

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume IV, Number II

May 2013

## IS A PART-TIME ADMINISTRATOR IN OUR FUTURE?

*The Town Management Committee Recommends ....*

*By Debbie Harris*

The Town of Sandisfield will be hiring a part-time town administrator if the proposal is accepted at the Annual Town Meeting coming up May 18.

The Town Management Review Committee recommended the proposal, and the idea was accepted at the March 18 meeting of the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen voted to add the position at \$15,000 per year to the FY 2014 budget, subject to approval at the Annual Meeting, and asked the Committee to draft a job description. The Committee did so, and the draft was approved by the Selectmen at their April 22 meeting.

The next step is presenting the proposal at the Town Meeting so it can be voted on along with other budget items.

The Committee recognized that our Selectmen are all part-time officials with other jobs and families. Therefore, the Selectmen need assistance in overseeing the daily running of the Town and its boards and committees. The Committee proposed a part-time position for someone who will help provide efficiency and transparency to town government. This person is to have no responsibilities for handling money, should be someone with no particular agenda, and a person who can work with all Town personnel and citizens to help move things along. This person should be hired by the Selectmen and serve at the will of and under the direction of the Selectmen. As a part-time employee, no benefits (such as health insurance, vacation or sick time) are to be included in the remuneration.

This completes what the Town Management Review Committee considers the final phase of our work. Please see page 2 for information on the Town Management Committee's Suggestion Box reached via the town website. Committee Members: Teresa DellaGiustina, Debbie Harris, Rhee Kasky, Bill O'Brien, Kathleen Segrin, John Skrip, Joe Zeller.



## Town Going to Pot?

*By Simon Winchester*

Our town may be going to pot. Literally.

The committee that has been charged with examining Sandisfield's long term financial future is now considering a revolutionary source of income hitherto prohibited by law: the growing and distribution of medical marijuana.

The prescribing and consumption of marijuana to ease pain has been legal in Massachusetts since the beginning of the year, following the overwhelming approval of a ballot issue in last November's election. The state is the 18th to allow use of the drug; California was the first, with its own law enacted in 1996. Connecticut currently allows the drug. New York still does not.

Under regulations currently being drawn up by the state's Department of Public Health, each county – including our own Berkshire County – is to have at least one marijuana dispensary and can have as many as five. Sandisfield's newly-established Strategic Planning Committee is currently considering a proposal that one such dispensary be created here – an

*Cont'd p. 8*

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# HEARING SET FOR NEW BRIDGE AT ROOSTERVILLE

By Times Reporter

A public hearing about the proposed replacement of the Clark Road Bridge will be held at Old Town Hall on May 15 at 7:00 p.m. The hearing, to be conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, is intended to provide residents with information about the project and present an opportunity for residents to express views and comments.

The bridge to be replaced is the bridge across the Farmington River at the Clark Road intersection with Roosterville Road below New Boston. The bridge serves Willard Platt's home on the west side of the river and Clark Road that ends at Willard's house. A temporary footbridge will be installed for Willard's use during construction.

The bridge, says MassDOT, has needed replacement for some years and it's "turn" has come up. It will cost about \$1.5 million, mostly recouped from the federal government, but the Town of Sandisfield will be responsible for rental of the "landing" zone where construction teams will stack equipment and hardware, as well as some legal and other fees, estimated at about \$10,000 per year for three years. The Town will be responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private and public lands.

Written views can be submitted prior to or at the hearing. Plans will be on display 30 minutes before the hearing begins, with an engineer in attendance to answer questions. Project inquiries may be emailed to [dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us](mailto:dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us). A project handout will be available on the MassDOT website at <http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/Highway>.

<i>Dates to Remember</i>	
<i>All-Board Meeting</i>	<i>May 13</i>
<i>Town Meeting</i>	<i>May 18</i>
<i>Town Election</i>	<i>May 20</i>



## Town Suggestion Box Open for Business

By Debbie Harris

The Town Suggestion Box is up and running already! Several people have already made submissions, although many have just done so on a test basis to make sure that the forum is really working. Suggestions submitted so far have included topics such as burning permits and adding contact information for the police to the town website.

The suggestion box, which is for suggestions only – no gripes or "attaboys", please – can be accessed via a link on the town website ([www.sandisfield.info](http://www.sandisfield.info)) or directly by email to [sandisfieldsuggestionbox@gmail.com](mailto:sandisfieldsuggestionbox@gmail.com). It was proposed by the Town Management Review Committee.

Suggestions are initially monitored for clarity, language and appropriateness and then passed to the responsible person, board, or committee for action. All submissions need to include a name and contact information in case of questions by the monitor, but the submissions can be passed on anonymously if desired.

We know there are lots of good ideas floating around out there, so please take advantage of this forum. The Town really needs to hear from you if we (yes, all of us) are to make this a better place. So, please, keep those emails coming straight into the Town Suggestion Box.

# SilverBrook Granted Permit for Store

## But Happy May Make Connie Sad

By Simon Winchester

It looks increasingly likely that Connie D'Andrea, current proprietor of the SilverBrook Café, will receive the licenses she needs to open a new general store in town – though her bid to do so is coming under increasingly keen scrutiny, as well as facing potential competition.

In particular, her wish to continue to operate a bar inside the same building that sells milk and eggs and other essentials is being openly criticized: as Patrick Barrett, senior Town Selectman remarked at the special meeting called to consider the application, "I wouldn't want to take my kids in there."

However, a reluctant Mr. Barrett did eventually agree to join his Select Board colleague Jeff Gray in voting to grant Ms. D'Andrea the necessary special permit. It remains only for the required 3-week appeal period to pass without challenge and work can begin on creating a replacement for the New Boston Store damaged by a runaway truck last fall, which Pete Murray, the longtime proprietor, has indicated he will not re-open.

Interestingly, a not-so-trivial challenge to Connie's plan is becoming apparent with an application gathering steam to build a gas station and Mini-mart on Route 8 across from Tuckers. The former owner of a service station in Lee, Happy Banga, has already been granted a permit to store 30,000 gallons of gasoline in underground tanks at the proposed site. He is now steering his application for a full-service gas station and market through the various Town committees. He is likely to experience some heavy weather with the Conservation Commission, which will consider his application on May 21.

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## Change


The Times sends regards to our neighbors in Boston. We extend the Town's sympathies to the families of those killed in the bombing and to everyone injured and their families. And our gratitude to all of the responders and law enforcement personnel involved.

Back on this side of the Commonwealth, some changes seem headed our way. Some of us may like all of the changes, others may like some, and some will like none. It's not unlike everywhere else – a lot of yin and yang, yang and yin coming together to make a whole.

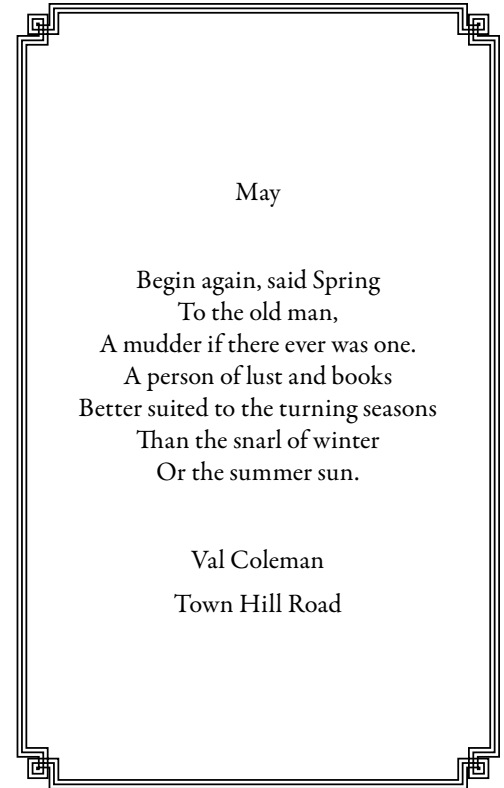
If approved at the Town Meeting, a part-time administrator will be hired to oversee the daily running of the Town and its boards and committees (see page 1). The Selectmen will be looking for someone whose only agenda is to urge our Town officials and departments to work together with more efficiency and transparency.

Ultimately the Town may make some cash from the installation of a pot-dispensing machine at Town Hall (see page 1 again). But, as usual, many hoops will have to be jumped through before anyone with a prescription will be able to drive into our Town for that particular kind of pick-up.

While Connie's SilverBrook Store proposal is making its way through the Town permit processes (see page 2), a challenge to her plans seems in the offing and may become a contentious issue. A proposal for a competing gas station/convenience store that would be at a wooded site across from MJ Tuckers is also proceeding through the permit process. Some of us may not want the gateway to our Town resembling every other roadside in America. Others, especially during the winter, might find a warm place with bright lights a comfort in the cold and dark.

Whatever happens, it's going to be different. I may not have visited Pete and Sue's New Boston Store every day, but I liked knowing it was there and I sure miss it. 

