

TOWN MEETING, MAY 17. ELECTION, MAY 19

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume V, Number 2

May 2014



Memorial Day Parade

SUNDAY, MAY 25
BE THERE

Jointly sponsored by the Sandisfield Fire Department and the American Legion, this year's Memorial Day Parade will be more like they used to be.

If you'd like to march in the parade or drive your vintage car or your off-road-vehicle or even ride horseback, call Fire Chief Ralph Morrison at 258-4742. Or simply show up as the parade is forming behind the Silver-

Cont'd on p.11

EDITORIAL:

A Resolution in Opposition to the Pipeline Expansion

By Bill Price

On page 5 of this issue the Times has printed the non-binding resolution that will be presented for vote at the Annual Town Meeting, May 17.

The resolution lays out the impact of the proposed pipeline expansion on Sandisfield and calls on the Select Board and elected officials to oppose the expansion. The resolution will be presented by the newly formed committee that is opposing the expansion, Sandisfield Taxpayers Opposing the Pipeline (S.T.O.P.). The resolution is non-binding in that the Selectmen can still vote as they see fit, but it does seek to express the views of Sandisfield voters.

Over the past few months, The Times has presented the case against the pipeline in several articles, Out on a Limb columns, and letters to the editor. We urge a YES vote at the Town Meeting to register opposition to the pipeline expansion.

Meanwhile, at Town Hall...

By Times Reporters

At a recent meeting of the Local Government Advisory Commission in Boston, Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer advocated on behalf of Western Massachusetts regarding the needs of communities in recovering from the harsh winter.

She reported to the commission that Sandisfield, for example, was over budget for snow and ice by nearly \$120,000 and that the Town had not been over budget in that regard for at least 15 years. Through the resulting "Winter Rapid Recovery Program," the Town will receive close to \$50,000 to help repair roads and equipment.

The reconstituted Planning Board and the Town Administrator met with the Strategic Planning Committee last month to review the process for developing a town master plan. "A master plan," said Blackmer, "can't be something to have on a shelf to pull out to

Cont'd on p.2

Important Public Meeting, May 8

KINDER MORGAN TO REVIEW PROPOSED GAS PIPELINE EXPANSION

A public meeting will be held May 8, 7 p.m., at Firehouse #2 on Route 57. Kinder-Morgan, owner of the pipeline, will attend and answer questions about the proposed expansion that will cross four miles of the Beech Plain section of Sandisfield. The company previously met with Town Manager Lisa Blackmer, but only presented her with an overview of the project and information about what they seek to do in widening the present line. If the line is expanded, more private property will have to be seized and the work itself will seriously impact our neighbors and the Town. This is a contentious issue, and a group of residents has organized opposition to the plan.

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Bobcat Suspected of Rabies

WATCH OUT FOR WILD ANIMALS, AND YOUR OWN PETS

By Kim Spring

Sandisfield Animal Warden

A few weeks ago an individual on Roosterville Road called to report that “a bobcat down here on the lawn isn’t afraid of people, and he’s been here for two days.”

Normally a bobcat will be gone as soon as you see him. A bobcat unafraid of people and hanging around within sight is very unusual. Over the last several months our town’s wildlife has been hit hard by the rabies virus. Several skunks and raccoons have tested positive for the virus, and some of these animals have fought with and infected domestic animals.

On my arrival I had a hard time spotting the cat because it blended in so well with the dead leaves and grass. When I saw him he was lying curled up in a ball, looking right at me.

He stared at me as I called the environmental police. Then he got up, stretched, and walked into the next field where he lay down again. I could see that the cat was very thin.

The Environmental Police Officer told me I had a 40-minute wait so I had plenty of time to monitor the cat. At one point the caller’s pit bull dog got away from him and came bounding down the road. The dog stopped at my vehicle.

Twenty feet away, the cat stood on its haunches, ears laid back, mouth open, showing every tooth. He was poised and ready to fight. To my relief, the dog kept running down the road, his owner racing after him.

This was very abnormal behavior for this bobcat. No fear of people or dogs, hanging out in a well-populated area with people and cars. All very bad signs.

When the Environmental Police arrived, we talked for several minutes about the best thing to do for the cat. He would have been almost impossible to catch and at

some point would be a danger to someone or other animals. We decided we needed to euthanize him, and the only way we could do that was with a rifle.

After the cat was put down we examined its remains. It smelled strongly of skunk and had a broken canine tooth. We didn’t go to the expense of having the animal tested for rabies, but all evidence pointed to the likeliness that he was infected. I sort of wish we had, since Massachusetts has never had a bobcat test positive for rabies, and I’m convinced this cat would have.

The long and short of the story is that it is not normal for wildlife of any kind to be near people and to not be afraid of people or dogs. It’s not normal for your domestic dog or cat to be “playing” with wildlife. It is not normal for wildlife to be eating from the same feed pans when your animals are eating.

When wild animals begin to show signs of the rabies virus, they lose their fear of humans. They may become extremely aggressive towards anything that moves. And they will bite!

Sometimes they will act “dumb,” walk in circles, fall down. The rabies virus in domestic livestock will cause them to go off their feed, become lethargic, stumble, fall, suffer seizures. Death always follows.

So please, if you see wildlife acting strangely call me or the local police or the environmental police. Do not handle these animals yourself. And keep your domestic pets under your control. If you see something, call me and say something: 258-4450. 🐾

MEANWHILE, AT TOWN HALL

Cont’d from p.1

say we have one. Grantors want applicants to have a real plan and be acting on it.”

The committee secretary, Mary Turek, said, “Writing a plan is a very big task that will reflect the direction of the town based on feedback from residents. We really need community input and volunteers for the master plan to happen.”

If you can help the committee, call either of the co-chairs: Kathy Jacobs at 258-4535 or Ralph Morrison at 413-441-2126. 🐾



Sold Out Event at Arts Center

SPRING FLING DINNER AND BENEFIT AUCTION

By Mary Anne Grammer

The Sandisfield Arts Center welcomed spring with its sold out Spring Fling Dinner and Benefit Auction in early April.

Guests were ushered into the newly transformed banquet hall. Tables were decorated with crisp green and white linens, candles, and spring flowers. The scene: jazz standards played softly from a live 3-piece band, guests mingling with old and new friends while sipping wine and bidding on items on the silent auction table. It was a perfect night for gathering, bidding on all kinds of items, and supporting the arts center.

An elegant dinner was prepared by Chef Adam Manacher, featuring freshly roasted asparagus and vegetable lasagna in a béchamel sauce. Champagne and wine were served throughout the meal. Alison Larkin, comedienne and author, warmed up the audience for the auction by hysterically impersonating a French sommelier.

Alison officiated at the auction and encouraged all to raise their paddles high for the Arts Center fundraiser. Highlights of the live auction included the English Sherry-Grand Marnier Trifle to be prepared and delivered by Simon Winchester, voice lessons from baritone and actor Ben Luxon, original poetry on any topic by Val Coleman, a Smoky Quartz Necklace by Margo Morrison, a silver stoned bracelet by Anni Crofut, a personal photography session with Richard Migot, and a silk and cashmere scarf from haute fashion house of Proenza Schouler.

Be sure to check out upcoming events at: www.sandisfieldartscenter.org. 🐾

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

We Published What?

Last month I answered a phone call from a gentleman in Springfield. I know he was a gentleman because he reads The Sandisfield Times.

He asked if I remembered a story we'd published in April or March, maybe May. The gentleman said the story mentioned the first naval surgeon in the US Navy. As a former navy man, he forwards articles about the navy to a naval history website and just realized that in a housecleaning effort he'd thrown out the issue. Could I help him find it?

He said the mention was on the middle pages of the issue. I said it wasn't May since our May issue wasn't published yet, and wasn't April since the spread in April was about barns. It seemed unlikely we'd published anything about a navy surgeon, but I didn't say so.

