

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



Plebis

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume IV, Number 10

January/February 2014

... Wee, wee, wee, all the way home

By Brigitte Ruthman

The eight-week old heirloom cross came home barely alive, head hanging low, after 12 days on the lam and a miraculous escape from the jaws of a coyote.

He didn't have a name when Scott MacKenzie adroitly hefted him and three of his 35-pound siblings by their hind legs November 30 from Scott's barn in New Marlborough. Pigs raised for the freezer generally don't have names. Still sucking on a giant homely sow, his mother, name of Roadblock, he had shared a wide pasture with 13 siblings, Hereford steers and cows. A \$50 fee for each closed the deal, and they were on their way to Sandisfield, 10 minutes along Route 57 in a dog crate in the back of my Toyota, the air conditioner blower on to keep the driver from being overwhelmed by pig fumes.



Lucky (left), home at last

The arrival and slithery removal from car to barn didn't go as well as the departure. Carried upside down like chickens to subdue them, piglets are strong and determined to be free – or at least back to mama. Like big flopping fish with feet, they are best moved by allowing their front feet to propel them forward in wheelbarrow fashion, at least to contain the ear-splitting squeal that accompanies

Cont'd on p.6



The Crown & Sandys "public house" in Ombersley was built in the late 17th century by the Sandys family, descendants of Lord Samuel Sandys (1695-1770) for whom Sandisfield was named. It is currently an Inn with a well-known restaurant.

Do We Have a Sibling Abroad?

SISTER CITY PROPOSAL APPROVED BY SELECTMEN

By Ron Bernard

SANDISFIELD HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Is there a "twin sister" in Sandisfield's future? Yes, Sandy, there is.

At their December 16 meeting, the Board of Selectmen approved a proposal from the Historical Commission to explore formation of a cultural association or friendship pact with the town of Ombersley, England.

The idea of Sandisfield partnering with a community overseas is not new. About 20 years ago, Norton Fletcher, president of the Sandisfield Historical Society and a then-member of the Sandisfield Historical Commission, paid a visit to the small town of Ombersley in the hopes of establishing such a link.

Cont'd on p.4

Banker Likely Buyer of Green Property

ADDS TO ALREADY ENORMOUS LAND HOLDING; TAX CONCERNS RAISED

By Simon Winchester

An ambitious but locally little-known New York banker, who has been buying land and properties in Sandisfield for many years, is in the final process of completing his most substantial purchase yet. He is in the last stages of buying, for approximately \$3.5 million, the 400-acre former youth camp off Sears Road in the southeast of town.

Dominic Konstam, a resident of Manhattan, has long sought to buy the so-called Mirror Lake Estate – the former Camp Wood Crest – to complete his ownership of most of the 1,500-foot mountain that is the Clam River watershed. His wish had been frustrated, however, as he encountered stiff opposition from the estate's long-time owner, Bob Green, also a banker, who during his lifetime resolutely declined to

Cont'd on p.5



The Town mourns Pete Murray of the New Boston Store.

And Tuffy Campetti and Bill O'Brien, Sr.

See pp. 16-17.

At the All Boards Meeting

By Times Reporter

At the All Boards Meeting December 9, Town officials polled department heads and various commissions and standing committees for their budget estimates for the remainder of FY 2014. The meeting was also an opportunity for managers to provide early warning about possible significant changes or key issues for the coming fiscal year.

According to a year-to-date expense planning schedule provided at the meeting, the updated budget for this year is \$3,172,852. This represents an increase of 9 percent from the original budget, due mostly to the \$250,000 New Hartford Road improvement project which had been approved for bonding by voters at an earlier Town Meeting. Other- wise anticipated spending in most accounts is tracking according to plan. Kathy Jacobs, Finance Committee, said that because of deferred maintenance in recent years, there is increasing pressure on town operations budgets.

FY 2015 begins on next July 1. All departments, commissions, and committees are required to submit budget requests to the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee by January 29, 2014, two weeks earlier than in the past.

John Skrip of the School Committee reported that negotiations were underway with school administrators and teachers. The proposed operational budget is expected to increase slightly. One area of concern and uncertainty is the health insurance account, a \$600,000 category that is rising. The cost for an insured family using the most popular plan, for example, is \$21,600, with the premium divided between the insured and the district at a range of 15/85% to 25/75%.

Kathy Jacobs of the Strategic Planning Committee said that the consultant evaluating town buildings has completed a draft report on long-range space and equipment needs based on estimates submitted by town departments. Cost estimates for a comprehensive list of necessary repairs are being prepared, and the Selectmen will be briefed by mid-January.

New Town Administrator, Lisa Blackmer, was introduced. Her experience in local government was evident and she brought perspective to many of the issues raised during the meeting.



Submitted by Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko

Edited by Bill Price

Agendas for upcoming Selectmen's Meetings and detailed meeting minutes are available at the Town website: www.sandisfield.info. Go to Meetings, then to Board of Selectmen. Town Selectmen are Patrick Barrett, Jeff Gray, and Rosario Messina.

Selectmen's Meeting, November 18. Among other regular business, presentations were made by representatives of the Planning Board and the Board of Health.

Planning Board

Gary Bottum in to review a grant proposal the Planning Board has submitted to Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. The BRPC assists towns in Berkshire County with community planning and economic development. The board is seeking technical assistance in future planning and growth for the Town. Gary also discussed Right-to-Farm and Driveway Permit bylaws.

Board of Health

Kathleen Segrin of the Board of Health in to question the process Victor Hryckvich has followed in restaurant inspections. Dolores responded that as soon as notification from the liquor board is received, usually at the end of October, she contacts the chair of the Board of Health and the Building Inspector. By state law the renewals must be signed in the month of November.

Kathleen went on to discuss ongoing problems on the Board of Health. Both Selectmen present stated that since the persons Kathleen is discussing were not present and the topic was not on the agenda, they can listen but cannot act. They also cannot discuss other members of the Board of Health without their being present or notified that they would be discussed. Patrick suggested that Kathleen provide him with health board minutes covering the last 12 months so that he could see where the problems may be. Kathleen said she didn't have them. The Selectmen addressed the importance and requirement of meeting minutes. The Selectmen agreed that this would be an area for the Town Administrator to help get things in order so that the board could become a functioning board.

Selectmen's Meeting, November 25. Among other regular Town business, the Board dis-

cussed the annual budget letter and upcoming All Boards Meeting. Kathy Jacobs of the Strategic Planning Committee presented an update on the town buildings assessment process.

Selectmen's Meeting, December 2. Among other regular business, Dominic Konstam and a representative of the BNRC made an application for a conservation restriction.

Town Buildings Report

The Strategic Planning Committee will meet Wednesday, January 22, at 7 p.m., at Firehouse #2 on Sandisfield Road, to hear and discuss the written report from Byarly Consultants on the condition and repair/replacement of the town's public buildings. Residents are invited to attend.

Conservation application

Narain Schroeder from Berkshire Natural Resources Council in, representing the family of Dominic Konstam, who asked to include 292 acres of land on Sears Road in a Conservation Restriction. The restriction, which would be in perpetuity, would prevent development, but not uses like sugaring, logging, or farming. The family would hold out 20 acres for building sites. They would oversee the property to ensure the guidelines are adhered to. There is an area for an Eco Cabin. Town approval is required for the proposal.

Jeff asked Mr. Konstam why he wants to do this. The reply was that he hoped to leave land to his children but also to protect it from development. The land is currently in Chapter 61 forestry. The Board replied that it would follow up with the Board of Assessors for more information on the tax impact. Public usage of the land was discussed, and would be by permission only.