Bill Price  
West New Boston



May

Begin again, said Spring  
To the old man,  
A mudder if there ever was one.  
A person of lust and books  
Better suited to the turning seasons  
Than the snarl of winter  
Or the summer sun.

Val Coleman  
Town Hill Road

## “OUR TOWN” COMING TO OUR TOWN

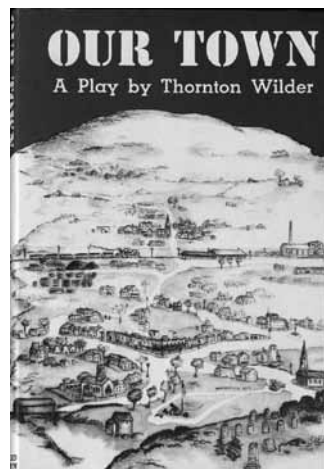
By Ben Luxon  
Director, “Rascals and Others”

For some time now a few people in town have expressed the desire to do some more acting or play reading. Over the last ten years we have had some notable successes: “The Lady in Black,” “The Little Matchgirl,” Val's two plays, “The Stamp Collection” and “The Outsiders,” and, of course, most notably, “Rascals and Others” last year. Well, the cry to continue with amateur theatre, especially after the success of “Rascals” and the enthusiasm of both cast and audience, should not and will not be denied.

So where do we find our next venture? Our 250th celebration of “Rascals” was especially devised and written by Val Coleman, Ron Bernard, and myself. Now I feel the time has come to tackle some kind of literary masterpiece. The play that immediately comes to mind is Thornton Wilder's “Our Town.” It seems the perfect play to follow our celebration of our own town's history.

“Our Town” is an all-American story of small-town America in years before World War I. A story of simple people, of their growing-up, living, working, and dying in their town. Beautifully observed with great wit, charm, and philosophical understanding, it is presented in simple everyday language. Wilder's original stage instructions requiring an empty stage with few props was a startling departure for the Broadway tradition of the 1930s.

Perfect for us!!




Cover of the first edition of  
“Our Town,” 1938.

The play has a large cast of some 27 characters. (Our “Rascals” cast was about 26.) There are no villains, heroes, lunatics, comedians, no dancers, no singers, just real everyday “folks,” which means there is no need for extraordinary acting ability. In fact, “Our Town” is a play about us.

The performance or performances (there may be two) will be in early November. There will be a two-month rehearsal period in September and October of three rehearsals each week scheduled around the availability of the players. By no means will all the cast be needed for every rehearsal. This will be a gentle play performed in a gentle manner by folks who enjoy being together. I'd prefer us all to have a good time doing it.

Memorizing will not be necessary. This will be a script-held performance, even though it will be costumed and staged, as was “Rascals,” with characters acting and moving about the stage.

I would like to know who is seriously interested in taking part by the end of May or early June, with a preliminary get-together scheduled for late June. Phone me: Ben Luxon, 258-4994 or email: benjaminluxon@gmail.com or susicrofut@gmail.com. 

# THIRD ANNUAL BLASS BLAST COMING UP

*Don't Miss It. Tuckers, May 18*

By Bill Price

If you missed the last two Blass Blasts, consider yourself invited to the third one, just coming up. If you attended an earlier Blast or both of them, you're invited back again.

The "Blass Blast" is an annual Pig Roast at MJ Tuckers on Rt. 8, just south of New Boston. Sponsored by Cascade Hose Engine #4 of the Winsted Fire Department, the Blast is a fund-raising event to benefit Rob Blass in his fight against cystic fibrosis.

A son of Sandisfield's Warren and Karlene Blass of South Beech Plain Road, 39-year-old Rob was diagnosed at birth with CF, a life-threatening chronic lung disease. He was recently approved for a double-lung transplant at New York City's Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital, where doctors say his age and health combined with his determination and will to live make him an excellent candidate for a transplant. He could be called to Columbia-Presbyterian immediately.

Rob and fiancée, Jeannette LaRose, live in Colebrook and Rob works at Banner Spring in Winsted. He has been an Exterior Volunteer Firefighter for Winsted and Colebrook the last ten years, although he has been unable to volunteer recently as it takes all his effort just to go to work and get through each day.

Rob's step-mother, Karlene Blass, said she is grateful to the men and women of Engine #4 for putting this event together for a third time. "We've had a lot of help for so long," she said, "starting with friends and family. In 1977, people in Falls Village, Connecticut, raised money for a reliable vehicle to transport Rob to Yale-New Haven Hospital for treatments that saved his life. Local individuals, businesses, and organizations have all helped for so long. Over the years we've had help from Easter Seals and the March of Dimes, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and the CF Clinic of Hartford Hospital."

Anyone interested in attending the "Blass Blast" can get further info by calling Warren or Karlene



*Jeannette LaRose and Rob Blass of Colebrook*

at 413-258-3341. Tickets for prior purchase are \$20, \$25 at the door. The Pig Roast will begin at 3 p.m. on May 18 at Tuckers.

Charitable donations can be made online to HelpHOPELive.org in honor of Robert Blass, or by check made out to HelpHOPELive, in honor of Robert Blass, sent to Two Radnor Corporate Center, 100 Matsonford Road, Suite 100, Radnor, PA 19087.



## Orchid Blossom Healing Arts

Lauren Paul, Dipl. Ac

413-258-4296

Acupuncture and Shiatsu

# Sandisfield Arts Center MAY

5 Hammertown Road  
Sandisfield, MA 01255

TICKETS ONLINE AT:  
[sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://sandisfieldartscenter.org)

## SAT, MAY 11 . . 10 AM "PIECED HISTORY" OF AMERICAN QUILTS

Lorraine German discusses the history and evolution of American American quilting. 5\$

## ART GALLERY

## RICHARD MIGOT'S "LANDSCAPES"

Photographer **Richard Migot** presents a new collection of landscapes of Berkshire County. The collection is being shown in its original size format, printed on metal.

Formal opening 5/25, 3-5PM

## SAT, MAY 18 . . . 7 PM A FAMILY CABARET!

A spicy, funny and wicked evening of marvelous local talent with comic vignettes between each act.

Adults \$10, Kids under 14 \$5

## SAT, JUNE 1 . . . 2-4 PM ANTIQUÉ APPRAISAL DAY

David J. LeBeau, our distinguished appraiser, will be on hand to tell you what that strange object you found in granny's attic is worth!

5\$ per article



# Who's Buried Over Here?

*Attend the Historical Society's Cemetery Tour. It's free, May 11*

*By John Kuzmecz*

Most of us routinely drive by our local cemeteries with little thought about them. A walk through a cemetery only occurs at solemn times. That sort of walk is purposeful. From point A to point B. An unavoidable natural reverence in these places comes over us. We usually get back in the car as soon as possible.

But an unhurried walk in a cemetery arouses a sentiment not present during that more purposeful kind of visit. A walk in a cemetery can become a personal experience. Questions pop in your head. Some thoughts are fleeting and some deep. The imagination always compels us toward questions about who these people were. Did they live a life similar to our own?

On a lighter level, I often ask why survivors chose these particular symbols to be carved on the stones of their loved ones. What is the purpose of the gas-pipe fencing around some plots? Why are some stones placed in opposing directions?

For students of history, these places are a treasure trove, and there is always more to learn during each walk. During the Town's 250th anniversary last summer, my friend

Willard Platt and I co-led a cemetery tour and sought to answer some of these questions. About a dozen locals joined us on a stroll through the New Boston Cemetery next to Carr Field. We squeezed in long-forgotten information, honored quite a few (using some unique primary sourcing), and shared a sprinkling of amusing anecdotes.

Now that spring is here, the Historical Society will host a new tour, this time of the Sandisfield Center Cemetery. This may be your only opportunity to hear a Revolutionary War widow's pension application and accompanying affidavits read aloud at the stones where she and her husband now rest.

We will correct some misconceptions. For example, contrary to popular belief Willard Platt did not fight alongside that soldier in the Revolution. Willard is a Korean War vet.

Sandisfield Center cemetery is at the top of the hill on Rt. 57 near the transfer station, across from the Turek's house. The tour will be held on Saturday, May 11th. We will meet at the Cemetery at 12:30, timed to coincide with the ending of an event at the Sandisfield Arts Center as well as the ending of the monthly Historical Society meeting.

The tour is free. There is a suggested donation of \$5 to the Sandisfield Historical Society. Willard and I are members and the Society is officially sponsoring us. When I say sponsoring, I don't mean they are paying us, rather they are allowing us to mention their name in order to add a noble sounding ring to the title of this grave event. ♡

# Sandisfield Historical Society



## NORTON FLETCHER FINALLY BELIEVED

*By Jo Freedman*

The Saturday morning meeting of the Sandisfield Historical Society, on April 13 was well attended with a delicious potluck lunch following the meeting. Norton Fletcher presided over the meeting as we planned events for the coming year.