He said he gets the paper at Villa Mia. He and his wife come over to Sandisfield now and then for a late lunch/early supper and love Villa Mia. "A bowl of soup there," he said, "is all you need. Dia's so nice, isn't she?" On both the soup and Dia, we agreed.

I suggested he might have been looking at an issue of the Otis Gazette, our sister publication to the northeast, since the Gazettes are stacked next to the Times at Villa Mia. He agreed, but was sure it was the Times.

I told him all back issues of the Times are available online, if he wanted to search for the story. After more pleasantries about Villa Mia, we said so long.

Less than ten minute later he called again. He'd gone to sandisfieldtimes.org and searched for the story. He was tickled to tell me it was in the April 2013 issue, page 10. When I got though congratulating him and got off the phone, I went to my stack of back issues of the Times, and there it was.


In his Historia series, Ron Bernard, our local historian, had written a full-page story about Dr. Jonathan Cowdery, born in Sandisfield 1767, one of the first surgeons in the US Navy, if not the first. During the Barbary Wars in 1804-1805, Dr. Cowdery was held prisoner by pirates for two years. We even published his photograph. It was a dramatic story, especially the part about being a prisoner of the pirates. We don't have stories like that very often.

Most Times readers know that Ron is the Times' production/advertising/distribution manager, besides doing a lot more.

How could I tell Ron I'd forgotten his excellent summary of Dr. Cowdery's life, that I had in fact denied it ever graced our pages? Dr. Cowdery was even born right here on the family farm, somewhere between Silverbrook and Viets Road. I decided I couldn't tell him, and wouldn't. I'd appreciate it if you didn't either.

Bill Price
West New Boston

During Rob's long struggle with this chronic, genetic illness numerous individuals, businesses, and organizations have raised money and support. Throughout the years, there has been assistance from the Easter Seals Foundation and the March of Dimes. More recently, Sandisfield businesses and individuals have contributed money and generous raffle prizes for the fundraising benefit here in town. Today the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and the CF Clinic of Hartford Hospital help with information about new medications and treatments and updates on research for improving the quality of life for patients with CF.

Anyone interested in attending the "Blass Blast" can get further info by calling Warren or Karlene at 413-258-3341. Tickets are \$20 with prior purchase, \$25 at the door. The Pig Roast will begin at 3 p.m. on May 31 at Tuckers. Charitable donations can be made online to HelpHOPELive.org in honor of Rob Blass. 

Wild Abandon

My fancies haven't changed;
Flowers still open in April
As they did when I was ten or so.
Spring is still insolent
With new and saucy dreams
And the child in me
Jumps once more
Upon the merry-go-round
Of the seasons,
Rides a painted horse
And flings my arms like windmills
In the Easter sun.

*Val Coleman
Town Hill Road*



Blass Blast Fundraiser

On Saturday, May 31, the Winsted Fire Dept., Cascade Engine #4 is sponsoring a Pig Roast at M.J.Tuckers Pub.


"The Blass Blast" is to benefit Rob Blass in his 40-year battle against Cystic Fibrosis. It's the fourth event the men and women of Engine #4 have put on to help raise funds for Rob's impending double lung transplant at New York's Columbia/Presbyterian Hospital. In June, Rob and Warren, his father, will travel to Mass. General Hospital in Boston for evaluation for a possible transplant there as well.

From the Office of the Town Clerk: Absentee Ballots

The Annual Town Meeting is May 17, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. and the Annual Town Election is May 19, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Both events take place at the Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road.

Absentee ballots are available from Town Hall. There are three reasons to obtain an absentee ballot:

1. Absence from the town during normal polling hours
2. Physical disability preventing you from going to the polling place
3. Religious belief.

To vote absentee, you will need to fill out an Absentee Ballot Application. Allow enough time if you are doing this through the mail. You can call the Town Hall Annex at 258-4711 to set up a date to absentee vote in person. If you have any questions do not hesitate to call. 



Moreover...

Alice's Restaurant

By Simon Winchester

Something strange and delightful is happening down on Hammertown Road. After almost two decades of heroic and sometimes thankless strugglings, the Sandisfield Arts Center is suddenly winning real attention, getting clicks, becoming popular. Listen, for example, to this:

A lady horticulturist, known to all, was at our house one recent morning, bringing advice for spring. Ever been to the Arts Center, I asked. "Heavens no!" she exclaimed, horror-struck. "Far too boring!" Just at that very moment, into the driveway swept Alice Boyd, the redoubtable new Arts Center boss-lady. Given the previous exchange it was agreed that all of us – lady gardener included – would sit down on our sun-porch, for coffee.

Inevitably, Alice being Alice, out came the program for the 2014 season. Our skeptic glanced at it, hesitantly at first. She skipped past the Poulenc and the poetry and the madrigals, but then flipped back a page or two.

"A pruning workshop? Bill Riiska? I'd go to that." (Too late, I pointed out. Already done.) "Discussion on the gas pipeline? Sure, I'll go." Alice began to beam. "Workshop on making soup. Animal stories? You should hear ours – did I tell you about one of our pigs, who thought she was a sheep?"

The culmination of this conversation about the very evident rebirth of the Center came

with a simple handshake. For Alice happened to mention that the Arts Center was now planning to host weddings – the first one free of charge, so that marketing pictures could be taken. The aforesaid gardener happens to have a daughter, currently betrothed. Wedding site already fixed – but could the Arts Center possibly host a bachelorette party?

Not even a pause. "Of course we could," said Alice, by now almost chortling. "Expensive?" "We'll come to terms. This is Sandisfield, after all." And so hands were shaken, warmly. And if the date can be fixed and floor repairs done on time, nine young maidens will soon be frolicking gaily where stern Baptists once read from their scriptures and congregant Sons of Abraham did likewise from theirs, and the clapboards of the old building will spring with laughter and good cheer.

Unthinkable, two years ago. But now, bachelorette parties and pig stories and marketing campaigns are only the half of it. *Under Milk Wood*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, and *A Christmas Carol* will be staged this year. And, important as symbol, our Annual Town Meeting may be held in 2015 at the Center, if the Selectmen vote to move the venue from Old Town Hall.

Yes, we're stuck with our uncomely name, perhaps – but what is becoming abundantly clear is that the Sandisfield Arts Center is fast evolving into what it always wanted to be: a community center, a center for a town that otherwise, as we all know, doesn't have a real center at all.

So bravo, mazeltov, to all involved. It took some time – but the heroic efforts are paying off. Let's just pray our bachelorettes don't frolic too gaily and burn the old place down.



THE SANDISFIELD PLAYERS ANNOUNCE 2014 SEASON

"UNDER MILK WOOD" TO BE
THEIR FIRST PRODUCTION

By Ben Luxon


The group of players who brought you "Rascals" in 2012 – in celebration of Sandisfield's 250th Anniversary – and Thornton Wilder's classic, "Our Town", last year – the story of Grovers Corners, a small fictitious New Hampshire town – have decided to continue with their community theatre work. In doing so, they have become and will be known as The Sandisfield Players.

This year – at the end of June – The Players will perform another classic play about a small town and its inhabitants. This time the town is a small Welsh seaside village with the fictitious name of Flareggub, written by the great Welsh poet Dylan Thomas and titled "Under Milk Wood."


The play has some 54 parts as well as a handful of children in it – quite a challenge, particularly in dividing the roles between our 22 players so that there is pretty even distribution for everyone.

Dylan Thomas wrote "Under Milk Wood" as a play for voices – not a stage production. We will be performing it as a "radio play." But there will be a set and a good deal of movement!

At the end of the year The Sandisfield Players will perform a full-costume production with three performances of Charles Dickens' Christmas classic, "A Christmas Carol."