Patrick described the fiscal impact that faces small towns by withdrawing property from tax rolls. He presented the Town Assessors' map that shows the large portion of Sandisfield that is tax reduced or exempt. Building rights were discussed. Per Ms. Schroeder, the restriction is the building rights, and the family is in charge of them.

Patrick asked what happens if the town does not sign off. Ms. Schroeder replied that the proposal cannot go forward without town approval. Patrick's main concern is the financial impact on the town. The restriction lasts forever and completely removes building rights on the designated property.

Cont'd on p.7

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

THREE TREMENDOUS LOSSES

For the 40 years he operated the New Boston Store, Pete Murray, who died two days after Christmas, was the face and voice of Sandisfield. Standing at his store counter, he would greet year-round residents with a smile and a story about what was going on in town. When out-of-towners returned in the spring or came up for a weekend, Pete would greet them like the old friends they were.

And then, on January 6, the Town lost some 175 years of its informal memory when Tuffy Campetti and Bill O'Brien, Sr., both died at age 87. Two of our most senior residents, Tuffy and Bill were hard-working men born and raised in Sandisfield. They married local girls, raised their families in town, and lived to enjoy their grandchildren growing up just down the road. A few of those grandchildren lost *both* of their grandfathers that awful day.

Bill, Sandisfield's chief of police for many years, knew who was who in town, and the what and the where and the when. In later years, whenever he was reminded of a story, Bill might start telling it in one place and he would follow that

story along an often winding trail into many other stories, all related and all told with gusto and his huge roar of laughter.

Tuffy started helping out on the family dairy farm when he was around 10. He and his wife, Joyce, later owned and operated the farm, now Eric and Dawn Pachulski's place in Roosterville. Dawn is Tuffy's daughter, and the farm is still in the family. Tuffy continued to help out at haying time every year, and Dawn said he was still helping out last year. That means Tuffy helped out on or operated that farm from 1936 until 2013, nearly eight decades. That's got to be a record, even for an agricultural town as old as Sandisfield.

Neither Bill nor Tuffy got out very often in the last couple of years, but we will always miss them. We'll miss Bill's pickup coming down the road with his big frame behind the wheel. We'll miss Tuffy's friendly wave and his wide smile wherever and whenever he saw you.

Pete. Tuffy. Bill. We'll remember you.

Bill Price
West New Boston



Evening is My Morning Now

I spend the days like pocket change,
Buy tickets for the night.
Behold, an opera
In a dinner bell!
However small, however bright.

There was a time
When the sun would rise,
Muffle the moon and muffle Mars.
Now I spend the afternoon
Waiting for the stars.

Evening is my morning now
Since I began to sleep alone
And find the shout of sunlight
A sad awaking tone.

Val Coleman
Town Hill Road



Our Continuing Store Dramas

ONE IS A VERY LOCAL PRODUCTION

By Bill Price

Competing plans for store and gas stations on opposite sides of Rt. 8 south of New Boston are still moving through the approval process. Two proposals have been in the planning stages since last fall.

One is a convenience store/gas station sited south of New Boston on the east side of the highway. The owner/operator would be Happy Banga of Lee. Mr. Banga currently owns the Route 102 Package Store in Lee and a Sunoco gas station in Winsted, located where Rt. 8 turns south and becomes a divided highway. Mr. Banga has not returned calls requesting information about what he is planning or where he is in the approval process.

The other is that of local residents Kim and Chandru Paspuletti. The site of their store, to be known as "Joyce's Trading Post," is also just south of New Boston, but on the west side of Rt. 8 next to MJ Tuckers.

"We don't envision a gas station," Chandru said. "We're planning a community center, a meeting place where people can buy and sell their produce, buy gas and diesel, and have everything you'd like to find at a country store in a small town. The place will be part of Sandisfield. We're planning a design that will be similar to Tuckers and look like it's always been there."

Chandru explains that they would like the town's support and help in the approval and planning process. "The community needs this after the loss of the New Boston Store more than a year ago. We need approval from town boards, and we hope people will come to meetings to give us reinforcement. Community support will make it possible."

Their store will be a "local" place built by local contractors. "We want to do this because this is our town," said Chandru. "We don't want Sandisfield to look like anyplace else. We want Joyce's

to be a part of and look like Sandisfield. We're trying to do what's best for the community."

"Joyce's" would be named for long-time Sandisfield resident Joyce Campetti, who died in 2007. With her husband, Maurice "Tuffy" Campetti, Joyce operated the popular Allen's Restaurant until 1989. Allen's is currently MJ Tuckers. Tuffy died in early January (see his obituary on p. 17). "We want to honor Joyce, a wonderful person who was a friend of everyone in town," Chandru said.

He added, "We're dotting the I's and crossing the T's. It's a tremendous process, but it's all coming together."

SIBLING ABROAD?

Cont'd from p.1

While that project did not materialize, the occasion of Sandisfield's 250th anniversary in 2012 stimulated renewed interest in our town's history and heritage and the notion was revived.

Why Ombersley? That's easy.

We have long-known that our town's name was derived from the Sandys, an aristocratic family from Ombersley. In particular Lord Samuel Sandys (pronounced as "sands") was the high-level official in charge of colonial "trade and plantations" at the time of our incorporation in 1762. If nothing more, this unique direct historical connection is certainly a basis for an association. Officials in Ombersley have been contacted, and they are intrigued and enthusiastic about a possible formal relationship with Sandisfield.

Ombersley is a village in Worcestershire in the British West Midlands, about 100 miles west of London. Our respective demographics are comparable which is considered to be an important factor to establish successful associations. Ombersley has about 2,300 inhabitants. Sandisfield, growing slightly but steadily, is comparable (more than 900 full-timers according to the 2010 census plus an estimated greater number of seasonal inhabitants). Although Sandisfield is more rural, Ombersley is also a country town and lies some distance from the nearest metropolitan area. Socially and economically, Ombersley's population is homogenous and middle class.

We share mutual interest and pride in our two communities' rich heritages, including many surviving early structures. "Early," of course, is a relative term. Ombersley traces its history back to the 8th century, a thousand years more than we can claim!

The custom of municipal partnerships in Western Europe, known there as "twin towns" or "twinning," emerged after WWI. In the United

States, the practice took root after WWII and has flourished since the 1960s. Such arrangements are called "sister cities" here. At least 2,000 American communities have friendship pacts in some 140 countries. Examples in the Berkshires include Pittsfield and North Adams, both of whom have multiple formal associations with small cities on several continents.

Potential benefits range from economic projects to technical and cultural exchanges. Smaller communities might arrange study exchanges for high school students or for promising artists, writers, or performers. Joint humanitarian projects could be another collaboration.

Usually an association forms between towns with shared history – as in our case – or because there is a particular immigrant community in one of the towns. Associations are officially formed when the respective town fathers sign a formal memorandum of agreement and proclamations are exchanged.

The Historical Commission will continue to explore avenues of potential cooperation with Ombersley. Typically the process is advanced through reciprocal visits of interested citizens so that the towns can get acquainted and plan projects. A visit to England by a Sandisfield group is being considered for this summer.

For more information contact any Commission member or Ron Bernard: 413 269-0012 / email ronbernard@aol.com .

WINTER/SPRING BURNING PERMITS

Open brush burning will be permitted between January 15 and April 30, weather and safety conditions permitting, says Fire Chief Ralph Morrison. Brush burners need to apply to the Sandisfield Fire Department for an Open Burning Permit before starting any fires.