Norton reminded us, again, that after this year's events he will no longer serve as president. For quite some time he has been telling us that he plans to step down, but this year we really believe him. The organization needs someone who will follow Norton's presidency with new and innovative ideas so that the Society can continue to fulfill its mission and expand on the events that we have typically sponsored. Please contact Norton Fletcher at 258-4520 if you would consider being a candidate for the presidency.

We still have cookbooks for sale at a cost of \$15 each. One year after publication there is still a demand for the memoir/cookbook because of the stories and great recipes. We get feedback all of the time about the really great recipes in the book. If you have not purchased one yet, call Jo Freedman at 258-4786 or stop in at Villa Mia to get your copy. ♡

*Left, a portion of the old section of Sandisfield Center Cemetery, about 1906, from a DeMars postcard image. Right, the same view today. Photos: Ron Bernard/Sandisfield Then and Now*





# Dividing up the Pie

## What did we spend last year and why did we spend it?

By Rhee Kasky

It's time to get out the reading glasses and sit down together to take a look at our current town budget.

The following is a summary of our expenditures between July 1, 2012 and February 28, 2013. These figures include adjustments that were voted on at Special Town Meetings during that period. I encourage you to take a few minutes to review them as they will give you a frame of reference for your vote on the budget for Fiscal Year 2014 at the Annual Town Meeting coming up on May 18.

Here we go.

The budget for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2012 was \$2,795,333

General government: 66% spent out of a department budget of \$195,034

Highways: The department's budget that was voted on last May was \$557,583. Subsequent adjustments were made (including the addition of the \$200,000 loan repayment for New Hartford Road) and voted on at Special Town Meetings. As a result it would be difficult to give you a short explanation of what's been spent to date. It would be best to study the final figures at the end of the fiscal year, or contact Teresa DellaGuistina, our town treasurer for more details. \*

Education: 90% spent out of a department budget of \$1,375,696.

Veterans: 66% spent out of a department budget of \$53,265.

Cemeteries: 60% spent out of a department budget of \$19,967.

Protection (police, fire, etc): 58% spent out of a budget of \$191,772.

Health and Sanitation: 78% spent out of a budget of \$72,689.

Unclassified expenses: 59% spent out of a budget of \$380,656. This line includes Stabilization Fund payments, maintaining town properties and a host of other "miscellaneous" items that were presented on the warrant.

\*NOTE: If you wish to stay on top of all these figures, especially the Highway Department budget, it's a good idea to attend some of the Selectmen's meetings where more details can be discussed. In addition, the Finance Committee now meets almost monthly (sometimes more often during budget time) on Saturday mornings (check the town website for dates) and the public is invited to attend.

Any day now you will receive your copy of the Town's Annual Report with the proposed new budget, line by line. That budget has been the subject of intense study and negotiation between all town departments, the Selectmen, and the Finance Committee. Everyone involved worked endlessly to keep the figures within the tax levy limits and happily we were able to avoid going for a Proposition 2 ½ as we had to do last year.

Point of information: when we vote on line items we do not actually have the funds in hand. We budget on the basis of anticipated income, a large portion of which comes from the real estate taxes that generally come in during May and November. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides a small amount of local aid to towns via a document referred to as the Cherry Sheet (I guess it was once red!) and it includes some state reimbursements, exemptions for veterans, the blind, surviving spouses, and the elderly.

In case you're wondering how the budget process begins, the first step is taken by the heads of various town departments. They look at their needs and present a fully documented budget to the Selectmen and the Finance Committee. Many meetings take place, items are added, subtracted, and negotiated. An "All Boards" meeting will take place May 13 at 7 p.m. at the Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road. This is an informational review of 2014 budgets and gives residents and voters the opportunity to ask officials and department heads questions about the projected budgets.

The final budget is presented to the Town by the Selectmen for a vote at the Annual Meeting. That's when it comes down to the final judgment – your vote.

Be sure it's an educated vote, so study up, ask questions, listen hard and have your say.

PS – Do try to attend Selectmen's and Finance Committees meetings during the year. You will be very much informed if you do! ♥

## LETTER FROM BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Over the last few years the Town of Sandisfield has seen an increase of taxes. This letter explains a few factors that affected the taxation increase.

The decline in Commercial accounts has had a negative effect in the Town's valuation. The lack of construction over the past few years has resulted

in a reduced amount of new growth, in the past the town has relied on new growth to help offset the budgeted increases.

Every year it takes more to run the Town than the prior year: the cost of electricity, telephones, heating, fuel for town vehicles, maintenance, salt and sand are all on the increase, and this is just to name a few items.

More taxpayers are looking to save a dollar; therefore, we have seen an increase of inquiries and taxpayers taking advantage of the Chapter Land program. Some taxpayers have permanently restricted their land from being built upon, which reduces the valuation. The Board estimates Chapter Land participants benefit from a reduced total valuation of over 5 million dollars and resulting in a \$63,000 loss in towns tax dollars. Exempted parcels are worth \$14,466,400 of valuation and estimated tax revenue \$182,276. The Assessors estimate that Exempt land (exempt from tax) and Chapter land (reduced taxed land) to be a little over the 50% of total acres in the town.

The state provides financial help to towns in a process known as Cherry Sheet funding. The Assessors anticipate the same dollars will be provided as the year before. If the Cherry Sheet funding changes, the Assessors can do nothing to change this amount and any shortfall has to be made up by the taxpayers.

As the State and Federal laws and regulations change, so do the requirements to fulfill them. The Town of Sandisfield would have to provide for those services out of pocket. The school budget is just one example of this. The School Department does an excellent job of trying to anticipate what the budget will be and all it could take is one extra child to move into the Town and there goes their planned budget.

Devastations from natural weather disasters, like ice and rainstorms, along with wind damage have mandated the need to fix our roads and their drainage systems.

Due to uncontrolled circumstances, some of the Town of Sandisfield's iconic businesses closed. Furthermore, the economy has seen some of our properties foreclosed upon as well.

All the above issues have affected the taxation in the Town of Sandisfield. With fewer parcels that pay 100% valuation for taxations, it does leave the rest of the taxpayers to pay for the budgeted items.

Remember this when voting on May 18th at the Annual Town Meeting.

The Assessors do not determine or modify the total tax to be collected. The Assessors' job is distributing the tax burden equitably. ♥

**Board of Assessors, Sandisfield, April 2013**

Chairman: Bethany Perry

Members: Kathleen Burrows, Teresa DellaGuistina

Principal Assessor MAA 834: Jacqueline Bitso

From Town website: [www.sandisfield.info](http://www.sandisfield.info)

# The Gardeners' Almanac



By Sue Tarasuk, Snow Farm

## THE KITCHEN GARDEN

This time of the year, like most of us, you are thinking about your garden. I love picking cut flowers for the house and fresh vegetables from our garden.

Although I go to the farmers' markets weekly in the summer, we still raise most of our vegetables in our vegetable garden, and so should you. It is easy, fun, healthy, and if you have children, a great way to teach them where our food comes from. It doesn't take long to experience the seed-to-harvest cycle for most vegetables.

If you do not have a vegetable garden, this may help you get motivated to start one, but also to get you on the right track as to how to start one.

The first thing – and the most important – is to have a good plan. How large do you want the garden? Think about how much time you have and how many vegetables you need to grow for your family. What about a budget? If time and money is a concern, keep the garden small and simple. Raised beds are essential if your soil is wet, but not necessary if you have good soil. Remember that raised beds can be expensive to build.

To keep down your maintenance time in the garden, a good practice is to mulch the garden. Mulching not only keeps down the weeds, but also makes watering the garden less often. You may need to put up a small fence to keep out smaller animals. A short 3-foot fence with small openings will take care of most of them (rabbits, woodchucks, dogs). If deer might visit your garden, you will need a much taller fence,

say 6 or 8 feet.

Location of your garden is essential. Think about sun availability. Your garden needs as much sun as it can get. Next, keep your garden close enough to your house that you won't be hesitant about running out to pick a few springs of thyme. Your garden should not be at the bottom of a slope where late or early frost will settle at night. You also want to locate the garden near a faucet so it's easier to water the garden.

Decide on what you want to grow. That will help you plan the size of your garden. Corn and pumpkins take lots of space. Tomatoes, lettuce, greens, beans and herbs take little space. Also, think vertical. Pole beans and cucumbers can grow up on a trellis or simple wire fencing.

Whatever you grow and however large or small your vegetable garden, it will give you lots of satisfaction. Just don't make it a chore. Small is better until you know you can manage – and want to manage – a larger garden. We all are being pulled in so many ways in our lives, but being out in the garden can give you that few minutes of quiet tranquility at the end of the day.

If you have questions, please feel free to call me at 413-717-0579 or email me at susantarasuk@gmail.com. I would be happy to help in any way.