We hope many of you will join us for these two great plays. "Under Milk Wood" in June, and "A Christmas Carol" in December. 

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Resolution to Ban Gas Pipeline Expansion Sandisfield

Whereas a proposed High-Pressure Pipeline, also known as a “loop,” carrying natural gas including gas obtained by hydraulic fracturing, may come through Sandisfield transporting said fuel to Connecticut or to overseas destinations; and

Whereas said pipeline may undermine current Massachusetts commitments to renewable energies and combating global climate change; and

Whereas said pipeline expansion would at least double the width of the existing 4-mile route and obliterate for all time major tracts of precious forest, conservation and farm lands and would threaten wetlands as well as streams, rivers and ground water, and

Whereas said pipeline expansion would be ruinous to the scenic beauty and tranquility of this Town and the Berkshire Mountains including the Otis State Forest in Sandisfield; and

Whereas a high-pressure 36-inch gas pipeline loop designed to store and concentrate vast amounts of gas a mere 24 inches below ground in order to boost the velocity of gas through adjacent existing very old pipelines which by its nature carries the potential for leak, rupture, as has in fact already happened in this town, or potential devastating explosion causing untold damage to property and lives and the local economy; and

Whereas such pipelines are notorious for leaks and escape of the highly environmentally damaging methane gas at every point in the process including extraction, transmission and storage; and

Whereas the cost of said pipeline expansion would require Massachusetts citizens to pay a utility bill tariff as well as environmental costs not required by law for Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, (“TGP”, a subsidiary of Kinder Morgan Energy Partners, L.P.), forcing ratepayers to bear financial risk for the benefit of a wealthy private corporation; and

Whereas, we the citizens of Sandisfield, Massachusetts choose not to participate in such encumbrances to the life, vibrancy, economic stability wherever hydraulic fracturing is occurring and the pressurized pipeline is running; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the people of Sandisfield, Massachusetts:

1. Hereby call on our Select Board to stand in opposition to TGP’s pipeline expansion and not allow it within our Town borders;
2. Oppose said pipeline expansion, and any new pipeline carrying natural gas whether obtained by hydraulic fracturing or otherwise, within the borders of our Commonwealth or our Nation; and
3. Hereby instruct our state and federal legislators and executive branch officials to enact legislation and take such other actions as are necessary to disallow such projects that go against our commitments to life, the environment, our economic well-being and our bodily safety, and, instead, to promote more stringent energy efficiency and further exploration of renewable energy sources.

The non-binding resolution to be presented to voters at the May 17 Annual Town Meeting, prepared by Sandisfield Taxpayers Opposing the Pipeline.

ORDER FORM

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By Elizur Yale Smith

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Sandisfield Historical Commission

UNPUBLISHED HISTORY OF SANDISFIELD AVAILABLE FOR THE FIRST TIME

By Ron Bernard

Last fall the Historical Commission embarked on an ambitious project to convert Elizur Yale Smith's unpublished 350-page manuscript, *Sandisfield: An Intimate History and Some Comments*, into printed and compact-disc formats and make it available to the public.

The 1948 manuscript was "rediscovered" in 2010 when it was used as a research tool and source document for *Sandisfield Then and Now* which was published in 2012 for the Town's 250th anniversary celebration.

The fascinating story of the manuscript and how it was "lost" for half a century to be ultimately rediscovered and finally published will be told in detail in next month's Times in a tale of adventure almost as thrilling as the tales of Indiana Jones and H. Rider Haggard. Well, maybe not, but it is a pretty good story.

A descendant of one of the earliest and largest pioneer families in Sandisfield, Elizur Yale Smith understood the heritage of this town better than almost any previous observer. His unusual approach in telling the story of Sandisfield mixed scholarly original research with delightful anecdotes and interesting facts and figures. Much of the material will not be found anywhere else. But it is Smith's very personal observations stemming from a deeply felt connection to this Town that makes this historical essay truly special.

Berkshires researchers and educators, local genealogists – especially Smith family researchers – and anyone interested in Massachusetts and American history will find much to relish among the book's now 178 pages.

The Sandisfield Taxpayers' Association, which operated from 1947 to the 1990s, encouraged Smith to write the book and was assigned publishing rights, but never published the book.

Sandisfield

An Intimate History
and Some Comments




Elizur Yale Smith

The nearly finished but rough manuscript lay in safe keeping since 1962 at the Otis Library & Museum waiting for another opportunity.

The Commission is grateful to Tom Ragusa of the Otis Historical Commission, Otis Library Director Kathleen Bort and her staff, and Hank Wingate of the Otis Museum for access to the manuscript and the encouragement. Thanks also to volunteers Bill Price for editing and formatting the text and Jean Atwater-Williams for indispensable technical support and the professional final design.

Copies of the book have been donated to the Farmington River School, the Sandisfield Public Library, the Otis Library, and the Berkshire Athenaeum in Pittsfield. A copy was also placed with the Sandisfield Town Clerk. Boston-based legacy organizations including the Massachusetts State Library, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the New England History and Genealogical Society also received copies.

The book is available from the Sandisfield Historical Society in printed format for \$20 or on compact disc for \$15 or both for \$30, plus postage if ordered by mail. Because the printed version does not have an index, researchers may find the fully searchable CD version a better option.

To order or for more information write the Sandisfield Historical Society, P.O. Box 513, Sandisfield MA 01255 (see order form this page) or contact Society Board member John Kuzmech at 413-258-4906 or email at kuzmech5@verizon.net. 



Spring Baseball

Despite the slow winter thaw, Spring Training baseball has started in South County for Cal Ripken League players.

Players ages 5-11 from Sandisfield, Otis, Monterey, Lee, Great Barrington, Mill River and surrounding towns have been coming to the Farmington River school gym in Otis on Sundays to practice and prepare for the upcoming season. It's not too late to sign up. There are no tryouts. The spring playing season lasts 8 weeks.

Games for players 8-11 began on Thursday, May 1, at Greene Park on Rt. 23 in Monterey. Players 5-7 play on Wednesdays at 4 p.m. starting in early May. For more information, contact Steve Graves at 269-4632 or email at sgraves8@yahoo.com.



Photo: Steve Graves

Like Kids? Have Kids?

HANDS AND HEADS NEEDED

By Bill Price

Parents have always chipped in with helping hands during planned events for Sandisfield kids. But now Robbin Campetti, chairman of the Entertainment Committee, would like one or two – maybe even three – additional bodies to join her officially.

“I need organizers, planners, workers,” she says, “anyone who wants to help provide something for Sandisfield kids.” She’s been chairman of the committee longer than she can remember and recently she’s been the only member.

The committee – or rather Robbin – organizes kids’ events at the Memorial Day parade, Easter egg hunts, the Halloween haunted house, outdoor movies at the American Legion pavilion during the summer, along with a few other activities. She’d like to hold ice skating parties at the Pavilion again and get a Halloween party back on track.

But she can’t do it all alone anymore. If you have kids, or just like kids or just like kids having a few organized events, call Robbin. Join her committee. Have fun yourself. Her number is 413-258-4615. She’ll be glad to hear from you.

WHAT IS IT WORTH?

By David LeBeau
Certified Appraiser of Personal Property

After a two week trip to Southern California to see our grandkids (and of course their parents), we’re about caught up with broken radiators and ruined wallpaper, etc.



The subject this month is one of my passions, a type of Japanese porcelain called Imari, or Arita ware.

Imari porcelain is the name for Japanese porcelain wares made in the town of Arita, in the former Hizen Province, southwestern Kyūshū. The word Imari is derived from the name of the port city from which fine porcelains have been shipped since the early

1600's, and the word Arita is derived from the geopolitical area in the southwestern part of Japan's Saga Prefecture, all of which is on the western edge of the southern-most island of Kyushu and northeast of Nagasaki.