Applications can be picked up at the Chief's Office at Fire House #1 at 79 South Main Street (Route 8) between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Or they can be downloaded from the town website and signed applications either mailed or faxed to the department.

Each time you intend to conduct an open burn call the day before to ensure that burning will be permitted that day. Call (413) 258-4742, between 9 and 5, for the next day's burning. Burning on unauthorized days is subject to fines and penalties.

Change the Batteries in Your Smoke Detectors

DO IT TODAY

If a fire starts in your Sandisfield home this winter, your family will have on average less than three minutes from the time the first smoke alarm sounds to escape.

A working smoke alarm will provide the early warning and critical seconds your family needs to escape and cut in half their risk of dying in a home fire.

So make a life-saving change in your household today. Change and test the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Remind your friends, family, and neighbors to do the same. Don't regret after it's too late that "I read it in the Times, but didn't do it. I should have."

Two-thirds of home fire deaths result from inoperable smoke alarms or no smoke alarm at all, and 24% of fire fatalities occur where a smoke alarm was present but failed to operate. This simple battery update is the best defense your family has against a home fire.

Court Blotter

Ivan Fiddelke, 77, of Dodd Road was ordered to serve a year of probation in Berkshire District Court in Great Barrington, Jan. 2. He was arrested by Massachusetts State Police for assault and battery in September. As part of his probation, he was ordered to have no contact with his victim.



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LIKELY BUYER OF GREEN PROPERTY

Cont'd from p.1

sell the property to Konstam for what were described as “personal reasons.”

Mr. Green died in 2012. His family, which has had the property for sale since last summer, ultimately agreed to sell to Konstam. The land is under contract and is expected to change hands formally in February.

If this happens Konstam will own some 3,000 acres of land and several formerly distressed but historic properties in an area roughly bordered by Silverbrook, Fox, Back, Sears, and New Hartford Roads. He will be one of the largest absentee landlords in the town.

Mr. Konstam works for Deutsche Bank as Managing Director, Global Head of Rates Research. He performed similar duties at Credit Suisse for a decade before that. He is a frequent guest on TV business channels, where he specializes in offering analysis of the developing worldwide financial situation, most particularly in Europe.

Famed though he may be among New York financial circles, Konstam is little known in Sandisfield, where he and his family play a limited social role and enjoy little interaction with local residents. He owns a number of horses and has employed local equestrians to help with training and riding instruction.

But most of his interests appear to be solitary: he has, for instance, posted several YouTube home movies of himself and his children speeding along the town’s lesser-used roadways on high-powered all-terrain vehicles, evidently using portions of the town as his own private velodrome.

His expected new purchase coincides with a brief recent demarche involving the Sandisfield Select Board, who during their December meetings expressed reluctance to give permission to Konstam to place some 240 acres of his existing land into conservation – thereby denying the cash-strapped town some thousands of dollars in annual tax revenues. In the end the Board proved powerless in law, and were compelled to agree to his demand. But it is expected that they will raise new concerns over the proposed purchase of the Green estate, wanting to know Mr. Konstam’s intentions, insofar as they have an impact on town finances



Dominic Konstam

Some in town have long entertained the hope that Mr. Konstam may in time become more positively involved with the future of the community of which he now owns substantial tracts. He has not, however, expressed either in the distant or the immediate past any inclination to do so; and most who have encountered him report an attitude of disdain, an attitude that seems to verge on outright hostility. His precise motive for purchasing here thus remains something a mystery. Local townspeople – and the Town Hall revenue collectors – will doubtless be intrigued with his plans for the future.

Got Your 2014 Dump Sticker?

Valid dump stickers are required to use the Sandisfield dump facility. Application forms for 2014 stickers have been mailed to property owners. The form may also be obtained at the Dump or from the Town Clerk at the Town Hall Annex. Stickers are not available for purchase at the dump, only at Town Hall or by mail. The fee is \$25 per family (up to 2 stickers).

Please note that the attendant has been instructed to ensure that users have valid stickers and may deny service to anyone without a sticker. Also, the Selectmen remind that materials placed in the large recycle dumpsters is Town property and may not be removed. Unauthorized removal is considered theft.



Get a sticker before you bring your trash to the dump. And the stuff in the dumpsters belongs to the Town, not you dumpster divers.

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

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WEE, WEE, WEE, ALL THE WAY HOME

Cont'd from p.1

aerial maneuvers.

One little piglet got free while I was removing one of his siblings from the car. He was the littlest one, black with a white strip circling his belly that made him look exactly like his mother. He forced the thin metal bars apart and made a break for it.

Across the pasture he ran in a wobbly trot on short legs into the neighbor's yard, and back again. At each turn his search – was it home to New Marlborough? – widened. He had not yet known the barn where his siblings were given food and a warm bed of hay, and thus he had no location to return to except where he had come from.

After a fruitless search by flashlight, it was easy to imagine his sad demise that night. The temperature fell to nine degrees in predator-infested woods. A neighbor called the next morning. "Your pig is loose," Don Johnson offered matter of factly. "He's in my driveway." But he got away.

Two days later he was back at Don's again, with a posse of eight Christmas party guests giving chase as if on cue as scheduled Sandisfield farm entertainment. After a brief standoff in a garage, the maybe by now 30-pound piglet was off to the races again, slipping through every hand.

Two days after that, gun season for deer opened in Massachusetts. Piglet made the 7,000 acre Sandisfield State Forest his new playground and seemed to be doing just fine.

I was in a tree stand at dusk, a third of mile from the farm, when a rustling in the leaves brought my shotgun up. A flash of white and the pig, grunting like a deer, appeared head to the ground as if following a scent. By the time the thought crossed my mind to give up the deer and chase the pig, he was halfway to York Lake.

He visited other hunters, too. I wonder if he didn't visit every one of them. Word got out by text and voice message from Connie D'Andrea at the Silverbrook Cafe as the stories mounted. Several bewildered hunters clicked off their safety levers at sounds in the brush, only to rub their eyes. The pig sightings were questioned at the Mill River Store where Scott's brother-in-law heard the story and made the connection of which pig this was. Scott kindly replaced the missing errant pig with another, even though he'd had no part in the escape.

With a dearth of deer, the pig was fast becoming a legend among otherwise bored and cold hunters who smiled at the sight of him. One stopped to offer crackers, which pig accepted. The little pig, the hunter said as breathlessly as if he had just spotted a



Lucky with his siblings the day after his return, with coyote wounds on his right shoulder.

10-point buck, had been rooting around for acorns. The phone lit up with sightings, but no capture.

A week into his disappearance, the New Marlborough Animal Control Officer rang me up. Prudence Spaulding left a message.

I wondered whether to return the call. It might mean getting in the proverbial line behind Arlo (Guthrie, of nearby Stockbridge fame) for being responsible for an errant pig's damage to a state forest rather than Thanksgiving garbage. I imagined myself on the Group W bench, arguing my way out of hatching a plot to launch a feral pig population.

Impossible, I would argue. He was snipped.

Prudence, nevertheless a government agent, convinced me to regard her as a helpful aunt. She suggested I call the radio station in Great Barrington. I did.

Sandisfield snowplow driver David McCuin called Monday, December 9, to say he had seen pig rooting for acorns under an oak tree along a forest road. I went looking for him at dawn on Tuesday not far from the New Marlborough town line, but found only tracks.