**TYRINGHAM  
GARDEN TOUR  
SATURDAY, JUNE 29  
10 - 4 RAIN OR SHINE**

**TOUR SEVEN GLORIOUS GARDENS  
\$15 PER PERSON**

**TO ORDER TICKETS:  
GARDEN TOUR, POB 322 TYRINGHAM MA 01264  
MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO  
HOP BROOK COMMUNITY CLUB**

**PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE HOP BROOK  
COMMUNITY CLUB SCHOLARSHIP FUND  
INFO: LEAVE A MESSAGE AT (413) 243-1717**

## Selectman's Letter

By Patrick Barrett

Our Annual Town Meeting and Town elections are fast approaching again. We were able to stay under our Proposition 2½ levy limit for the 2014 Budget. Town officials put a lot of time and effort into preparing the budget. In these fiscally difficult times this process seems especially stressful and trying. I would like to thank Administrative Assistant Dolores Harasyko, members of the Sandisfield Finance Committee, Sandisfield Town Treasurer Teresa DellaGiustina, and members of the Sandisfield Board of Assessors for the work they have done preparing the budget.

An All Boards meeting will review the 2014 budget and all residents are welcome to attend and speak up: Monday May 13th, at 7:00 p.m. in the Old Town Hall. This is an informational meeting and an opportunity for residents to ask town officials and department heads questions regarding this year's budget. We encourage voters to become as informed as possible so that they make the best decisions come Election Day.

We would like to thank Chuck Nelson and sculptor Binney Meigs for donating their artistic creation Sandisfield Then and Now to the Town of Sandisfield. This work, standing at the intersection of Route 57 and New Hartford Road, has generated a lot of positive discussion since it was put in place, reminding residents of Sandisfield's rich history. We sincerely appreciate Chuck and Binney for their willingness to donate their work to the Town for future generations to enjoy. We would also like to the Gene Riiska for offering to mow and maintain the area around this sculpture free of charge to the Town. We are fortunate to have residents such as Gene who readily step forward to donate their time and effort to Sandisfield.

I would like to thank Steve Harasyko and Billy Perry for allowing me to ride with them for a short time while they plowed during February's blizzard. It was an eye-opening experience to witness firsthand the difficulties/challenges our town crews face while trying to keep the roads open during heavy snowstorms. Because of this experience I have increased appreciation for the work put in by the our Highway Department – as well as for other town crews throughout the state.

Last fall Road Superintendent Steve Harasyko hired the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to study Town roads. The report not only provides us with a thorough assessment/rating of each paved and dirt road in town, but also offers suggestions for future maintenance/repair work that needs to be done. This coming year we will again commission the BRPC to conduct a further survey of town

### Great gardens begin here.



Don't take our word for it. Visit Snow Farm and choose from a variety of healthy, locally-grown annuals, perennials, herbs, and shrubs. Too busy to garden? Snow Farm's professional horticulturists will design, install, and maintain your gardens for you.

**Snow Farm**  
Nursery & Greenhouse  
16 Beech Plain Road, Sandisfield, MA  
413-258-4929 - snow-farm.com

## Town Going to Pot?

Cont'd from p.1

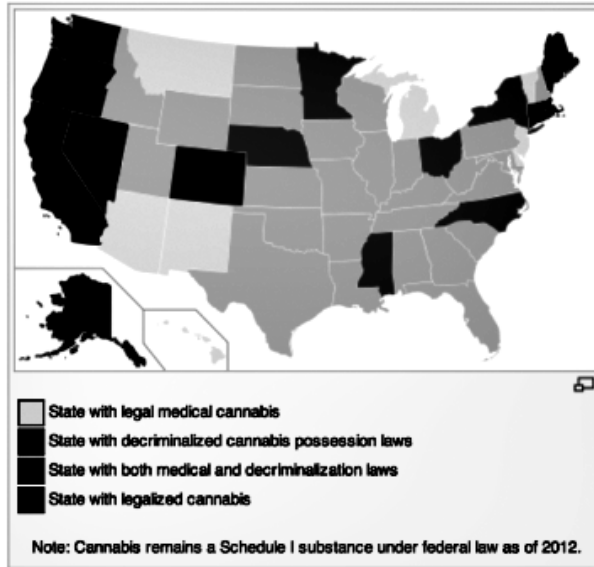
establishment that, according to one supporter's estimate, could bring in as much as \$200,000 annually in clear profit.

Such monies could go some long way to help pay for the Town's essential maintenance projects, like our highways. As one wag at the meeting remarked: "It is a question of whether we want pot, or pot-holes."

Since final state regulations are due to be published later this month, much of what follows if necessary speculative. What is currently certain is this: patients suffering from a range of painful and debilitating medical conditions – current rules include cancer, glaucoma, HIV, AIDS, hepatitis C, ALS, Crohn's disease, Parkinson's disease, and multiple sclerosis – may now receive from their doctor prescriptions for the active ingredient of marijuana. The prescriptions can be filled at one of some 35 designated and regulated dispensaries soon to be set up.

The dispensaries can only be set up by individuals or institutions that meet strict criteria – with provisions of the new state law trying to ensure that the drug does not fall into the wrong hands. Aside from the expected prohibitions – convicted felons, for example, clearly need not bother to apply for a dispensary license – there is a substantial cash bond required. Anyone seeking a license for what is essentially intended to be a non-profit community service should have as much as \$500,000 in readily available cash – a provision that sets that bar, at least for most individuals, dauntingly high.

But a municipality like our own meets this financial criterion, and handily (Sandisfield would be able to demonstrate that it already has more than this amount in



funds held in reserve). Accordingly, advocates of the proposal like David Hubbard, the Sandisfield resident and Finance Board member who has conducted detailed research on the topic, believes that the town itself should now apply for a license.

While a license would enable a successful applicant to grow marijuana plants, experience from other states suggests that growing would be centralized: it is probable that a community like ours would not farm the crop, but would make its money from dispensing it.

"There would be a rented dispensing machine – much like a Coke machine – sited in one of the town buildings, probably the Town Hall annex," David Hubbard says. "A patient who has been certified by his physician would drive up here, swipe his card through a reader on the machine and give his fingerprints to a bio-

metric scanner, and insert his credit card. Providing everything checked out, he would then be delivered his medicine in 60-day supply amounts.

"The dispensary machine makers have estimated that with only 30 registered patients using the device a clear profit of \$200,000 could be realized annually.

"It is something well worth considering. The Town sorely needs more revenue. And this is revenue acquired without ever having to raise taxes. It is an issue that we need to discuss formally, and then have our entire community vote on."

The Sandisfield Selectmen are scheduled to begin formal consideration of the proposals shortly, with the first meeting inconveniently due at the very time The Sandisfield Times goes to press. Watch this space for future developments.

## Old Cemeteries to Get New Signs

By Kathie Burrows

Sandisfield Center Cemetery, the Town's largest and only active cemetery, is our only burial ground with roadside identification. While researching Sandisfield cemeteries for the history book project last summer, I noticed that none of our other cemeteries, although well maintained, are even identified and may never have been.

Cemeteries are very important to me. I think of them as places of dignity – memorial parks – which honor our family members and ancestors and our friends and neighbors who are no longer with us. So I resolved to correct this long overdue situation. Thanks to the encouragement and cooperation of the Selectmen and Town Clerk, signs have been designed and manufactured and are ready for installation by the Highway Department in the near future.

The signs measure 18" x 24" with white lettering on brown background. They will be attached to 4' x 4' wooden posts at four locations. They were manufactured by Interstate Sign Co. who previously made the 911 house number signs for Sandisfield. Descriptions will read as follows:

Beech Plain Cemetery – c.1775. North Beech Plain Road

New Boston Cemetery – c.1831. Earlier names were Clam River Cemetery or West New Boston Cemetery. Sandisfield Road.

Roberts Road Cemetery – c.1790. Earlier names include Southfield Cemetery, South Cemetery, and New Hartford Road Cemetery. Roberts Road.

South Sandisfield Cemetery – c.1836. Earlier name was Lower Southwest Cemetery. Sandy Brook Turnpike.

To learn more about the history of these cemeteries, see *Sandisfield Then and Now*, Burying Grounds chapter, pp. 120-26.

## Projects from the Historical Sandisfield Commission

By Ron Bernard

1. Commissioner Kathie Burrows announced that signs for the four public cemeteries will be installed soon. (*see article, left*)

2. Twenty photographs depicting early 20th century Sandisfield street scenes, mostly from the DeMars collection, will replace the group of postcard copies at the Town Hall Annex.

3. The Commission has proposed historical markers for each of the five original villages in Sandisfield, to be installed at visible and accessible historic locations. The Commission expects to make its recommendation to the Select Board by June.

The last two projects will be funded with surplus donations from the 250th anniversary history book project, *Sandisfield Then and Now: 1762-2012*.