Imari porcelain was exported to Europe extensively from the port of Imari between the second half of the 17th century and the first half of the 19th. The Japanese as well as Europeans called them Imari. Imari or Arita porcelain has been continually produced up through the present day.

The plates pictured here, known as chargers, were used as serving or decorative plates. Approximately 18½ inches diameter, they were used as serving or decorative dishes. Two similar plates were offered a few months ago, at retail at a local antique shop, for about \$500 each.



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Selectman's Letter

By Patrick Barrett

Sandisfield Town Manager Lisa Blackmer has been advocating for our town. On a recent trip to Boston, she pushed for state funding to repair potholes, securing nearly \$50,000 for the Sandisfield Highway Department.

She is currently working on securing a Technical Assistance Grant through the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission which would allow the town to seek assistance in identifying inconsistencies in our Town By-Laws. This year Lisa will work with town boards and interested residents toward building a Master Plan. The Technical Assistance Grant, if secured, would help defray some of the costs of this project.


Lisa is also writing a grant through the Executive Office of Public Safety to seek help in purchasing defibrillators for the Library, Old Town Hall, Arts Center, and Highway Garage. If successful, this grant would pay for half of the cost for these life-saving machines. We thank Lisa for her proactive approach in seeking and securing much needed funding for Sandisfield.

George Green recently resigned from the Conservation Commission due to an increasingly busy schedule. We thank George for his many dedicated years of service to this important town board. Clare English was appointed by the Board of Selectmen to fill this vacant post. We thank Clare for her willingness to help out.

Margaret O'Clair was recently appointed to fill a vacant seat on the Board of Health. Having previously served for many years on this board, Margaret's vast experience will be of great service to our community.

We thank Tom Jacobs, Bobby O'Brien, and Andy Snyder for their willingness to join the Sandisfield Planning Board. We would also like to welcome back Gary Bottum to this board. With new appointees joining Willard Platt, we now have a full board. With a number of potential projects emerging this year this board will no doubt be busy.

This winter was extremely difficult on all of our town roads. The Highway Department has been working hard to patch up the worst areas and anxiously waiting for the dirt roads to dry up in order to begin the process of grading and rolling these areas. We ask for patience and understanding while this major undertaking moves forward. Please keep the lines of communication open and positive so that Steve and his crew can best serve the residents in town.

Monday, May 12, at 7:00 p.m. in the Old Town Hall, the Select Board will host an All Boards Meeting to go over the 2014 Town Warrant. This is an opportunity for residents to ask town officials questions regarding this year's budget. It is our hope that this forum will allow community members to hear first-hand the thoughts and reasoning for particular budget line-items and allow them to be more informed voters at the Annual Town Meeting on May 17. 

SELECT BOARD MINUTES LET US KNOW

Space was unavailable this month to include Selectmen's Meeting minutes. We'd like your opinion about including the minutes in the Times. Are the minutes valuable to you as a Times reader? Should we continue to include the minutes, or a summary of them, in each issue? Let us know at editor@sandisfieldtimes.org or at PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

Agendas and detailed minutes for Select Board meetings are available at the Town website: www.sandisfield.info. Go to Meetings, then to Board of Selectmen.

wm. brockman real estate

the berkshires

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“Cinderella” a Great Success

By Mary Anne Grammer

“Cinderella” came to the Farmington River Regional School on March 11, presented by district students and staff.

Pre-school through 6th grade students, parents, grandparents and school staff enthusiastically applauded the fully staged production with orchestra.

Participants had a good time, too. Clarinetist/actor Konstantine Stanmeyer said, “I enjoyed playing the clarinet and being part of the orchestra. I felt confident.”

Dean Argiro who played the King said, “It wasn’t hard, it was fun. It was fun to stay after school and meet new friends.”

Makenzie Chaffee, Assistant to the Music Teacher and Director Ms. Kim Chirichrella, said, “It was fun going back stage and being part

of the crew. I also liked making the costumes.”

Sophie Krans, in the lead role as Cinderella, said she was proud the way the production came together and how everyone worked together to make the production a success. “I also like the songs and being on stage with older students. It felt good to be up there and just sing.” She said she also really liked making her rag costume with her grandmother.

Sandisfield students who either acted in the play or worked backstage included Joey Beardsley, Madison DellaGuistina, Zoe Parsons, Ruby Smith, and Rosie Snyder.

Congratulations to all the actors, backstage crew, costumers and Farmington River Regional School District staff on a professional and entertaining Cinderella. 🍷

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24th 8 PM

DANCING ON THE EDGE



Sandisfield’s Linda Mironti shares her perspective on life & love teetering on the edge of today’s challenges



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2014 Town Election

THREE CONTESTED OFFICES

Candidates for Selectman (3 years)



STATEMENT FROM JEFF GRAY

I'm asking for your support to be re-elected as Selectman this year.

I still live on Stump Road on the Annecharico family farm (now Red Barn Alpacas) with my wife, Sonja, and our three children. In addition to the farm, I've worked at the Farmington River School in maintenance for the past 2 years, after 18 years with Annecharico Construction. I earned a BS in civil engineering from Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston and previously worked for the Commonwealth as an engineer overseeing the construction of roads, bridges, and highways. I've maintained connections with state personnel.

As Selectman, I've worked hard not to raise taxes, not to spend your town money foolishly, and to avoid resorting to Prop. 2-1/2. I've worked within our thin town budget and consulted all town boards for their advice.

Every year it seems Federal and State funding decreases. I'll continue to work hard to find funding for our town and our roads. We just finished the bridge on Rt. 8 and another bridge will begin this spring on Clark Road. 1.5 miles of Rt. 183 has been reclaimed and repaired, New Hartford Road started with new drainage and soon blacktop, culverts, gravel road repair, and widening will have been done. With our

new town administrator and the present Select Board, I feel confident that we will receive more grants.

I want to thank all the boards for their support and advice during this past difficult year, but mostly I want to thank the townspeople for bringing me their concerns and opinions. I look forward to responding to their needs over the next 3 years and would appreciate your vote so that I may continue to working on your behalf to see our scheduled projects completed and address new challenges.

STATEMENT FROM MARK NEWMAN



My name is Mark Newman, and I am running for Selectman. I live on Cronk Road with my wife, Donna, and our dog, Libby.

After finishing school, Donna and I owned and operated our own dairy farm. I am currently the farm manager at Sheffield Sod Farm, where I have been for the past nineteen years. Having been involved in several different businesses, I have learned to take a common-sense approach to a wide variety of different issues and challenges.

I have enjoyed meeting and talking with folks in town about the challenges we face ahead. Election Day is May 19th, come out and vote. Thank you for your support.

Candidates for Auditor (1 year)

AUDITOR: While Sandisfield by-laws do not define the Auditor's role, the state auditor, according to the Commonwealth's website, "is committed to ensuring that every dollar given to state government is a dollar well spent and that state agencies and contractors follow the rules when spending public funds." The Auditor also makes "recommendations to improve accountability, efficiency, and transparency."

STATEMENT FROM RALPH MORRISON

I am running for re-election as Town Auditor. Auditor is an important position meant to help save the taxpayers' money. It is a role that provides oversight for town expenditures and a voice for taxpaying citizens. I'll continue to ask tough questions of our Selectman and town employees.

As the owner/operator of A&M Auto in New Boston, I have to know how to budget and control expenses. I've also been chief of the Sandisfield Fire Department and EMT Squad for about 35 years, and the department has always operated within its budget.

Please vote for me on May 19th so I can keep working for the citizens of the town of Sandisfield. Thank you.