One set had drops of blood in them, heading back in the direction of the farm. He'd had enough of this adventure, and somehow figured out where it had begun more than a mile along an unplowed dirt road he had only been down once, or maybe not at all, before it snowed.

Then Don called. "I have your pig." He had grabbed a leg from under his truck.

Pig was in bad shape. A coyote had latched its jaws around his head and neck, causing deep puncture wounds. Pig was lethargic and bleeding, and limping from a rear leg. He looked up at me with eyes that seemed willing to submit to whatever might come next.

Dave McCuin took a couple of minutes out from plowing to help me get the pig into the barn, where the little guy pressed in tight with his siblings. He was half the size of the others, and he wouldn't eat. I gave him doses of penicillin, treated the wounds, and drenched him with a calf drencher to fill him with vitamins. For two more days, his demise seemed imminent, even as he relaxed in a deep bed of hay with his pals as temperatures dipped close to zero.

On the third day he drank a sip of milk and followed his sisters to lie snuggled with them in the hay. By Christmas he was sleeping less and eating more, and it looked like he'd make it. He began fighting with his sisters for food.

I like pigs a lot more than I used to. One especially. Under pressure from his fans, I gave him a name: Lucky.

A boy who visited the farm and was involved in the chase for the lost piglet said a prayer at his school for him and told his father the angels gave him the name "cookie dough." So this small pig now has a surname: Mr. Lucky Cookie Dough.

Computer Woes?

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TOWN BUSINESS

Cont'd from p.2

Lisa asked what happens if the town does not approve the proposal. Ms. Schroeder replied that they will come back again. They would like it approved by the end of this calendar year. The Selectmen would like more time to review. The state has already pre-approved the proposal. Lisa will work with the Assessors for more information for the Select Board. Patrick pointed out that the letter from the BRNC mentioned development occurring in Sandisfield and asked where that was. The response was that the letter used boiler-plate language and was not specific to Sandisfield. Mr. Konstam and the BRNC are to return to the Selectmen, Dec. 16, 2013.

Selectmen's Meeting, December 2 and the All Boards Meeting, December 9. Among other regular business, newly hired Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer was introduced and her duties outlined.

Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer

The Selectmen introduced and welcomed Lisa. Patrick explained that she is a welcomed addition to our town. He said that we have very good employees who are taxed in their duties, and Lisa will be a great asset.

Lisa will serve as liaison between the public and the Selectmen. Patrick reiterated that she will take direction from the Selectmen, and when issues come before her that need attention or action she needs to bring it before the Selectmen.

The Selectmen reviewed a list of prioritized items for her to address. One issue is for her to assist the Selectmen in being more effective during meetings. Lisa explained the need to keep the discussions focused. They discussed public participation in the meetings and when public comments are appropriate.

Other items on the list included the budget process, consolidating the annual town warrant, the senior tax work-off program, COA handicap accessible ramp, records retention, building repair specs, work with the Highway Department on funding and bidding to complete New Hartford Road repair, energy audit, Town employee job descriptions and employee handbook, working with the Planning Board regarding bylaws.

At the All Boards meeting on December 9, the Selectmen formally introduced and welcomed Lisa as our new Town Administrator. The Selectmen thanked the Town Management Review Committee for their work getting the Town to the point of being able to hire an administrator. Patrick reviewed Lisa's work experience and said she would be a significant asset for the town.

Selectmen's Meeting, December 16, has not yet been posted. Among other regular business, a complaint was raised about the highway crew.

Plowing Their Own Driveways

A verbal complaint was made to Rosario about the highway crews using town equipment to plow their own driveways. Ensuing discussion was that there has been a practice for decades of the crew being allowed to open the driveway to get to their house – but not plow the complete



Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer with Selectman Jeff Gray

driveway. This allows drivers to take a break or get in and out when necessary. Highway crews work day and night during storms and can be on the job 16 hours at a stretch. The town covers a large area of mileage and it does not make sense nor is it cost effective for a crew member to drive all the way across town to take a break. More importantly, the town does not have a heated facility with warm water to take a break and freshen up before returning to work during overtime hours. The only restroom available is the single bathroom at the old town hall which is kept at 50 degrees and has no hot water. The consensus was that, pending ethics clearance to be obtained by the Town Administrator, it will be business as usual. Drivers can drop their plows to get to their door and drop the plow to leave.

Patrick added that the Selectmen solicits feedback and encourages residents to register complaints – but not anonymously. There is a Town Suggestion Box on the website, a Town Hall phone number (258-4075), and that Town Hall

Annex is open to anyone with a complaint or a positive suggestion.

Selectmen's Meeting, December 23. Among other regular business, Road Superintendent Steve Harasyko presented highway department updates.

Road report, end of December

Steve reported that due to unusually warm weather the dirt roads have thawed and turned to mud. Road crews are adding gravel, but the roads are too soft to grade or rake. Especially difficult roads are Sears, Clark, Dodd, and Stump. Once the roads freeze the crews will do some grading. The department has been working on equipment repairs instead of sending trucks out. Discussed the type of salt, and Steve said he has used "brown" salt for the past 2 years, which melts at a colder temperature and is more efficient.

Steve had reviewed snow plow bids for this winter with Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer. They recommend the bid be awarded to P & R Construction, and it was so ordered. The Selectmen and Steve discussed bidding snow plowing next year for a 3-year contract, rather than one year at a time.

SUZANNE HOYNOSKI

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HELPING RABBITS REAPPEAR

By Marianne Piché, DFW Habitat Management Biologist, and Tom Ryan, DCR Service Forester Photo: www.newenglandcottontail.org

A land tour and workshop held in late November at the Sandisfield Arts Center provided landowners with information about resources available for managing or protecting their land and, in particular, to increase awareness of an initiative to create habitat for New England Cottontail rabbits.

The Commonwealth's only native cottontail rabbit, the New England Cottontail, is currently in severe decline and is being considered for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Private landowners are being encouraged to create suitable NEC habitat. If we can increase the amount of available habitat in areas where the rabbits are still known to occur, we might be able to help the rabbits survive and thrive without the need for federal protection.

A nearly identical rabbit, the Eastern Cottontail, is quite common, but is an out-of-towner and not native to Massachusetts. Genetically distinct, Easterns were introduced from the Midwest as a game species in 1924.

New England Cottontails, our home-grown species, once ranged throughout all of southern New England. Sandisfield is at the center of a focal area where remaining isolated populations of NECs still exist. The area includes all or part of eight towns in south-eastern Berkshire County. In these towns, so far eleven landowners (including the BNRC Clam River Project) have received funding assistance to create NEC habitat. A growing community is voluntarily managing



The elusive New England Cottontail

their land in an effort to keep our native cottontail rabbit from disappearing.

Young forest/shrubland provides critical cover for these animals to avoid predation and a concentrated abundant food source at or near the ground level. With most of the surrounding landscape more or less composed of mature forest, open agricultural land, or residential/commercial development, young forest habitat is scarce and transitional in nature. Land managers are realizing the need to be proactive by creating and maintaining this unique habitat niche as a component of our landscape.

The evening began with a field tour led by Doug Bruce, Stewardship Manager for BNRC who showed where approximately 25 acres of young forest habitat is being created at their Clam River

property on Hammertown Rd. Although funded specifically for New England Cottontail, the NEC Initiative will benefit at least 12 other state-identified rare or declining animal species. Some of the participants shared that two of these have already been observed at Clam River, including Ruffed Grouse and American Woodcock.