# Gov. Patrick Celebrates Broadband Connection at Farmington Elementary

By Jean Atwater-Williams


Governor Patrick was the guest of honor at the Farmington River Regional Elementary School in Otis on April 4. With other elected officials the governor watched a Skype demonstration in which fifth-graders connected with their counterparts in a classroom in Bogota, Columbia, and with NASA scientists. The event marked the lighting of the first segment of the MBI's middle mile network, which connects "anchor institutions" such as schools and municipal buildings.

"High-speed broadband is as necessary in this 21st century global economy as roads and bridges," Patrick said. "It is an educational necessity, a medical necessity, a public safety necessity, a commercial necessity and frankly a competitive necessity. We can no more afford to have a community without access to broadband than we can afford to have a community without access to a good school or a safe road."



Photo Jean Atwater-Williams


With the broadband middle mile scheduled to be completed over the coming months, the next step will be bringing the wiring to individual homes. Patrick has submitted another bond bill for about \$40 million for the MBI to bring the fiber-optics from the middle mile to homes and businesses. The MBI has indicated that they will be looking to towns and the private sector to join them as partners in completing the last mile.

WiredWest, which has long advocated for last mile broadband in our region, congratulated the Patrick Administration on this important milestone. "WiredWest remains committed to universally available and fairly priced fiber-optic broadband access for citizens and businesses of its member towns," said WiredWest Chairwoman Monica Webb. "We see the proposed capital investment by the state as a crucial step towards achieving those goals and look forward to participating in making a last-mile network a reality." 

## Save the Date

### Local Heroes Will be Back, July 27

The Arts Center is glad to remind the Town that Sandisfield is blessed with a small and powerful group of first responders: firemen, EMT, and police officers who are always there when we need them but seldom get the thanks they richly deserve.

Some of these first responders were honored last year at Local Heroes I, but this year the Arts Center will dig a little deeper into that battalion of volunteers who find others' lives precious enough to put their own on the line. On July 27, the Center will present Local Heroes II, and will be honoring not only the heroes but their families as well: the long-suffering wives, husbands, and children of these folks! This will be their night too, a night of thanks, dancing, and good cheer. All are welcome, free of charge. 



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# 2013 Town Election Three Contested Offices

## TOWN ELECTION Monday, May 20

Election time is here again with several offices to be filled. Candidates running for contested offices were invited to submit statements to The Sandisfield Times for consideration by our readers. Below is a list of open seats and the names of the candidates.

**MODERATOR (1 year):**  
..... John Skrip, Jr.

**SELECTMAN (3 years)**  
.....Rosario E. Messina  
.....Mark P. Newman  
.....William D. O'Brien, Jr.

**AUDITOR (1 year):**  
..... Ralph Morrison

**TAX COLLECTOR (3 years)**  
.....Edna L. Leavenworth

**BOARD OF ASSESSORS (3 years):**  
..... Elaine E. O'Brien  
..... Bethany R. Perry

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE (3 years):**  
..... John Skrip, Jr.

**BOARD OF HEALTH (3 years):**  
..... Gary Bottum, Sr.  
..... Kim Spring

**PLANNING BOARD (5 years):**  
..... Willard R. Platt, Jr



## CANDIDATES FOR SELECTMAN – 3 YEARS

### STATEMENT FROM ROSARIO E. MESSINA



I have been involved with law enforcement for the past 12 years. I work full time as a Police Officer for the Stockbridge Police Department and part time as a Police Officer for the Sandisfield Police Department. My wife, Laura Messina, and I have two sons, Brandon and Shane. Brandon attends school at Mount Everett Regional School and Shane at Farmington River Regional School. My family lives in a house on Dodd Road that we bought when we moved to Sandisfield in 1996 and then renovated and expanded.

I graduated from Berkshire Community College with an Associate Degree in Business Science. I owned and operated a convenience store from the Franchise Jane Alden in Feeding Hills, Mass. in the late 1980s. I was a banker for twenty years for the former Great Barrington Savings Bank, which merged later on and became today's Berkshire Bank. I held different positions at the bank and served as Branch Manager in West Stockbridge.

My previous and current experience is understanding people from different walks of life, and I try to encourage others to make a positive difference in the world. I really enjoy and am rewarded when I work as a member of a team helping people solve their problems.

### STATEMENT FROM MARK NORMAN



My name is Mark Newman. I'm running for Sandisfield Selectman. For the past 18 years, I have been the farm manager at Sheffield Sod Farm, where I have a herd of Hereford beef cows and grow hay to sell. Having made deliveries over the years in the Sandisfield area, my wife Donna and I fell in love with the peaceful hills of Sandisfield. In 2005, Donna and I moved to Cronk Road with our dog, Libby.

For the past 35 years, I been a businessman involved in running my own business and managing several others. This has taught me how to take a very common sense approach to many different issues and still have the ability to make a decision. I believe that hard work gets the job done and moving forward is the best path.

I have enjoyed meeting and talking with residents of Sandisfield, and look forward to being able to help the town make some of the tough decisions ahead. As a selectman, my door will always be open. Thank you for your support.

**STATEMENT FROM  
BILL O'BRIEN, JR.**



My name is Bill O'Brien, Jr. and I am running for Selectman. I have lived in Sandisfield all my life. I worked for the town as a young man helping to plow our roads with my father, William O'Brien, Sr. and others when snowplowing was contracted out. I spent 33 years working in the Labors' Union, 30 of those years on road construction. When I retired from construction I worked for the Town of Sandisfield on the Highway Department for 10 years and have a very good understanding of the repair work needed for our roads. As a retiree, I am a current member of the Finance Committee, and the Town Manager Advisory Committee. As a result of attending these meeting, I have become aware of the fiscal problems our town faces. As a retiree I will have daytime hours to be available for town business. Thank you for your support.

**CANDIDATES FOR BOARD  
OF ASSESSORS— 3 YEARS**

**STATEMENT FROM**



**ELAINE O'BRIEN**

Do I like being retired?? Ask anyone who has asked me that question since I retired in 2010. I've

always answered YES in a big way. I sure did need the down time from all that I was doing when I did retire. I had been involved with the town for over 19 years in one capacity or another. But after almost three years of "hiding on my hill," I find that I miss giving to my community.

Working in the Assessors' Office from 1993 until 2010 was one of my Town positions that I most enjoyed. Helping taxpayers resolve issues, providing information for prospective buyers, or just handing out real estate, motor vehicle, and elderly tax information forms was a "person-to-person" task that made the job for me. As our town tries to overcome its financial obstacles, I will have the time to contribute when needed. Thank you for your support.

**STATEMENT FROM  
BETHANY RIISKA PERRY**



I live on New Hartford Road with my husband Billy and our two daughters Emma and Valerie and my nephew Eric. I have been a resident of Sandisfield for the last 13 years and enjoy helping my parents with their apple orchard across the street each fall. I have 21 years of banking and finance experience and am currently Branch Officer of Berkshire Bank in the Great Barrington and Stockbridge Offices. I have worked for Berkshire Bank for the past thirteen years throughout southern Berkshire County.

I am running for my fourth three-year term as a Sandisfield Assessor. For the past six years I have served as chairperson for the Board of Assessors. I am running again because of the dedication I feel toward Sandisfield, although I did not grow up in Sandisfield, my father Bill Riiska did. I have family in Town and feel proud to be an active resident. I believe we need more people to step up and help the Town run smoothly. I have enjoyed the years I have already spent on the board and hope to be able to continue to serve our community.

**CANDIDATES FOR BOARD  
OF HEALTH— 3 YEARS**

**STATEMENT FROM  
GARY BOTTUM, SR.**

I've lived on New Hartford Road for the last 10 years, and before that lived in Norfolk, Conn. I enjoy being involved in Town business and working with the Selectmen. I've been on the Planning Board for 4 years, and served as chairman during 2011. I've been a member of the School Committee for the last year. I've been a volunteer with the Fire Department for 9 years.

I'm interested in the Board of Health because I thought it would be a learning experience to know more about inspections and different septic plans, and that it might help me with my job. I've worked with Joe Wilkinson Excavating in Sheffield installing septic systems for the last 12 years.

Thank you for your consideration.

**STATEMENT FROM  
KIM SPRING**

I've lived in Sandisfield my entire life and love the easy-going way of life we have here. I've been serving our town as Animal Control Officer and Animal Inspector for the last 20 years or so, combining my interest in law and love for animals into becoming their voice and protector. Doing this job, one of my passions is educating the public on animal laws and behavior and educating myself at various classes locally as well as throughout the state.

I've spent 12 weeks at the Agawam Police Academy studying animal control, graduating in May 1996, and two years studying criminal law, criminal behavior, and courtroom procedures and another two earning my Veterinary Technician Certificate. I am currently on the Animal Response Teams of both the State of Massachusetts and Central Massachusetts, groups that send teams to state- and nation-wide disasters such as hurricanes, floods, and tornadoes to rescue pets for people displaced by mother nature. And now another chapter unfolds as I look forward to serving the Town of Sandisfield as a member of the Board of Health.





