suckers sprouted from the trunk. Some limbs gave up their leaves long before fall and other limbs came down in the December ice storm of 2008.

In May, the tree turned lime green on cue as I considered its fate. Twice I went out with a chain saw to take care of the dying thing. Twice I looked up at it and changed my mind. Like a favorite steer, a fall-fattened pig, or a stubborn old rooster, I couldn't part with it.

Its demise became inevitable after the emerald ash borer was found in New York State, then Connecticut, and, last summer, in Dalton.

The tree had lived to old age with strength and grace, without an advancing army of pretty green bugs to find its weakness and suck the last bit of

life from it. Finally, it had to be cut down to keep borers from finding it, to keep it from risking harm, or maybe just put down.

I asked logger friend Henry Gundlach if he might bring up one of his longer chainsaws to cut it. Henry arrived with the same size saw I had. He expertly notched the downhill side of the tree's nearly five-foot diameter trunk. It pulled up on its massive heels and swiveled right as it fell, a last dance in the wind that had for so long determined its pose.

It's a New England truism that good wood warms you twice – once when you cut it and again when you burn it. Ash, long considered the king of firewood, splits easily, dries quickly, and burns hot. But the old giants, the “wolf trees” that once owned the open fields, are another breed. If Henry is right, the old sentinel will not give up its heating fuel value easily. “You'll be arguing with it for a while,” he said. ♣



The sentinel ash tumbled, after more than a century of growth. Photos: Brigitte Ruthman



A First Novel by Town Resident

By Sandisfield Times Reporter

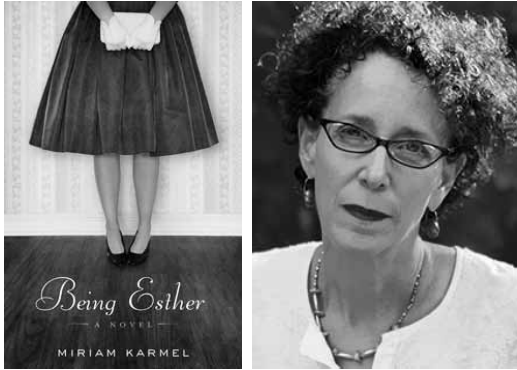


Photo Richard Migot

Miriam Karmel of West New Boston is the author of a novel being published this month by Milkweed Editions. Miriam spends winters in Minnesota but is in Sandisfield most of each spring, summer, and fall.

Being Esther, her first novel, explores the interior consciousness of an elderly woman in Chicago who lives as much in the past as in the present. In the novel, Miriam writes of Esther: "Growing old is one of the most surprising things that has happened to her. She hadn't given it any thought. Then one day, she was eighty-five. Not just old, but an object of derision, pity. Is there any use explaining that she is still herself – albeit a slower, achier, creakier version of the original?"

Despite being increasingly marginalized by her family, her narrowing list of friends and neighbors, and even grocery clerks, Esther forges ahead as if little has changed, although she does begin the unhappy chore of crossing out names in her address book.

A selection of the Independent Bookseller's Association, Miriam's novel has received early praise. A bookseller in Books on the Common in Ridgefield, Conn., described the book as "a small gem – a beautiful, funny and sad meditation on life and old age." Miriam's novel is available at The Book Loft in Great Barrington.

Town Suggestion Box Goes Live

By Debbie Harris

The Sandisfield Suggestion Box is up and running! Here is the place where you can submit your constructive suggestions as to how to help improve our town.

The suggestion box can be accessed either through a link on the Sandisfield website at www.sandisfield.info or directly via email at sandisfieldsuggestionbox@gmail.com.

All suggestions will initially be reviewed for clarity and language and then passed on to the appropriate person, board, or committee for further action.

Please note that this forum is for suggestions. It is NOT intended as a gripe session and any submission that is deemed nothing more than a complaint will be discarded, as will notes that simply approve or disapprove of some action or

condition in the town.

With your suggestion, you must initially include contact information (name, phone number and/or email address) with your submission in case there are questions or the reviewer needs to let you know that your submission has been considered inappropriate. However, you CAN specify that, when the suggestion is passed on, it be done so anonymously.

We know there are tons of great suggestions out there, so please use this opportunity to put them in front of the appropriate people. On occasion we may ask for suggestions on a specific topic for a limited period of time. On those occasions please conform to this restriction and save other suggestions for after the limiting time period has passed.



Well, start those suggestions coming. Let's all put our heads together and help make Sandisfield the place we want it to be and where we want to live!

A New Sandisfield Exchange

Bring almost anything; find what you need

By Vanessa Tarasuk

The economy has been pretty rough for all of us trying to make a living out here in Sandisfield, and this year was the worst our family has ever experienced.

But occasionally hard times bring out the very best in good people. Karen Yvonne of Blandford is one of those good people.

Karen works in the Farmington River School District. Over the years, with the help of the internet, she has been collecting and relocating clothing and household items for struggling families in the Otis area. Any and all costs have come out of her own pocket! Amazing!

That is how we connected. I donated boxes of our boys' clothes they had out-grown. I hadn't expected it, but in return the boys and I were rewarded with whatever Karen had in the next size up. I was so grateful and so impressed that I wanted in on what she was doing for others. So for the last few months

I have been helping Karen pick up donations and organize deliveries and, as an additional benefit, cultivating a grand friendship.