The creation of young forest/shrubland is quite an intense experience to behold as we were essentially witnessing land clearing, which in most circumstances is followed by residential or commercial construction. In this instance the land will be allowed to revert back to a forest. The real magic happens in the subsequent growing seasons where you will see a flush of new growth as Mother Nature reclaims the clearing.

Young forest habitat is created naturally as a result of hurricanes, tornados, ice storms, wildfires, insect or tree disease outbreaks, and beaver activity; all for the most part sudden and drastic events. But in this instance a young forest is being crafted by human activity from tree cutting or clearing. The idea of active habitat management is to use forest management techniques to mimic natural events and create habitat where it is needed by rare and declining wildlife. The involvement of individual landowners is essential to the efforts of the NEC initiative because at least 75% of the Commonwealth's land is in private ownership.

Funding assistance is available to landowners from the USDA NRCS and the Massachusetts Stewardship Program that can help further the NEC Initiative. If landowners are eligible and apply, they can use funds to hire a licensed forester to prepare management and cutting plans that identify suitable areas for NEC habitat creation. The funds can also be used to hire licensed timber harvesters to create the young forest habitat under a state-permitted forest cutting plan.

This workshop was organized by the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Department of Conservation and Recreation. These agencies work under partnership to assist landowners in planning and funding forest and habitat management activities. We'd also like to thank the Sandisfield Arts Center and the Berkshire Natural Resources Council for hosting this presentation and tour of the habitat management project.

To learn more about the Rangewide New England Cottontail Initiative visit newenglandcottontail.org. For further information please contact Marianne Piché, DFW Habitat Management Biologist, 508-389-6313 or marianne.piche@state.ma.us; or Tom Ryan, DCR Service Forester, 413-784-1828 ext. 123 or tom.ryan@state.ma.us.

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Office of the Town Clerk: Nomination Papers

Nomination papers are now available. If you are interested in running for an elected position you can take out nomination papers. You will need to contact the Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko or the Asst. Town Clerk Teresa DellaGiustina. You need to be a registered voter. When collecting signatures on your nomination papers make sure the person signing is a registered voter of Sandisfield, they use their street address, PO boxes and route numbers are not acceptable, and if the signature is not legible they can print their name next to their signature.

Offices up for Election

<i>Office</i>	<i>Term</i>	<i>Currently held by</i>
Moderator	1 year	John Skrip
Town Clerk	3 years	Dolores Harasyko
Selectmen	3 years	Jeffrey Gray
Treasurer	1 year	Ralph Morrison
Board of Assessors	3 years	Teresa DellaGiustina
School Committee	3 years	Nick DellaGiustina
Board of Health	3 years	Victor Hryckvich
Planning Board	5 years	Gary Bottum, Sr.
Library Trustee	5 years	Clare M. English
Constable	3 years	Nazario Sanchez
Constable	3 years	Joseph Zeller

TOWN OF SANDISFIELD OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK YEAR 2014 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 27 Last day to obtain nomination papers.
- March 31 Last day to submit nomination papers.
- April 10 Town Caucus – Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Rd., 7:00 p.m.
- April 15 Last day to object or withdraw nomination papers.
- April 28 Last day to register to vote for the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Election. This will be held at the Town Hall Annex from 2:00 to 4:00 and 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- May 17 Annual Town Meeting. Old Town Hall 10:00 a.m.
- May 19 Annual Town Election. Old Town Hall 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Aug. 20 Last day to register to vote or change party enrollment for the State Primaries. This will be held at the Town Hall Annex from 2:00 to 4:00 and 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- Sept. 9 State Primary at the Old Town Hall, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- Oct. 15 Last day to register to vote for the State Election
- Nov. 4 State Election at the Old Town Hall, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

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Residents Seek Answers to Pipeline Concerns SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE AT RISK

By Bill Price

The gas pipeline expansion across Beech Plain proposed by the parent company of Tennessee Gas Pipeline, KinderMorgan, has drawn two more town residents to question the wisdom of simply allowing the property-taking from Sandisfield neighbors to go forward.

In the following letters, two town residents publicly asked the Board of Selectmen to address the issue. This is in addition to the three letters published in the November issue of the Times and an "Out on a Limb" article last month.

The date for public hearing by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in order for residents to address the pipeline expansion has not yet been determined, but it should occur early this spring. The FERC meetings normally are pro-forma assemblages of commission and government representatives, pipeline officials, and upset citizens. In most cases, the commission listens politely to local complaints, then votes to allow such expansion. Possibly this time will be different.

Selectmen Patrick Barrett, who has been designated as contact person by the Board, has discussed the issue with State Representative Smitty Pignatelli and will write to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Resources. Because the pipeline expansion will cross the Spectacle Pond property, he feels the DCR is the state agency that will be most involved.

Patrick added that Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer will contact the Commonwealth's Berkshire County delegation. Lisa says that pipeline expansion anywhere in Berkshire County is a county-wide issue, and that "we should all be nervous about these kinds of incursions."

Patrick will also write to Senator Ed Markey's office to alert his staff to the planned effort. Patrick said, "The idea that the pipeline company can take your land, prevent you from having access to it, and that you still have to pay taxes on it, is totally unfair."

ASKING FOR MORE INFORMATION

Date: December 9, 2013

To: Town of Sandisfield Board of Selectmen
with a cc: to Re.Smitty@mahouse.gov

Re: Tennessee Gas Company Expansion

In reference to the town's Selectmen's minutes of September 16, 2013, Patrick Barrett stated he would contact our State Representative Pignatelli for more information on the expansion of the gas pipeline by Tennessee Gas Company. We are asking that any additional findings be disclosed and added to the agenda for the December 16, 2013 Board of Selectmen meeting.

As my husband and I witness the continued surveyance of property abutting Sandisfield resident's property by Tennessee Gas Company, we are concerned that Tennessee Gas Company has no interest in maintaining the natural beauty of our town. Has our State Representative Pignatelli been made aware of the continued marring of Southern Berkshire County by Tennessee Gas Company and how is this issue being addressed?

We would also like to schedule a meeting with State Representative Pignatelli including the town selectmen and local residents in order to impress on him the importance of this issue.

My husband and I will attend the December 16, 2013 Board of Selectmen meeting to hear the results of your findings.

Thank you.

Mary Anne and John Grammer
South Beech Plain Road

"SAFETY ISSUES ARE REAL"

December 10, 2013

Dear Board of Selectmen:

It is with great concern that I am writing to you in regard to the Tennessee Gas Pipeline expansion proposed by KinderMorgan. I am a resident of Sandisfield and while not directly abutting the pipeline, my property and quality of life will be affected, as will our entire community. The pipeline expansion was discussed in your meetings of September 16 and September 30. I attended the September 30 meeting and was pleased to hear the Board say that they would find out more about this proposed expansion and its impact on our town.

Residents Thelma Esteves, Roberta Myers, and Hilde Weisert have written recently in The Sandisfield Times to point out the many risks



and threats to our community in this pipeline expansion. One risk that greatly concerns me is safety, important for everyone in our town, not just for the pipeline abutters. I am writing to ask that the Board specifically look into how, before considering any pipeline expansion, we can ensure that the safety steps recommended by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) are in place. NTSB, a highly respected independent Federal agency, has identified enhancing pipeline safety as one of the top 10 "NTSB Most Wanted List" changes "needed to reduce transportation accidents and save lives."

The NTSB investigations of pipeline accidents found that according to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, in 2010 there were 34 serious pipeline incidents in which 19 people were killed, 104 were injured, and 3,104 barrels of hazardous liquid were spilled. In 2011, another 12 people were killed and 55 injured in 34 serious pipeline incidents.