# TOWN BUSINESS

Submitted by Dolores Harasyko, Town Clerk

Edited by Bill Price

## Meetings of the Selectmen

### Selectmen's Meeting

March 11, 2013

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

Steve provided Highway Department updates. He researched the cost of replacing the F550. The approximate cost before trade-in is \$60,000. Since the warrant on the F55 expired we have spent \$23,680 on repairs, not including regular maintenance. Discussed financing options. We will place an article on the FY2014 warrant. Patrick suggested meeting with New Marlborough to compare equipment, subbed out work, and staff. New Marlborough is comparable to Sandisfield in the amount of miles they maintain. Roads are thawing and getting soft. Steve will be ordering gravel to place on the dirt roads.

Discussed having a Special Town meeting in April to cover the costs of some repairs to Town buildings that need attention as soon as possible. Teresa DellaGuistina explained that she will need to cover the additional cost for Tax Lien expenses. She will send a letter to the Finance Committee for a reserve fund transfer and if that fails will need an article on the Special Town Meeting warrant.

Teresa reviewed her findings requested by Patrick

regarding subbed-out snow plow expenses and the Fire Chief's salary.

Reviewed recommendations from Jean Atwater-Williams regarding the Town website. Jean recommends adding a salary to the Website Committee to cover the cost of updating the website, posting minutes and agendas, and monitoring the Suggestion Box for the Town Management Review Committee. Jean recommends at least 3 hours per week. Discussed whether this should be done by the Website Committee, Tech Committee, or Town Clerk. Patrick feels this could be done by the Assistant Town Clerk. Jeff, Dolores, and Teresa do not agree. They feel this should be covered by the Website or Tech Committee. The Assistant Town Clerk is only budgeted for six hours per week at a higher rate than the \$10 suggested rate. Patrick questioned if the Website was an active ththcommittee or a temporary one. They do still have a budget of \$3,500. Teresa will research this for next week.

Discussed FY2014 budgets and gas accounts.



### Selectmen's Meeting

March 18, 2013

*Members present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Administrative Assistant Dolores Harasyko*

The Town Management Review Committee in, members Teresa DellaGuistina, Debbie Harris,

Rhee Kasky, Bill O'Brien, Kathleen Segrin, John Skrip, and Joe Zeller. John reviewed what the committee has been working on and read their proposal to the board. They recommend that the Town hire a part-time Town Administrator. This person would serve at the discretion of the Selectmen and would be available to respond to the needs of each department head. The committee suggested trying this for one year. John Burrows asked who would be responsible for writing the job description for this position. The committee feels the Selectmen should. Discussed when the job would start. Rhee suggested January 2014. Dolores asked about funding this position and where the person's office would be located. The committee suggested \$10,000-\$15,000 per year for salary and \$1,000 for expenses. The committee would like to see it on this year's warrant. The numbers are needed this week for the budget. Ralph suggested that the committee put together a job description and have all their information available to the Town meeting. If that is not possible they should consider having a Special Town Meeting at a later date when they have all the supporting information. Patrick suggested that the committee make the commitment together all their information for this year's Annual Town Meeting. The committee said they would work on it. Rhee suggested the job start in September 2013 rather than January. The committee explained that the job would be part-time with no benefits. Patrick thanked the committee for their work. The committee then reviewed their "Suggestion Box" that was created for the Town website.

Reviewed Fire Department budgets. Teresa reviewed with the DOR the ambulance collection fees account. Ralph would like to have it come out of the revolving ambulance account. Per DOR it cannot come out of that account, which was created specifically to pay for a new ambulance only.

Discussed Fire/EMT compensation account. Ralph and Teresa discussed the difference between on-call compared to administrative duties. Ralph explained that he cannot do the paperwork for the Fire and EMT personnel that respond to calls, that they have to submit their own paperwork. He has been paying John Burrows to help with this. Since the article does not include administrative cost, we will amend the article to include that cost for the FY2014 warrant. Ralph is amending his Fire/Ambulance Maintenance Account to include an additional \$2,000 for salary for John Burrows. Ralph has in the past paid for secretarial help out of his salary.



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Kathy Jacobs would like to remove the budget for the 250th Celebration Committee.

David Hubbard and Kathy Jacobs present for the Future Strategic Planning Committee. They would like an operating budget of \$1,000 for FY2014. David would like the Selectmen to determine what the Town is eligible for from liquor and lodging fees. He also asked about stumpage fees. He would like clarification from state representatives on the stumpage fee charge before and after 1985. Teresa will follow up with the Assessors as this is not an area the Selectmen are responsible for. Kathy Jacobs suggested the Town look into having our own chapter tax.

Reviewed the Clark Road Bridge Replacement project.

Teresa reviewed the updated mileage reimbursement rate set by the IRS, now set at \$0.565 cents per mile. She said she will require evidence of the mileage for reimbursement, and that evidence can be a hand-out from the meeting attended.

Reviewed and signed warrant for the Special Town Meeting for April 16, 2013, and the warrant for the Special State Primary for April 30, 2013.



**Selectmen's Meeting**

**March 25, 2013**

*Members present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Road Superintendent Steve Harasyko, Administrative Assistant Dolores Harasyko*

Steve provided Highway Department updates. As roads are thawing the department is bringing in gravel as needed.

Discussed how to fund the purchase of the one-ton pickup truck. The estimate for a new truck, plow, and sander is \$65,000. After a discussion with our DOR representative, Treasurer Teresa DellaGiustina and Steve suggested funding the truck from free cash. Kathy Jacobs, Finance Committee chair, suggested using the stabilization account. The committee would like any new funding for vehicles for any department be paid back in five years rather than ten.

Reviewed the stabilization account. The Finance Committee also discussed at their meeting using Chapter 90 funds for vehicles. Steve replied that Chapter 90 funds could be used for larger trucks but not for snow-removal equipment, and that this truck would not qualify for Chapter 90 funding.

Patrick reviewed his request to complete the New Hartford Road project by splitting the cost between Chapter 90 and free cash.

Discussed capital expenditures and various financing options available. We will follow up with the DOR.

Motion by Patrick, second by Jeff, to reappoint Kim Spring as Inspector of Animals.

Discussed FY2014 budgets.



**Selectmen's Meeting**

**April 1, 2013**


*Members present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Administrative Assistant Dolores Harasyko, Admin. Asst.*

Reviewed the draft copy of the FY2014 budget.

Reviewed and discussed the stabilization account. There are still two payments left on the ambulance and the Highway Department's 550 truck. Discussed the article for the new truck for the Highway Department. The article will

probably be included at the Town Meeting once Steve has quotes which will include the trade-in of the 550. Kathy Jacobs suggested moving money from free cash to stabilization to cover the payments left on these two vehicles. Discussion followed. Discussed several options such as forgiving the payments back to ourselves for one or two years, extending the payments over a few more years, or transferring from free cash. We will meet with the Finance Committee April 4 to discuss this item and the FY2014 budget.

Discussed the Special Town Meeting set for April 16.

Selectmen's Meeting for April 8, 2013 was postponed until April 16 as quorum requirements were not met. 

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## THE ARTS CENTER GETS SPIFFED UP

By Alice Boyd

“Find out what people are good at, then get out of their way.” Not the most sophisticated management philosophy but in Sandisfield it works like a charm. As the Arts Center gets ready to open its doors for the 2013 season, our team of volunteers and contractors are all working in harmony to pull a rabbit out of a hat. And we’re standing alongside, letting them have at it.

The Baptists parishioners who crafted our building would be proud. Local artists have selected paint colors, volunteers have unpacked trucks, and a handy husband has created a storage area behind a hollow wall. Local architect Nick Elton is serving as ringmaster directing the

bending of steel, fixing of floors, installing a lift, and constructing a vestibule, all without charging us a dime!

And Val Coleman is my hero. At least once a day Val treks down to the Arts Center from his cozy cabin and reports on the activities of each worker: who showed up for work, what they’re doing, why. How much the electrician is charging and why isn’t the steel here yet? Val sends his daily epistle filled with praise and vitriol, keeping us all informed and chuckling. In an act of solidarity and pitch-right-in, Val even painted a pew!

Meanwhile, Susie Crofut and I are diligently trying to raise the funds to pay for it all this activity. So many of you have been generous, some with time and some with money. But we still have a gap to be filled. If you can help, we’d be very grateful. As the saying goes, “Don’t give until it hurts, give until it feels good!”

So why are we doing all this? My vision for the Sandisfield Arts Center harkens back to those wonderful Synagogue members and Arts Center founders who came up with a way to save our historic building while providing a special place for the community to come together. The Arts Center is rich with history. It is a place for the community to meet, relax, learn, be entertained, and grow closer. The Arts Center is not just for a

few, it’s for everyone, all of us.