Karen was such an inspiration to me that I wanted to bring her mission to Sandisfield. With spring cleaning right around the corner, I thought I would reach out to you, my community, and offer my services. I will happily pick up any donations of reusable clothing or household items you may want to get rid of and save you a trip to Goodwill or the dump!

If you are in need of something for yourself or your family you can give me a list of what you are looking for and I will happily arrange for you to pick it up or for me to drop it off to you.

My contact information is Vanessa Tarasuk, 123 West Street, 413-258-4831 or email at vtarasuk66@hotmail.com.

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Future Planning Committee Meets

The first meeting of what may be coming our way

Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2013 at the Sandisfield Library

Members present: David Hubbard, Kathy Jacobs, Mike Lutynski, John Skrip, Mary Turek.

Absent: Jeff Grey, Ralph Morrison, Paul Van Sickle, Simon Winchester

The committee voted to appoint Kathy Jacobs as Chairman with others acting as Co-chairman on an as-needed basis. The secretary for the committee remains to be determined.

The committee voted and approved the following mission statement to define its goals and scope:

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

Sandisfield is an attractive rural community with a population of about 800. The strategic planning committee, with input from the residents and taxpayers of Sandisfield, will try to present to the Selectman a long-range plan that will address the present and future needs of its residents. The goal is to maintain the community and promote orderly growth.

1. Outline of the core values of the Strategic Planning Committee:
2. Provide a safe community with a good quality of life
3. Provide quality needed services to town residents
4. Plan for the future
5. Protect the financial health of the Town and promote economic development
6. Protect the environment
7. Conduct committee affairs in a transparent and inclusive manner.

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

David Hubbard reviewed a talking-points document that he authored regarding issues facing the Town and potential options.

Part of the charge to the Committee is to review and assess Town buildings. An approach was discussed on how to proceed with that assignment. It was determined that the Committee would review known building repair requirements with Town departments and help identify the departments' future needs.

An effort will be made to schedule monthly meetings at a time when all members can attend. To that end a meeting schedule will be developed for the year.

Tasks assigned for our next meeting;

- John S. will check with the Town Clerk regarding the committee's member appointment status
- John S. will research a possible mandate in existence that requires all Towns within the Commonwealth to have a Comprehensive Plan in place.
- Mary T. will research and locate an Open Space Plan that the Town may have previously begun.

We want to hear from you, our neighbors, on how we can help the Town prepare for the future years ahead. Please call Kathy Jacobs (258-4535) if you are interested in helping out with this project.

Next meeting Wednesday, April 10, 7 p.m., Fire House #2, Rt. 57, Sandisfield. Please call Kathy for details. 📧



USPS May Be on Its Knees

But Not Our Karen

By Simon Winchester



Miss Sandisfield. The new knee is the bended one. Photo: Simon Winchester

Alleluiah! We have our postmaster back. Karen Cooley, both knees now in excellent shape and the lady herself in the finest of fine fettle back behind the counter after four long winter months away, is ready to notch up her 24th year in the service of Sandisfield as our town's only full-time employee of the great United States Government.

Maybe it remains true that *Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds*; but a bad right knee can certainly slow one courier down, and it was not until clever men with scalpels and screwdrivers concocted Postmaster Cooley a brand-new one last winter that she was able, at last, to return to us, fleet of foot and eagle of eye once more, to resume her duties.

We owe much gratitude to Koren Ahlen, who came here during the coldest months, on temporary postal duty from Richmond (and who indeed now goes on to Mill River, should any of us pass by and want to offer good wishes). And to Connie D'Andrea, who filled in on those days when neither Karen nor Koren – their names confusing us all – happened to be on call.

What postal business now concerns us is the matter of Saturday Delivery, the Cessation Of, a budget-cutting suggestion still under consideration in Washington. Ms. Cooley, still not officially notified, believes that August will see the last of Saturday mails, and that Lisa Leavenworth, our delivery lady for the past twelve months, will henceforward then be able to spend both of her weekend mornings abed, while the rest of us chafe during one of them, and wish for letters that will not arrive. Not until the following Monday. 📧

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

A Sandisfield Naval Hero of the "Barbary Wars"

By Ron Bernard

One of the worst things that can happen to a historian is to run out of time. Researching Sandisfield's colonial doctors for our 250th Celebration book, I found this innocuous mention in George Shepard's 1885 history of the Town.

Dr. Jonathan Cowdery in town a short time, about 1790. Cowdery, an eminent surgeon in the US Navy, was a native of this town, born April 22, 1767. He died in Norfolk, Va., Nov. 20, 1852. He was a prisoner in the hands of the Turks for nearly two years.

Shepard buried this mention in his book, and in effect I buried it again on page 146 in *Sandisfield Then And Now: 1762-2012*. With a publication deadline looming there was no time to research Cowdery's life or this claim of imprisonment by the Turks. But the statement stayed with me after the book was finished: "*prisoner in the hands of the Turks...*" What the heck was that all about?

First I found out more about the family.

In March 1767, Dr. Jabez Cowdery (1741-1826) and his new wife, Ruth Wickham (1742-1815), arrived from Montague, Mass. The circumstances of his establishment in Sandisfield are unknown. We know that their farmstead (2nd Division lots nos. 19-21) was between today's Silverbrook and Viets Roads.