STATEMENT FROM BETHANY RIISKA PERRY



Bethany and Bill Perry

I live on New Hartford Road with my husband Billy, who works for the Highway Department, my nephew Eric, and our three children Emma, Valerie, and Baby William. I have been in banking for 23 years and am currently Branch Manager of Berkshire Bank in two locations, Great Barrington and Otis. I have been chairperson for

the Sandisfield Board of Assessors for the last 10 years. I already have experience with DOR and the Treasurer/Accountant of this town. I have a great working relationship with them which will only make this new position better for me.

I honestly have not known too much about where this position has been in the past. I would like to be able to educate taxpayers as to where we stand and help them have a clear understanding of the "behind the scenes" work that goes into making the town run daily.

If we all understand where we are financially as a Town, agree where we want to be, and work together to achieve this goal with full knowledge of the processes, we could make this town run smoother with more profitability. I am not afraid to ask what needs to be questioned. And I love taking the time to explain to people the reasons why things are done so they can make educated decisions about our town. This is why I am running for Auditor, to help the Town and its people get to a better financial place.

Candidates for Constable (3 years)
(Vote for two)

DANA BEARDSLEY

I am running for one of the constable positions up for election. I live on Sandisfield Road in what you may know as the "Old Bidwell House" with my wife, Tara and two children, Janey and Joe. We have, however, renamed our place "Buck River Farm" as it was called by the original owners, the Pinsky's.

I am a successful full time builder/carpenter with over 25 years experience. I also completed the Massachusetts Intermittent Police Academy, trained with the Great Barrington Police Department and currently hold a part time position with the Tolland Police Department.

Since I am never content to simply sit idle, in my spare time I enjoy working in my wood shop and in my yard. I am also an avid hunter and enjoy competition shooting with my family.

If elected, I intend to work with the town officials in order to benefit the community as needed. I appreciate your consideration and hope for your support at the Annual Town Election on May 19th. Thank you.

NAZARIO SANCHEZ

(No statement submitted by press time.)

JOE ZELLER

I am running for a third term as constable. I have lived in Sandisfield for almost 30 years. I am now retired from the Highway Department after working for the town for almost 20 years.

I enjoy being a constable in Sandisfield and look forward to serving our town again. I appreciate your vote on May 19th. Thank you.



MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

Cont'd from p.1

brook Café at 9:30 a.m. The parade starts at 10, moves down Rt. 57, stopping twice for ceremonies at the New Boston Cemetery and Skilled Care & Rehabilitation facility. It ends at the American Legion Pavilion on South Main Street with a ceremony honoring veterans. Join the Fire Department and the Legion after the parade for free hot dogs and refreshments.

Maria Domato, Commander of American Legion Post #456, and Ralph are co-chairs of this year's parade. If you don't march in the parade, turn out anyway, rain or shine, to honor veterans and line the parade route.

Town Election
MONDAY, MAY 19

Most of the fifteen offices to be filled in the coming election have only one candidate. Three offices are contested. Candidates nominated for these offices were invited to submit statements. Below is a list of open seats and names of the candidates.

Moderator (1 year)	John Skrip
Selectman (3 years)	Jeff Gray Mark Newman
Town Clerk (3 years)	Dolores Harasyko
Treasurer (3 years)	Teresa DellaGiustina
Auditor (1 year)	Ralph Morrison Bethany Perry
Board of Assessors (3 years)	Teresa DellaGiustina
School Committee (3 years)	Nick DellaGiustina
Board of Health (1 year)	Margaret O'Clair
Board of Health (3 years)	Victor Hyrckvich
Planning Board (1 year)	Tom Jacobs
Planning Board (2 years)	Bob O'Brien
Planning Board (3 years)	Andy Snyder
Planning Board (5 years)	Gary Bottum
Library Trustee (5 years)	Clare English
Constable (3 years) (vote for 2)	Dana Beardsley Nazario Sanchez Joe Zeller

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Police Report

JANUARY

- 4 MV accident Sandybrook Tnpk
- 4 MV accident South Main
- 4 MV accident Tolland Rd
- 6 Citizen Assist Sandisfield Rd
- 6 MV accident Tolland Rd
- 6 Medical Assist Sandisfield Rd
- 7 Citizens Assist Sandisfield Rd
- 7 MV accident Sandisfield Rd
- 9 Larceny Sandisfield Rd
- 11 MV accident Sandisfield Rd
- 11 MV accident South Main
- 12 MV accident Sandisfield Rd
- 18 Alarm New Hartford Rd
- 18 MV accident Sandisfield Rd
- 21 MV accident New Hartford Rd
- 26 Alarm New Hartford Rd
- 26 ATV complaint North Main

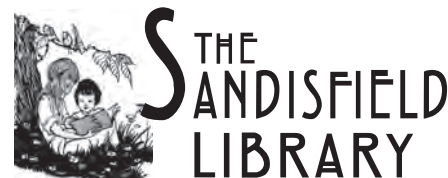
FEBRUARY

- 8 Alarm Sears Rd
- 8 Alarm Sandisfield Rd
- 8 Snowmobile accident Sandybrook Tnpk
- 9 MV accident North Main
- 12 Medical call North Main
- 15 Domestic call Roosterville Rd
- 19 DMV Town Hill Rd
- 19 Citizen assist Silverbrook Rd
- 21 MV accident Sandybrook Tnpk
- 21 DMV Sandisfield Rd

- 22 911 hang up Cold Spring Rd
- 23 911 hang up Beech Plain Rd
- 23 Alarm Sandisfield Rd
- 23 Assist ACO Sandisfield Rd
- 24 Citizen assist Sandisfield Rd
- 25 Illegal dumping Sandybrook Tnpk
- 28 Alarm Sage Rd

MARCH

- 1 MV accident West Street
- 3 Citizen assist Silverbrook Rd
- 4 Citizen assist Silverbrook Rd
- 9 Strange person Hammertown Rd
- 11 DMV South Main
- 11 DMV Sandisfield Rd
- 12 Assist other agency
- 12 DMV North Main
- 13 Well-being check Clark Rd
- 16 911 hang up Sandisfield Rd
- 21 Citizen assist Sandisfield Rd
- 22 Citizens assist Sandisfield Rd
- 24 Assist other agency
- 25 Assist other agency
- 25 Citizens assist Sandisfield Rd
- 27 Assist other agency
- 28 911 Hang up North Main
- 29 MV accident North Main
- 30 Noise complaint New Hartford Rd
- 30 Tree/wires South Beech Plain Rd
- 30 MV accident North Main



By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

Next Genealogy Assistance Classes: May 28 and June 25, Wednesdays, at 6:30 p.m. Call for Genealogy requests at 258-4966, Monday and Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, or via e-mail at sandisfieldlibrary@yahoo.com

NEW BOOKS:

- The Gilded Newport Mystery Series/
Alyssa Maxwell
- Breaking Point/C.J. Box
- Blossom Street Brides/Debbie Macomber
- Carnal Curiosity/Stuart Woods
- Aunt Dimity and the Wishing Well/
Nancy Atherton
- Death Comes Quickly/Susan Wittig Albert
- Destroyer Angel/Nevada Barr
- Night Diver/Elizabeth Lowell
- I've Got You Under My Skin/
Mary Higgins Clark
- The Target/David Baldacci
- The Spirit Keeper/K.B. Laugheed
- Robert B. Parker's Cheap Shot/Ace Atkins



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Council on Aging



By Susan Galik

First off ... a mea culpa. It was the Cultural Council who gave us a grant to cover the Quilting and Flower arrangement class. Apologies to the council, and our thanks.

As I type this, the quilting class is progressing. Squares have been made and more are on the way. Currently learning to square them off and bind them ... next is the actually quilting.

We also had an Easter/Spring flower arrangement class. We all frowned at our own creations and oohed and ahhhed over everyone else's. We had all kinds of choices of flowers and greens and choices of containers. Then we had instructions with a demo. When we put our arrangements on the counter they were like a florists display. We may do this again for Christmas. Let us know if you are interested.