So, this year when we honor our Local Heroes we’ll be throwing a party and a dance that is free for Sandisfield residents. And we’re trying to include programming through the season that attracts a wider audience. We’d love to hear your thoughts.

And what else can happen at the Arts Center as a result of our latest renovations? Weddings? Town Meeting? Private Parties? There is no limit. Now that we’ll be handicap accessible and have flexible space, comfortable seating, and a strong and beautiful finished floor in our hall, it will be exciting to see how this wonderful building will be used by our town’s residents in the years to come.

So pick up a program at the library or post office. Or take a good look at our new website, sandisfieldartscenter.org. The site itself is a marvel, and we’re very proud of it. On it, you can check our schedule, buy tickets, see a photo of “Rascals and Others” from last year, like us on Facebook, note us on Twitter, and even, if you’re so inclined, send us a donation.

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## What's a "Burek"?

by June Strickland

Did you see the Villa Mia ad on this page? Did you wonder, "What's a burek? What's Dia talking about?"

The answer is easy, and it tastes good, too.

A burek is a baked pastry made of thin flaky dough. It can be filled with feta cheese, meat, potatoes, or vegetables. It comes from the Turkish cuisine, and is very popular in the countries of the Balkan region, which include Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Albania, this dish is called byrek or burek. The most common fillings include cheese (especially feta or ricotta) or spinach and egg. Burek is traditionally made with several layers of dough that have been thinly rolled out by hand. The final form can be small, individual triangles, especially from street vendors called 'Byrektore' which sell burek and other traditional pastries



and drinks. It can also be made as one large burek that is cut into smaller pieces. Burek is traditional to southern Albania but is made throughout the country with variations. They can be served cold or hot.

Dia makes her burek as small single servings shaped like small pie. They are light and fluffy. Order a salad with your burek for a small meal or have one as an appetizer. 🍷



## VOLUNTEER NEEDED!

Some time on your hands? Willing to help out on an interesting, worthy, and fun project? The Sandisfield Times is seeking a volunteer to index our issues from the past three years. When completed, the index will be posted on the Times' web site for the convenience of readers. You will earn the gratitude of many. Contact: editor@SandisfieldTimes.org

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# Thyme and Babe

## A Life-Saving Country Drama

By Brigitte Ruthman



Thyme was out flat. Her big dark cow's eyes rolled back and glazed over, then refocused to find her day-old red calf in the corner of the dimly lit barn. Her chest heaved. She lifted her head and murmured in a language cows use only for new-born calves, sounds that are rarely heard in large dairies where the two are separated soon after birth.

Thyme's will to live, for her own sake or the calf's, had beaten the odds, but the outlook for this new mother, everyone's favorite, a playful four-year-old roan milking shorthorn, remained grim that afternoon after her calf was born.

Thyme couldn't lift her 1,200 pounds on hind legs that had mysteriously and suddenly become paralyzed four days earlier, March 13. Large animals must stand for periods of time to keep their circulatory, muscular, and digestive systems properly functioning, and her systems would fail in a matter of days.

Green Acres Thyme is the smartest of my five cows. Brought to Sandisfield from Vermont in the back of a Jeep as a two-month old calf and bottle fed, she could open sliding doors with her nose, pick out creatures lurking in the woods by pointing her ears, and stand perfectly still for anyone willing to brush a currycomb around her neck.

She was a week from freshening with her second calf when she went down. Suddenly both were at risk.

I found her crumpled, her legs folded beneath her on a Wednesday morning. No blood, no broken bones, no clues to what had befallen her overnight. She tried, but couldn't find the strength to lift herself. I gave her calcium paste, suspecting a deficiency even though milk fever wouldn't normally strike until after calving. Then I gave her vitamins, an electrolyte drench, and banamine, the rough equivalent of a mild cortizone and painkiller. Nothing brought her up.

Could it have been hardware disease, a potentially deadly malady afflicting cows that ingest nails, bits of barbed wire and other spiky metal objects along with their feed? But she had a magnet, the preventative remedy, dropped into the first of her four stomachs to secure those objects from cutting into her intestinal lining. I found cellophane wrappers that had been discarded by hunters in the field where the hay she was eating had been collected, but no metal.

That Wednesday night brought bitter cold, wind, and snow. Thyme pulled herself across the cement floor, using her front legs, to reach the manure pile, warm from the decomposing layers beneath and dry on top.

I checked her hourly, unsure whether she would make it through the night. Her head perked up when I called her name, a uniform "girly girly" to which all cows answer. She ate the hay I brought, and drank water from a bucket.

Wayne Hassinger, a vet from Dutchess County, cleared his schedule Thursday morning after I called. He gave her dextrose and calcium and vitamins by IV. Doc Hassinger also left me with instructions if I chose to induce the calf, and dexamethazone and lutalase to help that happen. The choice was mine. If the calf was born with underdeveloped lungs, it would die. If Thyme couldn't get to her feet, she would die along with her calf. That night I used the medicine in careful combination to prompt the calving, hoping to save one or the other.

Exactly 34 hours later, after Thyme's udder had been tricked into filling, Babe pushed his wet nose into the world, and quickly rose on wet wobbly legs. Miraculously, so did Thyme, just long enough to follow Babe cradled in Ross Delaney's arms into the barn as another bitter night weighed in. But as soon the sliding door closed, she crumpled under her weight again. Safe from the winter, and dried by Thyme's gritty tongue, Babe got his colostrum from a nipple on a bottle while Thyme's udder remained buried beneath her.

Help arrived Saturday morning. Attempts to raise Thyme with wide woven belts retrieved from neighbor David Hubbard's busy shed failed under her unwieldy weight. Ross, David, and Jean Atwater-Williams reapplied the belts and unscrewed the handle from the sliding door. Thyme cooed weakly to Babe, who watched motionless from a corner.

If angels appear as strangers, Mike Wood might have been wearing wings instead of a lined flannel shirt when Ross fetched him up because he knew cows better than some vets. His long black hair nearly covered his features like a winter fleece.

Mike said someone had suggested years ago that he get a few cows to get his mind off a broken marriage. He did, and he took to them as easily as rugged men I had known in Vermont who had been born to farming, cow whisperers who could raise up a team of oxen and command them without a stick or an angry word. A good



mechanic and herdsman, Mike worked for a time at a large commercial dairy in Canaan after timber prices fell in the logging industry.


He brought home more cows to his small hillside than his Colebrook neighbors liked, including a blind heifer he saved from the culling list. He plans on moving to Texas, a part of the country where skilled laborers are in demand.

Dr. Mike eagerly took on the challenge. He greased up an old hip hoist, a modified claw that operates much like a hay hook by grabbing a cow's hip pins. Applying it too tightly risks breaking bones. Too loose and it comes free. Mike and David secured it to a chain attached to the tractor bucket. Slowly, I pulled the hydraulic lever up.

The 33 hp Massey tractor strained under the weight. The bucket leaned sideways, braced against the barn door. Thyme found her shaky legs, and five minutes later was standing on her own.

She remained on her feet until early the next morning, when she finally laid down to rest. Jim Kennedy came from Cornwall and helped raise her up again. The next time she got up, she did it without help.

Another vet from Pennsylvania diagnosed the problem over the phone as likely a pinched nerve, an occasional physiological mishap that occurs as the calf moves toward the birthing position. She said she'd have given the cow and calf only a half chance at survival with help. They both were doomed without it.

Babe eventually learned the udder. Right now the two of them are searching the field for the first fresh grass. 

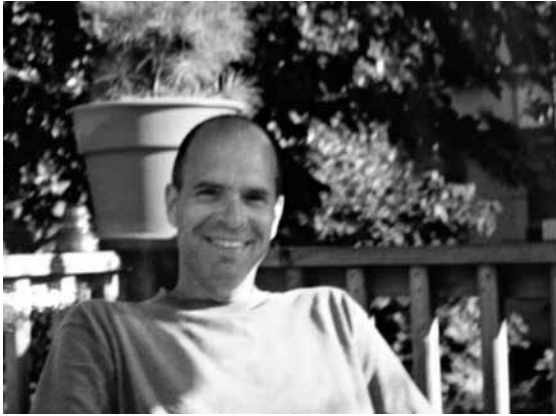
### If This Was 1913

What happened to Thyme has been happening to farm animals since Noah led them all off the ark. If it had been 1913 instead of 2013, with no tractor or hydraulic winch, how would Brigitte gotten Thyme back on her feet? (Is it correct to write about getting a bovine "back on her feet?")

Brigitte says, "Horses or oxen would likely have been employed to pull on a pulley or block and tackle to pull her up. The old farmers had all these things figured out when they built their barns. There would have been a hook in place and a beam sturdy enough to hold it, not sister beams like I have in my barn. Next time you walk into an old barn, look at all the neat things that were intended to make up for machinery they didn't have." —B.P.