The couple had eight children in Sandisfield including the first, our subject, Jonathan, in 1767. He was followed by Zachariah, Jabez Jr., Ruth, Dorothy, Chloe, Penelope, Luce, and the last, Elihu, in 1782. Another girl, Stellula, was born in 1788 but the event was not registered. Dr. Cowdery served for a short time as a sergeant in the Continental Army during the Revolution. On Sept. 7, 1783 the eight children were admitted as members to the Congregational church.

In 1790, the Cowderys sold their Sandisfield properties and moved to Turnbridge, Vermont, where Dr. Cowdery practiced for many years. He was described in the history of the Cowdery family of America (1911) in his later life as being a physician "of the old school."

Oldest son Jonathan and Mary Bryant of New Marlborough tied the knot in that town in 1789, soon moving to New York to begin married life. The couple had three children: Benjamin Franklin, Issac Newton, and Mary. This marriage appears to have ended for unknown reasons by the early 1800s.



Jonathan Cowdery joined the newly formed (1798) U.S. Navy as a medical officer on Jan. 1, 1800, at New York and was appointed assistant Surgeon on the frigate *Philadelphia*. Later the ship was part of the expedition President Jefferson ordered to the coast of North Africa to protect American merchant interests from marauding Barbary pirates (the infamous "Turks"). In October, 1803, the *Philadelphia* was stranded off the coast of Tripoli and its crew of 350 were captured by the pirates. They were held captive for almost two years under poor conditions.

On Sept. 4, 1804, the also-captured *Intrepid*, anchored in Tripoli harbor, was reportedly intentionally exploded by a rescue team of US sailors (our first "SEAL" team?) in an attempt to deny its use by the pirates. Unfortunately the explosion was premature and 13 Americans aboard were killed. Their bodies washed ashore. Cowdery was ordered by the ruler to bury the remains which he did in two graves

outside the walls of the old castle fort on what is today Martyr's Square in Tripoli, Libya.

The so-called Barbary Wars concluded in 1805 and the Jefferson administration negotiated the prisoner exchange, including our Dr. Cowdery who by then had been promoted to Surgeon. Upon return he was reassigned to the base at Norfolk. In 1808 he married Elizabeth Reddick of that city, a union that produced five more children including one son named George Washington Cowdery.

In 1806, Cowdery published his journal under the title, "*American Captives in Tripoli.*" The book describes in detail the hardships and cruelties as well as everyday banalities of life in captivity. Owing to his rank and medical skills, Cowdery's experience was considerably better than that of the ordinary seamen. He became the personal physician to the local potentate, and from his vantage was able to influence, to some extent, the ruler's attitude and behavior towards his compatriots. Still, he was one of the first American POWs. His journal is the most important document from that campaign, part of the newly formed America's first war, a series of conflicts known as the Tripolitan Wars which established the United States as an international sea power. This particular episode was enshrined in the lyrics of the Marine Corps' anthem, "From the halls of Montezuma, to the shores of Tripoli ..."

Cowdery served his country for the rest of his life and rose to the rank of Surgeon of the Navy. When he died in 1852 the Norfolk Beacon eulogized, "Few men have borne a more unblemished character or been held in such high and universal esteem for all the qualities of head and heart that constitute the efficient officer and worthy citizen. Dr. Cowdery was perhaps not only the oldest surgeon, but the oldest officer in the Navy."

And he was born right here between Silverbrook and Viets Roads. 🇺🇸



Summer Internship Offer at Bidwell House Museum

HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIP FOR LOCAL STUDENTS

By Sandisfield Times Reporter



Is there a young high school student in Town interested in local history? Any interested student 14-16 can apply to spend two summer weeks at the Bidwell House Museum in Monterey immersed in primary historical research and get to know people who are making careers in Berkshire colonial history.

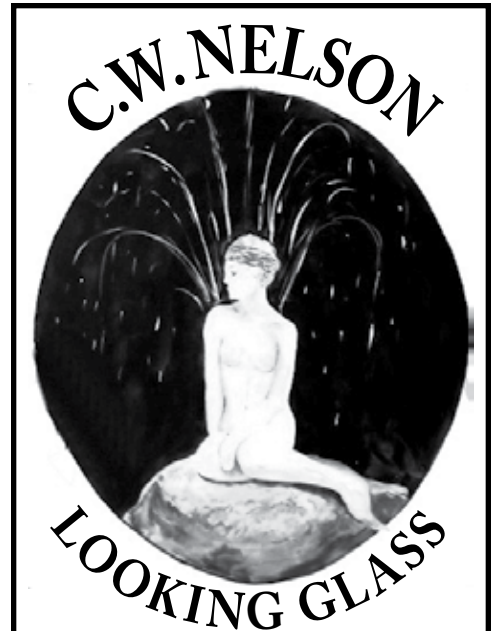
"I'd love to have a student from Sandisfield," said Barbara Palmer, Executive Director of the Bidwell House Museum. "We've had interns from New Marlborough and Sheffield, but not Sandisfield yet. This is one of my favorite programs. It's exciting to watch the interns grow and learn and experience what we have to offer. They thrive here."

The Bidwell House, built about 1750, is a restored Georgian saltbox-style home, originally a parsonage, surrounded by nearly 200 acres of grounds and hiking trails. As a Young History Scholar Intern, each high school intern receives a \$200 stipend for the two-week internship. The museum is also seeking a college student for an 8-week internship. Applications are accepted from high school students throughout the Berkshires.