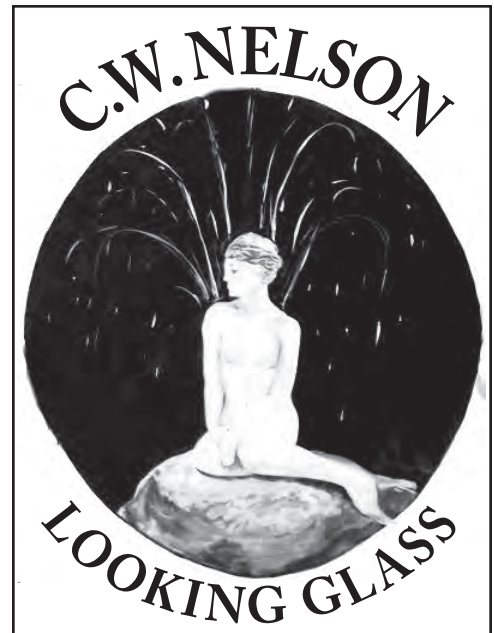
Monument Mountain Regional High School invited the senior community to watch a dress rehearsal of their play, "Into the Woods." About ten of us enjoyed the program this yearly spring event. We usually go as a group to one restaurant before the event, with everyone buying their own meal and we have a little socializing. This year we went to the Brewery. Anyone who goes to the play is welcome to join us at which ever restaurant we pick next year.

ELDER LAW. A lawyer who practices elder law will be here on Wednesday, May 14 at 11 a.m. Please join us with your questions. Two years ago another lawyer presented a program on elder law. The information was invaluable, and based on it people changed their wills or made special arrangements. Everyone is welcome. We will follow up with our usual pot luck at noon.

Our movie for May will continue with episodes of *The Red Skelton Show*, starting between 12:30 and 1 and going until 2 p.m. Popcorn will be available.

We're sponsoring a fundraiser spaghetti dinner on Saturday, May 31. Cora Barrett, daughter of Selectman Patrick Barrett, is in need of heart surgery and we'd like to help raise funds. The dinner will be at Fire Station #2 in two seatings, 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. \$10 adults, \$5 ages 5-12, free under 5. The Fire Department has donated the station, and the Historical Society is considering financial and physical help.

PLEASE. If you are not attending on Wednesdays, let us know why. Is there another activity you'd like to do? Bowling? Backgammon? Badminton? It's up to you. Where would you like to travel? Let us know. Call Linda Riiska at 258-4816 or use our page at www.facebook.com/sandisfield.coa



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Town Meeting

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At the Riiska's Pruning Workshop

CUT HERE, TRIM THERE, GROW HEALTHIER FRUIT TREES

By Adam Manacher

The Sandisfield Arts Center kicked off the 2014 season with a fabulous seminar on "Pruning Fruit Trees."

Held at Riiska Brook Orchards and lead by Andy



Andy Wrba demonstrating pruning techniques.

Wrba, Bill and Barbara Riiska's grandson, more than a dozen participants were treated to a beautiful spring morning walk through the apple orchards learning the elements of proper fruit tree care.

Guiding us through the fundamentals, Andy discussed how to analyze the needs of our trees and the best approaches to achieve the outcomes we desire. "What to cut, where to cut, which tool to use, and how to cut" were reviewed and demonstrated on several of the trees in the orchard. Riiska Brook Orchards, with its variety of apple trees, offered us the opportunity to see how different tree types may need slightly different pruning.

After Andy demonstrated the techniques, he turned us loose: Roaming the trees we sawed, snipped, and clipped! Quickly we all understood the daunting task of managing 2,300 trees! Our morning ended with a helpful discussion of managing blueberry bushes; all 900 of them!

Thank you to Bill and Barbara for allowing us to use their wonderful orchard for our first-ever pruning seminar. And thank you to Andy for your clear, informative presentation. You've made pruning a less intimidating task for all those who attended - as long as it's only for the few trees we may have in our yards!

OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Dawn Campetti Pachulski of New Boston recently suffered a broken wrist and is recuperating from surgery. She's wearing a cast but has gone back to work.



Sandisfield author Courtney Maum will see her first novel published by Touchstone Press in June. Titled *I Am Having So Much Fun Here Without You*, her book will be available in bookstores, on Amazon, and in the Sandisfield Library. It will be reviewed in these pages in the June issue.



Local realtor Chapin Fish brokered and closed the sale for \$3.5 million of the 433-acre property known locally as the Green property/Mirror Lake/Camp Wood Crest. Chapin, a broker and partner with Wm. Brockman Real Estate, was named the Berkshire's top-selling realtor of 2013. The Green property reached one of the top sale prices in the Berkshires and the highest for Sandisfield. The previous Sandisfield high was \$1,125,000 for a historic house on South Beech Plain Road in 2008, also listed and sold by Chapin. Chapin also handled the third highest sale in Sandisfield, \$850,000 in March 2011.



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Comings and Goings

MARION BERNSTEIN

1928-2014



Photo: Gertrud Michelson

From Gertrud Michelson

Marion struggled with cancer for several years, but she died peacefully at home in New York in April. She would have turned 86 on May 2.

Marion attended Music and Art High School in New York City and went on to earn a BA at Hunter College. From her early teens she was interested in photography. She assembled a large archive of photos taken over the years and many were sold. Before working professionally in photography, she was a teacher in the public school system.

Marion supported philanthropic causes hoping to make this world a better place in which to live.

She loved her home in New Boston and regretted that she was not well enough to come up this year.

She leaves a cousin in New York and some in-laws in California from her marriage to Ray Ostrovsky. Her sisters predeceased her.

High school friends with whom she met regularly for lunch are hosting a memorial for her in New York on May 4. If interested, please contact me for details at 258-4722 or gertrudm@earthlink.net.

From Francis Deming

Years ago I went to this lady's house to meet the new neighbor. She was Marion Bernstein. I started to do odd jobs for her. Later, I just came around to see her. We planted flowers, weeded, and enjoyed conversation.

Although I did not share all of her views, never did she put me down for not agreeing with her. Often I saw that she had been right while I'd been wrong. I wonder if maybe she had the same experience. Anyway, she made me a better person. She spoke of many things I never knew about, but we also shared many common interests. Marion led a simple, even Spartan, lifestyle. I recall how she was glad to use her mother's cooking utensils.

All in all, Marion became one of my best and valued friends. Kind, trustworthy, honest, and always there for me. Her passing has left a huge void in my life and, I'm sure, in the lives of many others as well. She offered good advice and especially encouragement during times of difficulty. I am sure God will welcome her in heaven with open arms. Goodbye, my dear Marion; you will be in my heart and mind forever.

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The Gardeners' Almanac

By Susan Tarasuk



Pruning Spring-Flowering Shrubs

Often, in the fall when I am doing a garden clean-out, I come across a shrub that has grown out of control. My first inclination is to prune it back – hard. But if this is a shrub that blooms in the spring, I would have just cut off all of the spring flowers. Even if it is a shrub that flowers in the summer, I would be weakening the shrub, and it may not survive the winter.

The key to pruning flowering shrubs is to find out whether the plant forms flower buds in the fall or in the spring.

Shrubs that form buds in late summer and fall are said to bloom on old wood; their buds were formed the previous fall. These shrubs' flowers

would be damaged if I pruned them in the fall.

If buds form in spring on fresh, green shoots, the plant blooms on new wood. The best time to prune early spring flowering shrubs is right after they have finished flowering.

If you are not sure when a shrub should be pruned – wait until it has flowered, then prune.

Of course, it is always best to do any dramatic pruning in early spring. This gives the plant time to recover all season. Even Rhododendron, Azaleas and Mountain Laurel can be pruned in late winter. You can even cut these wide-leaved evergreens to the ground if they are overgrown. They will take a few years to flower again. Keep them fertilized.