# Comings and Goings



## MARTIN BERNSTEIN 1944-2013

Martin Bernstein, of Silverbrook Road, died suddenly on March 21, 2013, of an arrhythmia after a gym workout. He was 68.

Martin grew up in Huntington and Syracuse, New York. He played ice hockey up to the semi-pro level but stopped playing after one too many concussions, later playing in adult leagues.

He studied anthropology at Bard College and the University of Buffalo. After graduating, he held a series of jobs including working at Hull House outside Chicago, working at a research lab in Tuxedo Park, NY, making the first working model of a larynx for the medical school at UCLA, and doing architectural restoration at Untermeyer Park in New York State. A marriage in his early 20s to Ellen Boyers ended in divorce.

After settling in New York City, Martin began a career building scenery for movies and television and rose to the position of Construction Coordinator. He worked for over 35 years in the industry on a range of features from big budget movies to smaller independent films and was working on the television series "The Good Wife" when he died. In his early days in the business he was elected president of his union, NABET, which later merged with the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE).

Martin was known for his calmness and ability to absorb stress in his life. His crews appreciated the atmosphere in his shops, and he enjoyed teaching what he knew. He was a lifelong learner and read prodigiously.

Music was a huge part of his life. He played guitar and had a vast memory for music of all genres. He had a lifelong interest in art, design, and architecture, and he made sculptures from wood and metal.

Martin loved the Berkshires and lived in Monterey for a number of years when he first married Deborah Barchat in 1978. Although work took him back to New York City, he kept alive his dream of building a house in the area where they had lived as newlyweds. About eight years ago he saw some land on Silverbrook Road and fell in love with it. He'd been searching for a long time and felt he'd found the right property there. He designed his house and built it mostly by himself with help from his sons and daughter. He was very much looking forward to moving to Sandisfield permanently after retiring in a few years.


Martin is survived by his wife Deborah, his sons Eli and Jed, his daughter Lily, his sister Toby Simon of Rhode Island, and his brother David Bernstein of California.

## Selectman's Letter

Cont'd from p.7

roads that will include a history of each road as well as give set-backs and other valuable information. These two projects will go a long way toward helping town officials create short- and long-term maintenance programs for fixing our town infrastructure.

This winter Steve fell during an ice storm while performing his duties and severely hurt his shoulder. He has recently had surgery and will be on light duty for some time. We would like to wish Steve a speedy recovery and thank Billy Perry for stepping forward to help guide the crew during Steve's absence.

Sandisfield resident Alice Boyd, a professional grant writer, donated many hours of her time to write a \$700,000 Community Development Block Grant for the Town of Sandisfield. If we are awarded this grant it would help pay for consulting work towards future planning for the town, as well as provide home repairs to members in our community. Alice's hard work has already paid dividends for the town as she was able to obtain funding for a handicapped assessable lift for the Sandisfield Arts Center. We can't thank Alice enough for her efforts on behalf of the community. 





**AN ERROR AND A TRIBUTE**

To the Editor:

The obituary for Vi Hryckvich in last month's Times misstated where she lived. Vi and Alexander Hryckvich lived on North Beech Plain Road, not in Roosterville.

This gives me an opportunity to add my own tribute to this remarkable woman. Vi was gentle, but also tough and loyal; while battling cancer she held on to be there for her dear Alexander much longer than anyone could have predicted.

I count it a privilege to have known Vi so long. She was perhaps the kindest and genuinely loveliest person I have ever met.

Roberta Myers, Cold Spring Road

(Editor's Note: Thanks for the correction, Roberta. The Times regrets the error.)

**THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS**

To the Editor:

My wife and I would like to personally thank the members of Sandisfield's emergency services – police officers, firefighters, and EMTs – for their prompt response to an accident on Route 57 involving the Farmington River Pre-School van. The van slid on ice and hit a tree (the driver was in no way at fault). Our daughter was on the van at the time. For a parent, receiving a call saying your child has been in an accident is a terrifying event. She was not hurt and was able to attend school that morning. The emergency personnel who responded not only provided exceptional care for our daughter but comfort and support to her stressed-out family. We are very fortunate to live in a community with such dedicated volunteers.

Patrick Barrett, Rood Hill Road

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August	April	May	
September	May	June	
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December	September	September	
	October	October	



By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

Our next genealogy assistance class will be May 29, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.

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

**NEW BOOKS:**

- Fly Away/Kristen Hannah
- The Apple Orchard/Susan Wiggs
- Flora/Gail Godwin
- Inferno/Dan Brown
- Angora Alibi No.7 /Sally Goldenbaum
- The Body in the Piazza/Faith Fairchild
- Dead, White and Blue/Carolyn Hart
- Foal Play/Kathryn O'Sullivan
- Smarty Bones/Carolyn Haines
- The Edge of the Earth/Christina Schwartz

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# NOW HEAR THIS!

*Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro. Please send future notices for Now Hear This! to [calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org).*

## MAY EVENTS

TAI CHI, continuing Tuesday evenings through May 21 at 7:00 p.m. at Old Town Hall. FREE! Sponsored by the Sandisfield Council on Aging but open to all. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes.

SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER SEASON OPENING, Saturday, May 11 at 10:00 a.m. with a "Pieced History of American Quilts by Lorraine German (\$5.00). Tickets available online at [www.sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://www.sandisfieldartscenter.org).

SANDISFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Saturday, May 11, 11 a.m. Meeting and Potluck lunch. Everyone is welcome at the South Sandisfield meeting house.

SANDISFIELD CENTER CEMETERY TOUR, Saturday, May 11 at 12:30 p.m., conducted by Willard Platt and John Kuzmech. Meet at the top of the hill at the Cemetery. Timing coincides with the ending of events at the Arts Center and the monthly Historical Society meeting. (See page 5.)

MOTHER'S DAY CHURCH SERVICE, Sunday, May 12 at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, 4 Sandisfield Road.

ALL-BOARDS MEETING, Monday, May 13, 7 p.m., Old Town Hall. This informational review of the 2014 Town budget gives residents the opportunity to ask officials and department heads questions regarding this year's budget. Voters are encouraged to become as informed as possible in order to make the best decisions come Election Day.

PUBLIC HEARING Clark Road Bridge replacement. Friday, May 15 at 7:00 p.m., Old Town Hall. Conducted by MassDOT. (See page 2).

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING, Saturday, May 18 at 10:00 a.m. at the old Town Hall.

"BLASS BLAST" PIG ROAST Fundraiser, Saturday, May 18 beginning at 3 p.m. at MJ Tuckers on Rt. 8. For info call Warren or Karlene Blass at 413-258-3341. Tickets for prior purchase \$20, \$25 at the door. (See page 4).

FAMILY CABARET on Saturday, May 18 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center (Adults, \$10; Children, \$5). Tickets available online at [www.sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://www.sandisfieldartscenter.org).

ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION on Monday, May 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the old Town Hall.

SOUP/DESSERT OPEN HOUSE, Sandisfield Council on Aging, May 20, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

"LANDSCAPES" PHOTOGRAPHY FORMAL OPENING with Richard Migot on Saturday, May 25 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in the Art Gallery at the Sandisfield Arts Center.

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE, Sunday, May 26, 10 a.m. Begins at Old Town Hall, with a veterans' salute at the New Boston Cemetery, parade continuing through New Boston to the American Legion Pavilion.

SAVE THESE TWO SUMMER SATURDAYS

June 15. By popular demand a hike of the Sandisfield portion of the old Knox Trail is planned for next month with Knox Trail expert Tom Ragusa and local historian Ron Bernard. 10:00 a.m. to noon. See the June issue of The Sandisfield Times for details.

July 27. Local Heroes II. Honoring our local volunteers and their families. A night of thanks, dancing, and good cheer. The Sandisfield Arts Center, all welcome, free to all.

## MAY EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

CHAIR YOGA with Connie Wilson (certified yoga instructor) on Wednesdays beginning May 15 from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. (\$7.00 for non-Monterey residents). The location in Monterey is to be announced, please contact Connie (528-3798).

OTIS CULTURAL COUNCIL SEEKS ARTISTS for its Sixth Otis Arts Festival scheduled for Saturday, July 27 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Farmington River Regional Elementary School. For information visit [www.townofotisma.com](http://www.townofotisma.com) or email [culturalco.otis@yahoo.com](mailto:culturalco.otis@yahoo.com)

## ONGOING EVENTS

The Tolland Council on Aging has organized a Senior Ride Program to address the difficulties facing seniors in getting to doctors' appointments or shopping. Any senior in Tolland, 60 years or older, may call the ride coordinator at 413-579-7834 to leave a message with name, address, phone number and date a ride is needed. Requests

must be made 72 hours in advance of the time a ride is needed. For further information contact Pat Storey, COA Clerk-Tolland at 413-269-6575

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Council on Aging, every Wednesday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Senior Center, Town Hall Annex. Potluck 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.

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