Interns spend two weeks at the museum: in week one the intern learns about colonial Berkshire history, the Bidwell family, the house, the property and the collection, and how docents give tours; in week two each intern chooses a research topic and begins to give tours of the museum as a junior docent.

The internship application can be found on the museum's website: www.bidwellhousemuseum.org

Deadline for applications is April 30th, and applicants will be invited for an interview. Please call or email Barbara Palmer, Executive Director of the museum, with any questions: bidwellhouse@gmail.com, 413-528-6888.



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TOWN BUSINESS

Submitted by Dolores Harasyko, Town Clerk

Edited by Bill Price

Selectmen's Minutes

February 11, 2013

*Present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray,
Road Superintendent Stephan Harasyko,
Administrative Assistant Dolores Harasyko*

Steve presented Highway Department updates. Highways are in good shape following Snow Storm Nemo. We had approximately two feet of snow. No major breakdowns reported. Department will be working on widening the snowparks on roadsides and winging back the banks. The F550 is in for repairs again. Ralph Morrison commented on the good communications throughout the storm and commended the Highway Department on the good job during the storm.. On behalf of the Selectmen Patrick thanked everyone for their dedicated work through the storm. Kathy Jacobs kept the town website updated with alerts throughout the storm.

Alice Boyd in to review and present the Community Development Block Grant for signatures from the Selectmen.

Jane Gleason, Administrator for the School, School Committee members John Skrip, Nick DellaGiustina, and Gary Bottums present to review the school budget. Jane and John handed out documents regarding the budget. Jane reviewed the budget and revenue line-by-line. A lengthy discussion followed. School choice discussed: we "choice out" 32 students and we have 22 coming in. Jane responded to all questions. She reviewed the calculations she uses to determine the budget breakout for Sandisfield and Otis. The Selectmen thanked her for the very thorough explanation of the school budget.

Reviewed FY2014 budget requests. Dolores reviewed her various jobs for the Town. Discussed conferences budgeted under the Town Clerk budget. Dolores explained that there are four conferences through the year. She usually attends one, but has budgeted for two because she is training the Assistant Town Clerk who should attend at least one conference. Attending conferences is the only venue to keep up-to-date on procedures and changes in the law. Kathy Jacobs of the Finance Committee suggested

cutting this in half but added if the Selectmen approve then the Finance Committee will be OK with the decision. Patrick, on behalf of the Selectmen, said he fully supports the education of all employees as it certainly benefits the town.

Reviewed and approved budgets. Highway, Treasurer, and Library Chairmen will be called in for follow-ups to questions.

Discussed the Future Planning/Building Committee. Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff to appoint Ralph Morrison, David Hubbard, Mary Turek, and Simon Winchester to the committee.

Patrick handed in a letter of resignation from the Future Planning/Building Committee, effective immediately, due to family and job obligations that make him unable to attend meetings at this time.

Reviewed license issues for the SilverBrook Café.

Discussed complaint from Jane Hason regarding her neighbor. Jane had a discussion with the neighbor, who said he is working on it. Jeff will follow up.

Discussed discontinued and abandoned roads.

Discussed next week's Selectmen's Meeting. We will not add more items to the agenda, and will contact Ron Bernard to ask him to attend the following week as we need next week to work on budgets.

Selectmen's Minutes

February 19, 2013

*Present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray,
Administrative Assistant Dolores Harasyko*

Absent: Road Superintendent Stephan Harasyko, due to snow and ice events

Bill Bures is on the agenda but did not attend the meeting.

The SilverBrook Café will be on next week's agenda for a hearing to determine whether the restaurant license has been abandoned.

Discussed FY2014 budgets. Library Trustee Clare English contacted the Finance Committee and answered their questions regarding the library budget. Steve also contacted the Finance Committee on highway budgets. Treasurer Teresa DellaGiustina reviewed the tax lien process. Teresa and Ralph Morrison discussed the Ambulance Collection Expense account. Ralph would like the expense to come out of the revolving ambulance account. Teresa will check with DOR to determine if this is feasible.

Kathy Jacobs asked Steve to do a cost analysis of buying a new truck and subbing out all the work

that the truck is used for. Jeff does not agree that this would be a cost effective option. The Selectmen are OK with Steve doing the analysis.

Reviewed FY2014 budget submissions.

Discussed the Finance Committee's response to budget questions with "if the Board of Selectmen are happy with it, then I guess the Finance is okay with it." Patrick addressed the Finance Committee's request early in the budget process to have better relations and a united front. A lengthy discussion followed. The Selectmen have provided an open meeting every week to discuss budgets and see input.

The Police Department is requesting a new vehicle. We will follow up as to whether that is for the upcoming year or the year after.

Discussed the bidding process. Discussed an energy audit. Review the dump sticker account.

Teresa requested that the Selectmen sign the weekly warrants in a timely fashion. She cannot send out checks without the Selectmen's signatures on the warrants.

Selectmen's Minutes

March 4, 2013

*Present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray,
Road Superintendent Stephan Harasyko,
Administrative Assistant Dolores Harasyko*

Steve presented Highway Department updates. Reviewed and signed Chapter 90 paperwork. Discussed plans for FY2014 road work. Patrick would like to see New Hartford Road completed. He suggested funding half of the project from Free Cash and half from Chapter 90. Steve will work on obtaining an estimate. Steve would also like to work on West Street and W. Hubbard Road. He has discussed "cold in place" with Mass DOT's Kathy Stevens. He would also like to work on Town Hill Road drainage where 14 culverts need replacement. He would like to use Chapter 90 funds for this also, as an approximate cost of \$60,000.