When pruning, make the cut at an angle, just above a bud that faces away from the center of the shrub. This new shoot will develop into a stem that grows out, not into the congested center of the plant.

Even those spring-blooming shrubs that are not overgrown should get a prune after flowering. Rhododendrons benefit by snapping off the dead flowers at their base. You can be heavy handed on those shrubs that bloom in the spring: For-

sythia, deutzia, Kolkwitzia (beauty bush), Philadelphus (mock orange). These should never be pruned in the fall.

Here are some good reasons to prune:

- To restrain growth and retain the natural shape of the shrub
- To let in air and sunlight by thinning overcrowded branches.
- Removing dead and diseased stems will keep plant healthy
- By removing stems that rub against each other, you are removing a potential opening for diseases and insects from entering the wound.

If you have any questions, you may call me at 413-717-0579. Have fun. ♡



Trash Talk

MEET OUR TRANSFER STATION ATTENDANTS. IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR.

By Ron Bernard

The Town transfer station (it is not really a dump) may not be beautiful but it is an important place. People depend on it and take the operation seriously.

With the passing of Sandisfield's social institutions that were also meeting places like school houses, post offices, general stores, and churches, the station now fills that role to some extent. It is a place where both full-time and seasonal residents of this sprawling town greet one another, renew acquaintances, and swap the news of the day.

All this is not lost on The Master Garbologist, Inc., the Ludlow-based family business that's had the contract for some years now. They know very well that a well-managed, friendly transfer station is important.

After a series of ups and downs – even a few misunderstandings – with novice attendants, the

company has staffed the Sandisfield operation with experienced employees.

On Wednesdays you'll be greeted by Zack, son of the company owner, Don Clement. Zack comes all the way from Ludlow for his 3-hour shift (2 to 5 p.m.). His father's been running the business for some 28 years, and they are proud that the transfer stations in Great Barrington, Monterey, Otis, and the Stockbridges are also clients.

Zack mentioned that some towns have really popular re-cycle/swap corners. It is a practical service which also provides psychological satisfaction for participants on both sides of a swap. He thinks that Sandisfield's swap point could be greatly improved by simply providing a shelter so items are not be left to ruin in the elements. This makes sense and should be done.

For the time being weekend users of the station will see Mike Gagnon, a senior manager with the company. From West Springfield, Mike is a not only a 20-year friend of Zack's dad, but he's also Zack's godfather. Mike stressed that the company values its relationships and works hard to provide good service. For instance, notice how the area around the attendant's shed has been cleaned-up. The company will interview candidates as permanent attendant for the weekend shift. Meanwhile, Mike and Zack are open to suggestions and look forward to meeting you and me as

we stop by on our weekly visit. One more thing. You'll still be able to pick up your copy of The Sandisfield Times right there. ♡

Top: Zack Clement. Below: Mike Gagnon.



Sandisfield Historical Society



NORTON FLETCHER RETIRES FROM SOCIETY LEADERSHIP

By John Kuzmech

First and foremost, the Historical Society thanks Norton Fletcher for his many years of service. In April, at our first meeting of the year, Norton passed the presidency on to me. I have big shoes to fill. Norton gave his word to the membership that he will continue to attend our meetings and discussions and help guide the Society.

Dates were set for the coming season: the annual Summer Fair (July 15), Apple Fest (September 27), and the Christmas Fair (December 6). Our next meeting is Saturday, May 10, at 11 a.m., followed by a potluck lunch.

Our meetings will have a format focusing on local history. For our first meeting using the new format, Norton Fletcher will be guest speaker.

Given that Norton has spent the majority of his nine decades in this town and has a wealth of interesting anecdotes ranging from adventures at the New Boston Inn, flood survival, and life before electricity, it seemed fitting that he tell stories of his life at our May 10 meeting.

He will talk about his first-hand experiences with local bootleggers (since the statute of limitations has passed), the dangers of gas lamps, and the paving of roads. Come hear an alternate function of road tar that the 10-year-old Norton and his friends discovered. Without giving it away, let's just say it could it have something to do with why he still has all his own teeth at 91. So please attend our meeting on Saturday, May 10, at 11 a.m., and say hello to Norton and hear 90 years of Sandisfield stories.


New for this year, the society will sponsor a lecture at the New Boston Inn by resident Mike White on the topic of the lost early American art of cider making. Knowledgeable about aspects of local history and a respected self-taught old-home restoration specialist, Mike has a hobby of historically accurate cider making. Watch for the date of his presentation, which may occur during the September AppleFest.



Norton Fletcher, 2006.

Photo: Ron Bernard

For the second year, the Lebanon Towne Militia (revolutionary war reenactors) will camp out at the New Boston Inn the weekend of August 16-17.

Historical Society meetings, important to the maintenance of the group, will occur on months when there is not a scheduled event. For everyone who may be on the fence about attending or who may have been a past member but slipped away, we intend to limit the business aspects of our meetings to make room for discussions or presentation of local history. As we sort through our priorities and what attracts people and keeps members interested, we thought it important that the Society emphasize the common theme of history. For information, I can be reached at 258-4906. 

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SUPPORT FOR FULL-TIME ADMINISTRATOR POSITION

Last year voters were asked to appropriate funding for a part-time town manager. As a member of the Select Board, I wasn't fully convinced that we even needed this position and felt rather certain that we wouldn't get a qualified candidate for a \$15 an hour job. I was wrong on both counts.

At this year's Annual Town Meeting, voters will be asked to secure an additional \$28,000 in funding in order to make our part-time town manager a full-time position. This past year has convinced me that our town is at a historical crossroads, and this decision will ultimately determine which path our community takes.

Before us we face an important fight over the proposed Tennessee Gas line extension project; the imminent need to repair Route 57, along with virtually every other paved road in Sandisfield; town buildings in need of serious repair or replacement; much needed updating of our Town By-laws with a long-term goal of designing a master plan; necessary zoning changes to encourage business growth; the creation of employee job descriptions and manuals; the need for obtaining federal and state grants. The list goes on and on.

We can either continue to stay the course and fight a losing battle against these challenging times or take a pro-active approach tackling the very serious issues facing our community.

In her part-time capacity as town manager, Lisa Blackmer has been able to successfully guide our town's governing bodies through a special permitting process that secured permits for a much needed gas station and convenience store in town. She was able to fight for, and succeeded in getting, nearly \$50,000 in state aid for fixing potholes. She has put the finishing touches on the Senior Tax Work-Off Program, negotiated a new three-year contract for the Highway Department and her attendance at the Massachusetts Municipal Meetings is putting Sandisfield on the radar of our state leaders.

Our town is a \$2,000,000 organization that can no longer afford to go without a full-time CEO. There is a lot of work to be done and the stakes are high. Please join me in voting for the funding necessary to ensure that our community can successfully navigate these challenging currents.

Patrick W. Barrett
Selectman



REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

As Police Chief, I try very hard to keep cost to taxpayers at a minimum with my budget.

This is the first time since 1998 that I have asked the taxpayers to fully fund a police vehicle. Prior to this I have been able to fund police vehicles through grants that I have applied for and received. I have tried to do the same this time, but have been unable to secure any because of the lack of such grants at this time.

The vehicle we are looking to replace is a 2006 Ford RWD sedan with about 60K miles come summer. Do not let the mileage fool you. Vehicles of this type have lots of hours on them which adds greatly to the wear-and-tear factor. A rule of thumb on vehicles such as this is to double the mileage to get the true wear factor.

Our goal is to replace it before spending a large amount of money to repair a worn-out vehicle. At present there are several things wrong with the vehicle: steering shaft and electrical issues, ABS braking issues, vehicle rust issues underneath, all of which are wear and tear problems due to the nature of what this vehicle is used for. Police vehicles are required to respond to an incident 24/7, 365 days. They are used many hours during patrol time, accidents and details, all of which causes wear and tear. We do charge for non-state detail time which goes into the general fund which generates enough money about every 6 or so years to pay for a vehicle.