What is KinderMorgan's plan to protect Sandisfield? Can the Selectmen find out if KM is following these NTSB recommendations to avoid future accidents and minimize damage and explosions:

- Pipelines delivering natural gas into residential areas must have automatic excess flow valves that terminate the flow of product upon reaching a certain threshold. Does the TG pipeline have this? Does the planned expansion?
- Companies need the ability to stop the flow and isolate a rupture quickly to minimize damage and the potential for an explosion. Does TGP/KinderMorgan have this ability? Can we see their plan to isolate ruptures quickly?
- Emergency response in the event of a leak is critical. Pipeline operators can help ensure adequate emergency response by providing local jurisdictions and residents key information on pipelines in their areas. What key safety information is TGP/KinderMorgan providing to our local jurisdiction and residents?
- When a rupture occurs, operators should notify 911 emergency call centers as part of the standard response. Is this part of the standard response? What is our 911 emergency call center's preparation for a pipeline accident?
- Pipeline operators should review their internal emergency response procedures and conduct periodic drills. Can Sandisfield get a copy of the TGP/KinderMorgan internal emergency response procedures? Do they conduct periodic drills?

These safety issues are real – as one resident said, an accident in the expanded pipeline or during its construction, with increased pressure and contents, would be like a bomb. When I am not in my home in Sandisfield, I reside in North Carolina, and yesterday received a news bulletin from the local TV station "Gas line rupture prompts evacuations in Apex." Although the break was only 2 inches and did not result in injuries, authorities in Apex learned from an earlier toxic explosion and now say "We have a plan in place. It's a plan we practice twice a year."

I thank you for following up with our representatives Downing and Pignatelli and learning that they were not aware of the proposal. What's next? It is my hope that you can work with our representatives and our community to ensure we are protected by a sound, public safety plan to be followed by KM, our emergency responders, and our residents.

I am attaching the NTSB Fact Sheet "Enhance Pipeline Safety" for your information and records (4 copies).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Barbara Penn
Hammertown Road

SUGGESTIONS NEEDED!



The Town Suggestion Box needs your constructive ideas. We've received about 15 so far and all have been passed along to the Select Board.

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

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

- John Skrip

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Another Winter of Our Discontent

By Larry Dwyer

Photos: Larry Dwyer

I've been telling this same joke about Sandisfield for years. "You know, people come up to Sandisfield in the summertime and fall in love with the place. They'll buy a house. After two winters, you see a 'For Sale' sign on the house."

You can't find a better place in the summertime than Sandisfield. Autumn is pleasant with crisp air and colorful foliage. And I like the early spring and the pale green color of fresh leaves in the morning mist. However, when it comes to winter, Sandisfield becomes a challenge.

Don't get me wrong, I have some beautiful pictures of winter scenes that I've taken in Sandisfield, and when I was younger in my carefree days I used to enjoy skiing at Butternut with my uncle Frank.

But after building a house, you always have to worry about Murphy's law: "What can go wrong, will go wrong." It's not that something dire happens every winter, but in Sandisfield you have to be prepared for the worst and hope for the best.

There's a lot of preparation for winter. First thing to do is to make sure the chimney is cleaned. Chimney fires are a common problem in cold weather regions, so make sure your chimney is clean. Second, make sure you have plenty of firewood to get through the winter. We supplement with wood, so one cord usually does the job.

Third, critters start settling into the house for winter. There are a couple of solutions to this problem, but our cat Scorpi has a handle on it. Despite his being twelve years old with worsening rheumatism, he still leaves us gifts in the dining room. Yummy!

Fourth, let's talk about snow. Not every winter in Sandisfield is a horror, but it's the unknown of what could happen. In all the winters I've been up here, I really have only a handful of momentous stories.

Two winters ago, my wife and I got stuck in a snowstorm coming down from Northampton. A one-hour drive turned into a five-hour ordeal.

Twenty-five years ago, I spun out on Route 57 and just missed a telephone pole. A shot of whiskey calmed me down on that one.

How about the ice storm in December 2008? One week with no power and then a power surge blew out the circuit board on our brand new furnace. Another week went by before the part came in. The fireplace and wood furnace kept the house at a balmy 38 degrees.

Then there was the winter when it snowed and snowed and snowed. There was a pile of snow in front of the house 40 feet long and 8 feet high. I had to dig a trench through the pile to get to the driveway and every time the plow came, it filled in the trench and I had to start all over again. The last bit of snow didn't melt until July. Just kidding.

Hey, maybe this winter won't be so bad after all. I have my fingers crossed, but don't tell Murphy that.



If snow falls too fast, things can get left out, sometimes all winter.



Bill Crofut Arts Fund for Children

APPLY FOR A SCHOLARSHIP

Put yourself or your child in this picture.

The Bill Crofut Arts Fund for Children has been making awards since 2002 to help Sandisfield children cover tuition and fees for a wide variety of arts activities. Opportunities are in dance, theater, drawing, painting, music, writing – almost anything you can come up with. Don't miss this opportunity to explore and develop your or your child's creativity.

To apply as a participant in an arts program: Send a letter briefly describing the program, activity, or item you are interested in, the cost, your background, and why you would like to participate. There are three target dates per year: January 15, June 1, September 15

Mail application or questions to: Crofut Fund, Sandisfield Arts and Restoration Center, P.O. Box 31, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or to: soconnell@wesleyan.edu.



Award recipient Donny Lee Scaglione, age 5, (second from left, front row) at the 2011 recital for the Center for Dance Arts II in Winsted, which is operated by Lisa Cormier of Sandisfield. Donny is now taking martial arts at the Center.

Photo: Marilyn Scaglione

Sandisfield Cultural Council Report

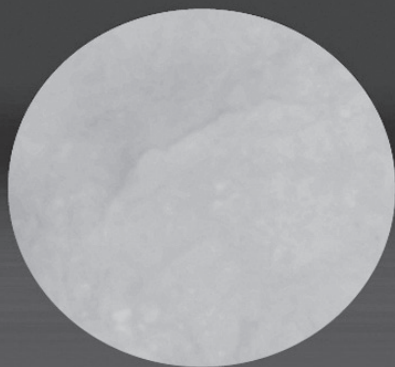
By John Skrip

The Cultural Council awarded 13 grants for the 2014 cycle of \$4,357 to groups that applied for support for local activities.

The approved grants were awarded to the Sandisfield Volunteer Fire Department, the Sandisfield Free Library, the Sandisfield Times, the Sandisfield Arts and Recreation Center, Bard College, six programs at the Farmington River Regional School for field trips and related programs, and the FRRS Community Health Program.

The council received a total of 28 applications, with the requests totaling some \$16,400. With a stipend of only \$4,250 from the Commonwealth, plus a gift fund (money given to the council by individuals or organizations) and a small annual donation from the Town of Sandisfield, council members experienced difficulty in deciding which group to support in order to provide maximum benefit to the town.

The Sandisfield Cultural Council is composed of Peter Levine, Anina Carr, Constance Canty, Clare English, and John Skrip. The council is looking for new members as the state prefers members stay for a period of 3 years. Please contact any of the above members for further information.



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You are ensuring that your community newspaper continues with a high-quality format that provides "Reliable, Regular, and Relevant" local news and features for another year. Every donation is important and greatly appreciated.

If you have not had a chance to make your (tax deductible) donation, please consider doing so by sending a check to us at PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255. Donations may also be made securely on our website, www.SandisfieldTimes.org, via credit card or PayPal. (Please Note: subscriptions are not tax deductible and may be ordered separately).