Discussed water heaters for the Town Garage and Old Town Hall. Steve received an estimate of \$1,600. Kathy Jacobs of the Future Planning Committee explained that this need could be prioritized when they do the building assessment. We need to come up with an amount for a line item starting this year for building repairs as Town buildings have fallen into disrepair. Kathy suggested a 5- to 10-year plan with jobs being done each year. Steve would like to prioritize the water heaters and blacktop repairs around the Old Town Hall. There is no bathroom at the

Town Garage and the bathroom used is at Old Town Hall. There is no hot water at either the Garage or Old Town Hall. Kathy suggested that Steve look into propane on-demand hot-water systems. Steve reviewed the electrical problems at the Garage. The panel is overloaded and keeps tripping off, and he would like the electrical inspector to review the panel.

Steve reported that he fell at Town Garage on January 12, 2013, on ice and injured his shoulder and will need time off for rotator-cuff surgery on April 2.

In response to a request at the February 19 Selectmen's Meeting, Steve discussed the cost and financing of a new truck versus subbing out the work.

Library Trustees Clare English, Mary Turek, and Laurie Green in to discuss the condition of the library building. Laurie presented photographs of deterioration of several areas. Four windows are broken; none of the library windows can be opened. Several areas of siding are rotting. Kathy Jacobs will present this information to the Future Planning Committee.

Kathy discussed holding a Sandisfield Day and would like to have Carr's field mowed. Steve has money in his budget for this.

Ron Love in to review estimates for some building repairs. The Future Planning Committee will be in charge of obtaining quotes and prioritizing the projects.


Discussed the gas and diesel accounts. The Selectmen will contact Police and Fire Departments. The Highway Department has approved their portion of the bill.

Discussed the Storm Nero blizzard.

Reviewed FY2014 budgets. We will have an article on the annual town warrant for building repairs. Patrick asked Kathy Jacobs to review with the Finance Committee the use of Free

Cash. Discussed the article we have every year to move money from Free Cash to offset the tax rate. We will use the \$50,000 we usually transfer to cover the first of four payments for the loan for the New Hartford Road work. This was the original intent when the Town applied for the loan.

Reviewed the ambulance bid. Ralph left the 67-page spec package on Dolores' desk with a note for her to advertise the bid. Dolores was able to complete the bid only after seeking information from John Burrows and Rico Sanchez. She made it very clear that she is not a procurement officer and does not want to be held responsible if something is missing from the bid. She usually does not bid things out for other departments, only Selectmen's and Highway Department, but did set this up for Ralph. The Selectmen agreed.

Reviewed the special permit application received for the SilverBrook Café. Will follow up with Town Council. 

Special Town Meeting Scheduled, April 16


Vote Required to Pay for Repairs to Two Town Buildings

By Sandisfield Times Reporter

Two buildings belonging to the Town need to be repaired and the sooner the better. In order to appropriate money to fix them, a special town meeting will be held April 16, Tuesday, at the Old Town Hall at 7 p.m. The repairs will cost about \$21,500.

One of the buildings is the Town Garage on Silverbrook Road. Equipment is stored in a loft there and drivers have had to use a ladder to get stuff up and down. One of the drivers recently fell from the ladder and is now on worker's comp. The ladder needs to be replaced with a stairway, says our OSHA rep, as the first order of business. The second order of business at the garage is the installation of a hot-water heater. The guys have been washing up with cold water for years now and are tired of it.

The second Town building in need of urgent attention is the Town Hall Annex on Sandisfield Road. A basement door in the back that doesn't fit tight allows rainwater and melting snow to pour inside across the floor. Since there are two other ways into and out of the basement it's been determined that the doorway isn't necessary. It will be blocked up tight.

Show up at the meeting and vote for or against these repairs. The second item at the Town meeting is to see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$3,900 or another sum for the Treasurer's Tax Lien Expense and to transfer that amount from Free Cash. You get to vote on that, too. 



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SANDISFIELD HISTORICAL COMMISSION RECONSTITUTED

By Ron Bernard

Almost every town in the Commonwealth has a local historical commission, and now Sandisfield does too. Again.

We had a Sandisfield Historical Commission more than 30 years ago, but over time interest and purpose slipped away and the Commission in effect disappeared. Given renewed interest in the town's history after our 250th anniversary and the publication of *Sandisfield Then and Now: 1762-2012*, the Town Select Board in February appointed several new members of the Sandisfield Historical Commission, and the Commission was back in business.

Some of the Commission's work had been continued in a way by the Sandisfield Historical Society, but the fact is the two entities serve different purposes. Historical commissions


are different from historical societies and from historic district commissions, although they share certain aims. Historical societies are private organizations primarily concerned with local heritage. Typically a society has a building or museum where artifacts and memorabilia can be stored. Historic district commissions, on the other hand, have authority and responsibility for regulatory review for design or proposed construction or destruction within a defined historic district. Many towns in Berkshire County have historic districts but there are none in Sandisfield nor are any being proposed.

A historical commission, for its part, encourages and plans for the preservation and protection of a town's historical and archeological assets. The commission identifies and researches places and sites of historical value and raises awareness about their importance for the town. Members often coordinate with other preservation organizations such as land trusts, historical societies, or neighboring towns' commissions on issues and projects of mutual interest.