We are looking to replace the present vehicle with a new, fully equipped all-wheel drive police vehicle at a cost of almost \$44K. We feel such a vehicle will much better serve our community. I hope you can support my request. Thank you.

Michael Morrison
Sandisfield Police Chief



VERY DISAPPOINTED

An opportunity has been lost. At the Earth Day seminar held on Saturday April 19 at the Sandisfield Arts Center. This was a lost opportunity

for more residents and taxpayers and especially Town administration and members of important commissions to learn first-hand about the most significant threat to this community in perhaps 50 years.

Yes, it was the day before Easter and a lovely spring day to boot. And people are busy, of course. But a group of concerned residents organized a program that included well-informed speakers who travelled considerable distances and who devoted their own precious time to explain the dangers and consequences of this unnecessary gas pipeline expansion in this state. The proposed expansion includes 4 miles entirely within Sandisfield. It is a profound threat to the safety, environmental, and economic well-being of our town now and for many years to come.

The speakers presented important background and facts and statistics, for example, about the hundreds of toxic chemicals used in the gas extraction and transmission process. Much came from the industry's own publications and government filings. This is the type of scary information that the gas industry is not likely to readily share with the public. And it raises real cause for concern. What could possibly be more important to our community than understanding and being well prepared to confront this looming disaster?

We know that the Select Board is concerned about this issue. But it is a pity that no one from the Board or administration or the Board of Health or the Conservation Commission, for example, thought to attend, to become better informed and therefore possibly more effective in protecting the Town and its residents and taxpayers. At least the audience went away with a heightened awareness and appreciation of the issue.

Barbara Penn
Hammertown Road



NEW PROPERTY OWNER RELIED ON THE TIMES

My wife, Tina, and I recently purchased (in March) 70 acres of raw land at 66 Lower West Street in Sandisfield. Prior to the land sale, I read several issues of your newspaper. It was very helpful to us in getting to know the area through reading your articles. Thanks for the help with your good read.

Andrew McDowell, Sr.
West Hartford, Connecticut

NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

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

MAY EVENTS

DeMars Images Spring Sale, Saturday and Sunday, May 3 and 4, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., at Whiting Mill, 100 Whiting Street, Winsted. DeMars historical images of Otis, Sandisfield, and other south county and Connecticut sites from the early 1900s.

Public Hearing, Pipeline Expansion Proposal. Thursday, May 8, 7 p.m., Firehouse #2 on Rt. 57. Kinder Morgan will send representatives to review and answer questions about the proposed gas pipeline expansion across 4 miles of the Beech Plain section of Sandisfield. It is a contentious issue, and a group of town residents has organized opposition.

Grand Opening: Gram's Redneck Reusables Flea Market & Tag Sale on Saturday and Sunday, May 10 & 11, from 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. at 186 Town Hill Road, Sandisfield. The Grand Opening features face painting, balloon critters, a food vendor, 50/50 raffle. On Sunday, May 11, Chainsaw wood carver Dave Conklin will provide a demonstration. The Flea Market will continue through the summer. Vendors wanted. Call 413-269-4695 or 413-429-7783.

Guest speaker Norton Fletcher, Sandisfield Historical Society, Saturday, May 10, 11 a.m., followed by potluck lunch. Norton will reflect on his many decades in Sandisfield.

Family Cabaret on Saturday, May 10 at 7 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. An entertaining evening of top-shelf local talent produced by Anni Crofut. (\$10 adults, \$5 under 12).

Tai Chi on Mondays, beginning May 12 from 6:30-7:45 p.m. with Sandisfield resident and Tai Chi Instructor Barbara Penn. Location TBA, contact Barbara, 269-0233. (\$8-9 depending on the number of participants.)

Elder Law Presentation. Wednesday, May 14, 11 a.m., at Sandisfield Council on Aging, Town Hall Annex, basement. All are welcome.

Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, May 17, at 10 a.m. at the Old Town Hall.

Celebration of Mother's Day on Saturday, May 17 at 4 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Readings by members of the Berkshire Festival of Women Writers followed by a performance of the Mt. Everett High School Madrigal Singers. (\$15).

Annual Town Election on Monday, May 19, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Old Town Hall.

Dancing on the Edge on Saturday, May 24, at 4 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. A cabaret performance by Sandisfield resident Linda Mironi. (\$15).

Memorial Day Parade on Sunday, May 25, at 10 a.m. All participants should be in line at the Old Town Hall by 9:30 a.m. The parade travels east on Route 57, with traditional stops at the West New Boston Cemetery and Berkshire Skilled Care & Rehab Facility. The parade continues south on Route 8 to the American Legion Pavilion for a Ceremony Honoring the Veterans.

Genealogy Assistance Class on Wednesday, May 28, at 6:30 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library. Free.

Blass Blast Fundraiser Pig Roast, Saturday, May 31, 3 p.m., at MJ Tuckers, Rt. 8, New Boston. Benefit Rob Blass in battle with cystic fibrosis. \$20 prior purchase, \$25 at the door. Call 258-3341.

MAY EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Steepletop Bird Walk sponsored by the Berkshire Natural Resources Council on Sunday, May 4, from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. in New Marlborough. Visit BNRC.net for more information. Free.

Mother's Day with Wildflowers Guided Walk on Sunday, May 11, from 10 a.m. to 12 Noon at Bartholomew's Cobble in Sheffield. Admission charged, call 413-229-8600.

Tag Sale sponsored by the Otis Cultural Council, Saturday, May 24, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Otis Ridge Ski Center parking lot on Route 23. (Rain-date, Sunday, May 25).

Free Open House Day at Historic Homes on Saturday, May 31, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Ashley House in Sheffield and Mission House and Naumkeag in Stockbridge.

ZUMBA on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. with Michelle Theilig at the Tyringham Town Hall. (\$8 per class). Join a friendly group of people and have fun during your workout!

COMING IN JUNE

Reception to honor Laurie Crittenden Nikituk, Monday, June 2, 5:45-7 p.m. at the Farmington River Regional School Cafeteria. Laurie served for many years as a member and chair of the public school board. Current and former students, families, staff members, former school and building committee members, residents of Otis and Sandisfield, and friends and colleagues are all invited to an open house reception in honor of her devoted service to the school children of FRRS.

Fundraiser Spaghetti Dinner. Saturday, June 7. Cora Barrett, daughter of Selectman Patrick Barrett, is in need of heart surgery. The Sandisfield Council on Aging is sponsoring a dinner to be held in two seatings, 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. Fire Station #2, Rt. 57. \$10 adults, \$5 ages 5-12, free under 5.

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.

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.

Historical Commission: Third Wednesday of the month, 7-8:30 p.m., Sandisfield Library.

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. Phone: 258-4966.

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



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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 Transfer Station, 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, and the Farmington River Diner. Other locations include the Monterey General Store and the Southfield Store in New Marlborough. Back issues are available for purchase.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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Editorial Staff

Editor: Bill Price, cell 413.429.7179 or email: w.billprice@gmail.com

Subscriptions/Advertising/Production/Distribution: Ron Bernard

Graphic Design: Tina Sotis

Founding Editor: Simon Winchester

Website: Jean Atwater-Williams

Now Hear This! Laura Rogers-Castro

How to Contact Us

Letters to the editor: . . . letters@sandisfieldtimes.org

News, ideas, tips & photos: . . . editor@sandisfieldtimes.org

Advertising questions: . . . advertising@sandisfieldtimes.org

Entries for calendar of events: . . . calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org

Birth, marriage, and death notices: . . . registrar@sandisfieldtimes.org