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OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Dia and Tasim Klenja have closed their Villa Mia Restaurant to make a long-overdue visit to their homeland, Albania. They expect to return and re-open Villa Mia in mid to-late February. Watch for the "Open" sign.



Town Clerk **Dolores Harasyko's** father, Reed P. Cote, 79, died in Newport, Vermont, December 18. Our condolences to Dolores and Steve and their family.



Hunter Cormier was recently honored with a "Good Works Youth Recognition Award" by Monument Mountain Regional High School. The award is given to an individual who has personally contributed to family or community. In her senior year at Monument Mountain, Hunter is a National Honor Society student and captain of the basketball team. She was nominated for the award for her efforts in organizing a half-marathon race to support the cause of fighting Duchenne's Muscular Dystrophy. Recruiting friends to run and receive pledges from friends and family, Hunter's team earned \$5,000 for the cause.

Council on Aging



By *Susan Galik*

We still intend to put a movie in once a month, and since we didn't get a chance to show "Francis, the Talking Mule," I've scheduled it for January 22, the same day as our Blood Pressure Clinic. But, double check, in case we have moved the BP to the 29th.

Thanks to all who donated their raffle tickets to the Vets down at the Berkshire Rehab. They won the basket! The food was incorporated into their dinner, and the candy and snacks were given out to those who were allowed such things. Hat's were delivered December 18, after our annual Christmas dinner, which we held this years at Mario's Restaurant in Winsted.

We had enough cash left over to donate some DVD's to the Rehab Center. They can always use DVD's of short duration - 15-30 minutes. If you have a

DVD you no longer want of any TV series or a compilation of short videos, the Vets there would appreciate it. Please contact Brenda at the Center.

We had a great Floral Workshop on December 9. Five members and two non-members joined us and made Christmas center pieces. We thank Wild Flowers for sending Bob Palmer to show us how make these things. We are considering making this an annual event. Let us know what you think about having another workshop. The price would be \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members.

Stay tuned to our Facebook page at "Sandisfieldcoa." We will be having a Quilting class next. We gather on Wednesdays at 11' a.m. in the basement of the Town Hall Annex, for a potluck lunch at noon and Bingo and, maybe, a movie! All ages are welcome.

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Comings and Goings



*Pete at the store, 2010
Photo: Ron Bernard*

PETE MURRAY OF THE NEW BOSTON STORE 1949-2013



Pete striking a vigorous pose at a 1950's dance in 1982 at the American Legion Pavilion. From left, Tom Dawson, Pete Murray and Don Henry.

Photo courtesy of Robert P. Witherston

Peter O. Murray, 64, of South Main Street, died on December 27 at Berkshire Medical Center, with his family by his side. As many residents knew, Pete had been ill with liver disease for the last couple years.

With his wife, Sue, Pete owned and operated The New Boston Store for the last 40 years. The store was described by local historian Ron Bernard: "Through two and one-half centuries, in hard times and good, the venerable New Boston Store has been a dependable provider of essential products as well as a friendly meeting place. It was also a national treasure, and may have been the oldest continuously operated store of its kind in the country."

During the years when Pete was the store's proprietor, he was the face and voice of Sandisfield. He greeted year-round residents who came in all winter for bread or milk with a smile and a story about what was going on in town. When out-of-towners returned in the spring or came up for a summer weekend, the store was often their first stop, and they'd find Pete standing beside the counter or slicing salami or stocking shelves. Whatever he was doing he would smile, greet you like an old friend, and laugh. Pete's smile and his laugh were infectious.

When a truck crash in early October 2012 destroyed the store and Pete and Sue's home upstairs, Pete and Sue retired. Local poet Val Coleman described what the town had lost:

*In recent years Pete and Sue Murray
Have cherished the old store
And we all have held forth
Next to the same old counter
Talking and gossiping
And keeping the faith
That this town is at America's heart
And that this store was the heart of our town.*

After the truck crash, Pete and Sue retired, and for a while lived in Florida. They returned home to Sandisfield in early December.

Born in Winsted, Conn., on November 27, 1949, Pete was the son of Paul J. Murray, Sr., and Teresa Morvidelli Murray. He was an EMT on the Sandisfield Ambulance Squad for twelve years in the 1970's and 1980's. He liked nothing better than being with his family, knocking off work for awhile to fish in the Farmington River mere steps from the New Boston store, or building something in his woodworking shop.

Pete is survived by his wife, the former Susan C. Campetti, whom he married March 21, 1970. He also leaves a daughter, Megan A. Murray, of Lee, and a son, Michael P. Murray and his wife, Katherine, and their children, Gavin, Claire, Ryan, Maggie and Maeve, of Lee, as well as two sisters: Mary Lopardo and her husband, Joseph, and Helen Centrella and her husband, Patrick, all of Winsted, Conn. He also leaves his mother-in-law, Carol Campetti and sister-in-law Doreen Murray, and many loving in-laws, nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his brother, Paul J. Murray, Jr.

Pete's funeral was held January 3 at the Kelly Funeral Home in Lee, with a Liturgy of Christian Burial at St. Ann's Church, Lenox. Burial followed at the Sandisfield Cemetery. Those wishing to do so may make a memorial donation to Cub Scout Pack 45 of Lee in care of the funeral home.



BILL O'BRIEN, SR.
1926-2014

William D. O'Brien, Sr. (Chief), 87, died peacefully, January 6 at the home of his grandson, Robert O'Brien.

A native and lifelong resident of Sandisfield, Bill was born September 12, 1926, the son of Alice and Joseph O'Brien. His family has been in or near Sandisfield at least since the 1850s; his great-great-grandson was born in November.

Bill was the chief of police in Sandisfield for many years. He was involved in many types of construction and was a member of Laborers Union 473, retiring in 1990 after 25 years.

He and his wife, Mabel, were dedicated custodians of the Sandisfield School for 40 years. He was a devoted father, grandfather, great grandfather, and most recently great-great grandfather. Above all else Bill cherished spending time with his family and his many friends.

Bill is survived by his son, William O'Brien, Jr., of Sandisfield, his brother Kenneth O'Brien of Lee, five grandchildren: Robert, Christina, and Patrick O'Brien, Jennifer Crealease, and Holly Morawiec, ten great-grand children and one great-great grandchild.

He was predeceased by his wife of 59 years, Mabel I. Spring O'Brien, in September 2009, his son Robert H. O'Brien, Sr. in February 2009, and his brother, Charles O'Brien Sr., in 1994.

The family received friends on January 13 at Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home in Great Barrington. Burial service will be in the spring. To send remembrances please visit the funeral home's website at www.finnertyandstevens.com.



TUFFY CAMPETTI
1926-2014

Maurice D. Campetti, known for most of his life as "Tuffy," died January 6. Age 87, Tuffy was a lifelong resident of Sandisfield.

Born March 3, 1926 in Winsted, he was one of seven children of Dominic and Caterina Consolati Campetti. He was a graduate of Lee High School, class of 1943. On November 16, 1946, Maurice married the love of his life, the former Joyce G. Allan.

He worked on the family-owned and -operated Valley View Dairy Farm in Roosterville. Interviewed for *Sandisfield Then and Now*, Tuffy said that in the early days he "had five minutes to hand milk each of 12 cows." In 1946, with his wife Joyce, Tuffy took over the daily operations of the farm from his father, and he and Joyce ran it together for the next 20 years. The farm was one of the few Sandisfield dairies that continued to operate after World War II.