A local commission's role is strictly advisory, limited to making recommendations to select boards on matters relating to protection and

preservation of historic buildings and sites. It is a panel that can serve as the contact point for the state historical commission and the state archeologist, for example, for surveys, grant applications, and honorary historical designations.

The occasion of our 250th anniversary last year stimulated a number of worthy ideas and suggestions that our newly reconstituted commission will evaluate. Short-term ideas include signs for town cemeteries (already done), permanent historic markers at the five original villages, an improved display of historic images at the Town offices, and assistance to owners of antique buildings who wish to obtain outside plaques. A significant long-term goal is the potential honorary recognition of the Town of Sandisfield on the National Register of Historic Places.

Meeting times and places will be posted and announced, and participation by Town residents will be encouraged. Suggestions and comments may be directed to Commission members: Ron Bernard, Chair, (269-0012); Eric Pachulski, Vice-Chair, (258-4931); or Don Peet, (258-4166). 

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Wildlife on Cold Spring Road

Photos: Jean Atwater-Williams



Jean Atwater-Williams was home March 15 when Sandi The Moose and her son, Otis The Moose, wandered west along the road outside the house. Jean had time to find the camera, come back outside, stand beside the road as the two continued ambling by as if practicing for a parade, and take a few pictures. Otis The Moose must be in early puberty, since his horns are just budding. Mother and Son didn't stay on the road long, but soon cut east across the Bernard/Atwater-Williams snow-covered yard.

While we're glad to see the moose, both of them, The Times wonders where the bears are this spring? Is it too early? Did the bears see snow and crawl back in their dens? It's about time for them to show up, so fill the bird feeders. The bears are going to wake up hungry.

“Then and Now” to Stay Here

ABSTRACT SCULPTURE HAS BEEN DONATED TO THE TOWN

By Bill Price



“Then and Now” at the intersection of Route 57 and New Hartford Road, almost exactly where Sandisfield Center stood in the 1800s.

Photos: Bill Price

The abstract sculpture put in place in honor of our 250th Anniversary last summer will stay where it is.

The granite sculpture and the platform it stands on were donated to the Town by the artist Binney Meigs and Chuck Nelson of C.W.Nelson Landscape Design and Nursery. The Town Selectmen have formally accepted the offer, with Selectman Patrick Barrett adding, “It’s a generous and wonderful gift to the Town. The sculpture stands on Town property already. Our responsibility will be to keep the area neat and mowed.”


Binney, who lives in Sheffield, is a nephew of the late John and Mary Brock, longtime Sandisfield residents and former owners of the Snow Farm property. Binney has been involved with stone carving and landscaping for many years and has worked with Chuck on other projects, but never on what could be considered a civic project.

The sculpture is a thick slab of granite with a hole drilled through the upper portion. “Chuck and I named it ‘Then and Now’ after the Sandisfield History by Ron Bernard,” Binney said. “The stone has a past to it, and as we were putting it up we were thinking of not only the continuum of history but the commemoration of a place. In a way the slab represents the place, and looking through the center of the hole – at

where the center of Sandisfield actually used to be – we see the past in the form of a picket fence, much like you would have seen in Sandisfield two hundred years ago.”

The wood for the split rail fence was donated by Don and Mary Turek of Berkshire Woods Realty.

There are no plans for trees or shrubs around the sculpture. “It stands on what is absolutely solid ledge,” Chuck said. “Nothing with roots would grow very well there anyway.”

The sculpture is within yards of the site of Sandisfield’s Congregational Church, built in 1852. The church, the third to stand at the Center and one of the finest structures in Berkshire County, was struck by lightning and destroyed in 1908. It is perfectly fitting that the sculpture, with its abstract hole in the center, stands where Sandisfield Center was located so long ago. 



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Comings and Goings

Betty in a rowboat at Atwater Pond, maybe early 1940s

Photo: Judi Friedman



BETTY WILBER 1922-2013

Mary Elizabeth "Betty" Wilber, a lifelong resident of Sandisfield, died March 11 at Fairview Commons in Great Barrington.

Known to everyone in New Boston as Aunt Betty, before moving to Fairview she lived one of the old houses on the river at the intersection of Rts. 8 and 57. The house was demolished in 2009 to make room for the New Boston Park. Aunt Betty loved cats and her home a refuge for strays.

Betty was born May 4, 1922 at home on Atwater Pond in Sandisfield. Her parents, Samuel R. Wilber, Sr. and Mary Ellen King Wilber, rented the Atwater/Doty home on the lake. She was predeceased by her brother, Samuel R. Wilber, Jr., who was a very popular police chief in Town, Selectman for six years, a key member of the American Legion and who organized the Sandisfield Boy Scouts.

She attended the one-room school houses in Sandisfield and graduated from Lee High School. She worked at Sun-Chief Electrics in Winsted, Conn., and then for the New Boston Nursing Home where she served as head cook for over 30 years. She retired in 1991.

Betty was a dedicated lifelong member of the former Sandisfield Grange, serving as Grange Master in the 1950s. She was also a member of the Monterey Grange and the Berkshire South Pomona Grange, as well as The New Boston Congregational Church.

Aunt Betty was well known for her cooking and could always be counted on for fresh cookies and hot tea anytime anyone came to visit, even while she was at Fairview Commons.

Betty is survived by her sister-in-law, Jeane Wilber, and by her nephews David and John Wilber. She leaves several other nieces and nephews as well as grand nieces and nephews.

Betty's family received friends on March 15, at Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home in Great Barrington. Burial will be in the spring at Sandisfield Center Cemetery.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Fairview Commons Activities Fun through Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, 426 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230. Remembrances may be sent to the family through www.finnertyandstevens.com



VIOLET M. HRYCKVICH 1930-2013

Violet M. Hryckvich of Roosterville died peacefully at home on Sunday, March 24, 2013, surrounded by family, after a three-year battle with lung cancer.

A native and lifelong resident of Sandisfield, Violet was born on July 4, 1930 to Walter and Mabel Adams. She was the oldest of nine children. Violet was a devoted friend who loved her family and helped many neighbors in need. An avid gardener and cook – no one ever left her table hungry. She was a long-time polling booth and VA volunteer and member of the First Congregational Church of Blandford.

She is survived by her husband of 64 years, Alexander Hryckvich, and her daughter Linda Fales and her husband, Tenney of Egremont; two grandchildren, Alice Weaver of San Diego, California, and Alexcia Adams and her husband Paul of St. Paul, Minnesota, and her great-grandson, Andrew Tenney Adams. She also leaves her brothers Walter and David Adams and David's wife Mary; her sisters Doris Reed; Edith Daniels and her husband George; Eva Hunt; and Marie Cripps and her husband Donald, along with many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Violet was predeceased by her brothers Donald and sister Eunice and grandson Justin.

A graveside service will be held at Sandisfield Center Cemetery at a future date.

Donations may be made to Hospice of the Berkshires via Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, 426 Main St., Great Barrington, MA. 01230. Remembrances may be sent through www.finnertyandstevens.com

One of Violet's favorite scriptures was Psalm 121: I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.



ROAD MAINTENANCE?

To the Editor:

This is my eighth winter in Sandisfield (other years spent in New Marlborough) and I feel trapped! No matter which road I take to get to Great Barrington or Pittsfield or Lee or Monterey or anywhere else for that matter, I must drive on the absolutely worst roads I've ever encountered. The moment I leave the Sandisfield town line things seem to go rather smoothly. By that time my body aches so badly from the potholes and bumps along the way that I wonder what possessed me to move to this side of the town line.

So, here's a question: Is there someone out there who can help our town crew figure out the best way to maintain our roads, given the limits of our town budget? This is not to say that our road crew doesn't work hard, I think they do. But why do the other towns have better roads? What are they doing that we're not doing?

If we're ever going to increase the tax base in Sandisfield (i.e., attract new home owners and increase the town's revenue) we really need to fix ourselves up. Somebody out there must know about this stuff, don't you think?

Rita Kasky, Silverbrook Road

LOCAL SAMARITANS

To the Editor

One blustery and ice-cold Saturday last month my aged Land Rover died on me on Route 57, in (of course) a cellphone dead-zone. People were astonishingly helpful. A Sandisfield neighbor never before met, Michael Downer, stopped, took my wife into town – and to the very place she was due to meet a friend, well out of his own way – from where she called Triple A. As I waited at least a dozen people stopped. One couple offered me a blanket, another a flask of coffee. One carpenter, a vocal critic of this paper, stopped just to keep me company. Then the saintly Ralph Morrison arrived, scooped up the car and gave me a lift to my front door on Silverbrook Road. His assistant called after the weekend. "Good news," she said. I assumed Ralph was making enough money from me to jet off for a Hawaiian holiday. "Your fuel gauge was stuck. You had run out of gas. We put in five gallons of unleaded – otherwise, no charge."

While I waited, I took notes. About the only people who didn't stop had New York plates and drove BMWs (reminding me of the old joke about the difference between a BMW and a hedgehog). Those who did stop drove trucks, and by and large they lived here. Which all makes me doubly delighted to live in this splendid old town – and to have neighbors like Michael Downer and Ralph Morrison, the blanket lady, and the coffee guy. Thank you all, so much.

Simon Winchester, Silverbrook Road



By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

Our next genealogy assistance will be held April 24, Wednesday, at 6:30 p.m.

We are experiencing some new interest finding ancestors. Using our International Ancestry.com subscription, we have new genealogy books here to help beginners begin to climb their family trees. We also can provide charts to help keep you organized.

Please e-mail me at sandisfieldlibrary@yahoo.com or call (258-4966) with research questions. I can assist you with family research: census, World Wars I and II, draft cards, ship records, and immigration records. Please take advantage of the great experience of finding your family's past with help from your Town Library.

NEW BOOKS:

Touch & Go/Lisa Gardner
 All Decent Animals/Oonya Kempadoo
 The Tide of Memory/Sidney Sheldon
 Starting Now/Debbie Macomber
 The Edge of the Earth, Christina Schwarz
 Aunty Dimity and the Lost Prince/Nancy Atherton
 Midnight at Marble Arch/Anne Perry
 Widow's Tears/Susan Wittig Albert
 Secrets from the Past/Barbara Taylor Bradford
 Whiskey Beach/Nora Roberts
 Daddy's Gone a Hunting/Mary Higgins Clark
 Let the Dead Sleep/Heather Graham
 Taking Eve/Iris Johansen
 12 of Never/James Patterson
 Unintended Consequences/Stuart Woods



More wildlife at the Bernard/Atwater-Williams place on Cold Spring Road.