For the rest of his life, Tuffy helped out every hay season at the farm, which is still owned by the family, including last year. If Tuffy started helping out on the farm at age 10, then he operated or helped out on farm for 77 years, from 1936 until 2013. Even in Sandisfield, that has to be a record.

In 1966, Tuffy started his own contracting and trucking business. In 1973, following the death of Joyce's parents, he and Joyce took over her family's business in Sandisfield, Allan's Restaurant on Rt. 8, which they owned and operated until they retired in 1989.

An avid sportsman, you could always count on Tuffy to be hunting, regardless of the weather: turkey hunting, bow hunting, black powder, to name a few. He loved the outdoors and fishing. He enjoyed playing cards and horse shoes. Over the years he organized numerous horseshoe tournaments at Allan's.

An active member of his community, Tuffy was a member and former Assistant Chief of the Sandisfield Volunteer Fire Department and a member of the Sandisfield Conservation Commission.

He is survived by his son, John Campetti, three daughters, Joy G. Greenleaf and her husband Tom, Candace A. Craig and her husband George, and Dawn A. Pachulski and her husband Eric, his sister Theresa Koszalka of Otis, six grandchildren, Jennifer, Holly, Matthew, Christopher, John & Jill, six great grandchildren Alek, Ryan, Anna, Sara, Emma & Joshua, and his great-great granddaughter, Aubrie.

Tuffy was predeceased by his beloved wife of 60 years, Joyce, who died in June 2007, and his brothers Angelo and Stephen Campetti and sisters Italia "Dolly" Henri, Mary Lundgren, and Pierina "Pete" Alexander.

The funeral was held January 11 at Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home in Great Barrington, conducted by the Rev. Donald Peet of Sandisfield. Burial service will be in the spring. Donations in memory of Maurice D. Campetti may be made to the Sandisfield Ambulance Squad through Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, 426 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DEPARTMENT OF BIRD AMPLIFICATION

For those of us who dare to subscribe to the competing Five Towns Newsletter, which covers New Marlborough, the sighting of sandhill cranes at the Crofut/Luxon sanctuary and on Phelps Flat in Colebrook is less of a surprise than to other readers.

In addition to the pairs nesting in Sheffield, reported in Margaret O'Clair's article, sandhill cranes have been visiting the llama farm on East Hill Road in New Marlborough for several years. From there it is just a short crow's flight – or a crane's flight – east to the Crofut property.

George J. Grumbach, Jr.
Sage Road



Moms Amanda Leavenworth (left) and Bethany Perry with 5-week-old Graysyn (left) and William. The newly arrived Sandisfield cousins, both born October 30, were introduced to each other socially for the first time at the Christmas Fair.

At the Sandisfield Historical Society's Christmas Fair



Shopping at the fair.



By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

The next genealogy assistance classes will be held January 29 and February 16 at 6:30 p.m.

The library has in stock new audio-books:

Hunt the Falcon: Seal Team Six/Don Mann

The Last Boy: Mickey Mantle/Jane Leavy

Room/Emma Donoghue

The Girl Who Played with Fire/Stieg Larsson

The Echelon Vendetta /David Stone

EMS/FIRE BLOTTER

TYPE OF CALL	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
EMS CALLS		
EMS MEDICAL	4	9
MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	2	1
FIRE DEPT CALLS		
MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT		1
CHIMNEY FIRE	2	
OUTSIDE RUBBISH FIRE	1	
POWER LINE DOWN	13	
FALSE ALARM	1	
SMOKE DETECTOR ALARMS		2
MUTUAL AID STANDBY		1

NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

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

JANUARY & FEBRUARY EVENTS

Clam River Hike sponsored by the Berkshire Natural Resources Council on Saturday, January 18 from 9:00 a.m. to Noon. Free. This moderately paced 3-mile hike is on intermediate terrain with some short, steep elevation gains. Bring your camera to this photogenic property: over a mile of river frontage, old stone walls, and cellar holes make great subjects. The majority of the hike will be off-trail. Come prepared for hiking in snow. Bring water, food, and snowshoes. Meet at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex. For more information, email mleavitt@bnrc.net.

Blood Pressure Clinic & Health Counseling on Wednesday, January 22 from 11:00 a.m. to noon at the Sandisfield Senior Center, Town Hall Annex. This event is sponsored by the Porchlight Visiting Nurse Association and the Sandisfield Board of Health. For more information, call 413-243-1212.

Genealogy Class on Wednesday, January 29, at 6:30 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library.

Quilting Workshop TBA. At the Sandisfield Senior Center. Contact Linda Riiska (258-4816) for more information.

JANUARY & FEBRUARY EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Beartown State Forest Loop Hike, sponsored by the Berkshire Natural Resources Council on Wednesday, January 22, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. This moderate 2-mile loop trail follows the edge of Benedict Pond in Beartown State Forest in Monterey. Meet in the first parking area, at the boat launch. Free. For more information, email mleavitt@bnrc.net.

Frosty Snowshoe, Toasty Yoga on Saturdays, January 27; February 10 and 24 from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. at Ashintully Gardens in Tyringham on Tyringham Road. \$25 each session. Snowshoe rentals: \$10. For more information, call Tracy at 413-243-3582.

Mobile Health Clinic on Friday, February 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the parking lot of the Otis Town Hall. Community Health Program's (CHP) family nurse practitioner

Kathleen Floyd will offer routine physicals, wellness visits, chronic disease management, and sick visits. To schedule an appointment, call 528-8580. Walk-ins welcome. CHP accepts almost all insurances.

Free Community Suppers at Berkshire South Community Center on Mondays at 5:00 p.m. No reservation needed, just come! Contact 528-2819 or visit www.berkshiresouth.org.

Hot Chocolate Saturdays at Bartholomew's Cobble in Sheffield on Saturdays in winter from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Free with admission.

Youth Outdoor Writing Contest. The New England Outdoor Writers Association (NEOWA) is sponsoring a Youth Outdoor Writing Contest for students in grades 6-12. Students are invited to submit a 500-word essay focusing on any outdoor activity, including hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, wildlife watching, and natural history. There are two categories: Junior Division for grades 6-8 and Senior Division for grades 9-12. Entries should be submitted in digital format to Mike Roche (mikeroche3@msn.com). NEOWA reserves the right to publish any work submitted. Division winners will receive \$125 each and the two New England-wide winners will receive an additional \$150. For more information, visit www.neowa.org/youthwritingcontest.

ONGOING EVENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Council on Aging, every Wednesday, 11 a.m.-2

p.m., Senior Center, Town Hall Annex. Pot luck lunch at noon, bingo at 1 p.m. Free blood pressure screening every fourth Wednesday.

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

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

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

Historical Commission: Third Wednesday, 7-8:30 p.m., Sandisfield Library. Next meeting, February 19.

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

Donations of all sizes are needed to ensure the continuation of this newspaper. Please send checks to: *The Sandisfield Times*, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or donate online at our website: www.sandisfieldtimes.org.

Copies of *The Sandisfield Times* are available in Sandisfield at A&M Auto, the Arts Center (in season), the Dump, Post Office, the New Boston Inn, the Silverbrook Café & Country Store, Villa Mia, MJ Tuckers, When Pigs Fly Farm and Town Hall. Copies are also available in Otis at Katie's Market, Papa's Fuel, Otis Library, the Farmington River Diner and Terranova's Café. Other locations include the Monterey General Store and the Southfield Store in New Marlborough. Back issues are available for purchase.

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