Photo: Jean Atwater-Williams

NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro. Please send future notices for Now Hear This! to calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org.

APRIL EVENTS

CLAM RIVER HIKE on Saturday, April 6 at 1:00 p.m. FREE! Learn how the Berkshire Natural Resources Council and other landowners are creating habitat for the threatened New England cottontail. The distance is 1 to 2 miles over trail, roads, and off trail. Bring plenty of water, an extra layer, snacks, and appropriate footwear. This program will be led by Amanda L'Etoile. Contact Amanda for confirmation (aletoile@bnrc.net) Meet at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex

SANDISFIELD TOWN CAUCUS on Thursday, April 11 at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall

POTLUCK LUNCH and MEETING at the Sandisfield Historical Society, Saturday, April 13th. The meeting will be at 11 a.m., followed by our usual pot luck lunch at 12 noon. This is the first meeting for 2013 and planned events for 2013 will be discussed. All are welcome to join us for the meeting and/or lunch. We look forward to seeing new and old members and anyone interested in the organization. Hope to see you there.

TAI CHI sponsored by the Sandisfield Council on Aging but open to all on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall in Sandisfield beginning April 23. Free! Wear comfortable clothing and shoes.

ELDER LAW DISCUSSION The Sandisfield Council on Aging (COA) will be inviting a lawyer specializing in elder issues for an open discussion for all interested individuals in May. COA Chairperson Linda Riiska is seeking questions and topics of interest prior to the meeting (date to be announced). Linda can be reached at 258-4816.

DOG LICENSES All dogs in Sandisfield must be licensed each year. License applications must be submitted to the Town Clerk between April 1 and May 31, 2013. After this time, dog owners can incur a \$25.00 fine for an unlicensed dog. Applications are available at the Town Hall Annex or online at www.sandisfield.info

APRIL EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

TAI CHI at the Otis Town Hall weekly beginning Saturday, April 6, from 10:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. \$7.00 per class (non-Otis residents). For more information, visit www.noticeotis.com

ENVIRONMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL on Sunday, April 7 from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. at the Triplex Cinema in Great Barrington. FREE! Limited seating, arrive early. For more information, visit www.projectnative.org

KOPS and KIDS CAMP for children ages 5-12 sponsored by the Otis Police Department. FREE but registration required (www.townofotisma.com) and space is limited. First preference to Otis and Tolland children. The program will be held on April 18, 19, and 20 during the day. The mission of the program is to promote safety, help children feel comfortable talking with police, and provide fun activities for children during April vacation.

HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY at the Bidwell House in Monterey. Applications available at www.bidwellhousemuseum.org Open to area students with an interest in history. \$200 stipend earned for a two-week summer internship. Deadline for applications is April 30. (See article p. 11)

ONGOING EVENTS

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

Selectmen, every Monday at 7:00 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

Farmington River Regional School District, first Monday of the month, 7 p.m., Farmington River Regional School, Rt. 8, JoAnn Austin, Superintendent. Public Welcome. Planning

Board, second Monday of the month, 6 p.m., Old Town Hall.

Board of Assessors, second Tuesday of the month, 5 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

Conservation Commission, third Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

Board of Health, first Wednesday of the month, 6 p.m., Old Town Hall.

Boy Scouts, contact Western Mass Council of Boy Scouts for a local troop at 413-418-4002.

Council on Aging, every Wednesday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Senior Center, Town Hall Annex. Pot luck lunch at noon, bingo at 1 p.m. Free blood pressure screening every fourth Wednesday.

Finance Committee, second Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m., Sandisfield Library. Public welcome.

PTO, second Thursday of the month, 3:15 p.m., Farmington River Regional School. Child Care provided.

The Children's Health Program Play Group, now every Tuesday when school is in session, 9:30-11 a.m., Farmington River Elementary School music room. Led by Laura Messina. For more information call 413-644-0104, Ext. 1159.

Senior Lunch Program, every Tuesday when school is in session, 12:15 p.m., Farmington River Regional School. For more information or reservations call Lynette at 413-269-4466. Cost \$2.00.

Sandisfield Public Library Hours: Monday and Tuesday 9 a.m.- 2:30 p.m., Wednesday 6:30-8:30 p.m., Thursday 2:30-5:30 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. Call ahead at 258-4966.



THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

P.O. Box 584
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www.sandisfieldtimes.org

Your donations are vital to our ability to continue publishing The Times.

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. For more information visit our website www.sandisfieldtimes.org.

Copies of *The Sandisfield Times* are available in Sandisfield at A&M Auto, the Dump, Post Office, the New Boston Inn, the SilverBrook Café, Villa Mia, MJ Tuckers, and When Pigs Fly Farm. Copies are also available in Otis at Katie's Market, Papa's Fuel, Otis Library, Otis Poultry Farm, the Farmington Elementary School, the Farmington River Deli and Terranova's Café. Other locations include The Roadstore Café and the Monterey General Store in Monterey and the Southfield Store in New Marlborough.

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To have the *The Times* mailed to your home, please complete the information below and send a check for \$25 (annual subscription fee for 11 issues) made out to *The Sandisfield Times* to:

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We welcome submissions, comments and suggestions, including letters to the editor **BY THE 15TH OF THE MONTH PRIOR**. We may edit for space, style or clarity. We will try to publish Public Service Announcements when we have room, with priority given to Sandisfield organizations. No portion of the *The Sandisfield Times* may be reproduced without permission.

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