

KM TO STATE: KISS MY GAS!

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume V, Number 6

September 2014

Dirt Under the Tires DRIVING THE BACK ROADS

By Brigitte Ruthman

They began as paths cut wide enough for horse and rider and ox cart to travel through densely wooded forests. The old Indian trail was known to 18th century settlers and travelers as the Albany Road. Newer ones sliced along hillsides that feathered up from the riverbanks.

Wagon ruts run deep in Sandisfield's 90 miles of roads, half of which are unpaved. Widened to accommodate horse-drawn buggies, coaches, sleighs and later motor cars, they provide a quaint access through

most of the year and a challenge the rest. They are remnants of an unhurried past, admired for the humility and peacefulness of the rural places they seem to frame.

What suited oxen and horse teams then is threatened today by the demand for costly improvement to an icon of inefficiency. Transplanted city folk usually want what they are used to, but in Sandisfield, it seems, our dirt roads are safe and sound, or relatively so.

Cont'd on p.14



The northern section of S. Beech Plain Road is a dirt road anyone would like.

INSIDE PAGE

- Select Board Responds 2
- Cemetery Regulations?..... 4
- Animals at the Arts Center.... 6-7
- History or Memories..... 8
- Town History: A Woman's Viewpoint..... 9
- Emergency Repairs at Connie's... 12

Store Wars, Part II

SEPTEMBER 15, OLD TOWN HALL

By Bill Price

The second hearing to consider the proposal of Happy Banga (Akaal Properties) of Lee to construct and operate a gas station/convenience store on Rt. 8 will be held at the Select Board meeting, Monday, September 15, at 7 p.m.

To accommodate the number of people expected to attend, the meeting will be held at Old Town Hall at 3 *Cont'd on p.3*

Divide and Conquer

PIPELINE COMPANY ATTEMPTING TO CIRCUMVENT STATE AND MEPA REGULATIONS

By Times Reporters

Kinder Morgan, parent company of Tennessee Gas, has aggressively ramped up its efforts to gain approval for a third gas pipeline next to its existing old lines through Sandisfield in 2016.

Many in this community are alarmed about the company's indifference towards the recent Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) ruling that denied their request to fast-track their state application and required *Cont'd on p.3*

Select Board Responds TO "OUT ON A LIMB" COLUMN

By Patrick W. Barrett, Chairman

On behalf of the Sandisfield Board of Selectmen, I would like to respond to Rita Kasky's "Out on a Limb" column published in last month's Sandisfield Times. Our Board is deeply committed to the town of Sandisfield, and it is extremely frustrating when a resident hasn't seen the proactive leadership taken by the Board of Selectmen.

It was the Sandisfield Board of Selectmen that played a leading role in knocking down two dilapidated houses on Route 8. We currently have a professional town website on an initiative started by the selectmen. Working with Highway Superintendent Steve Harasyko and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, a road study of all our byways was conducted as a means for building a long-term plan for road repair. Work has been done improving our dirt roads so that now when we get heavy rains, as recently witnessed by all who have been around this summer, they don't wash out. This frees up taxpayer money which can then be spent rebuilding other roads.

The Strategic Planning Committee recently finished a study of all of our town buildings. This group was put together by the Board of Selectmen after an inquiry was made about looking into the condition of the Senior Center by the Council on Aging. The Board of Selectmen has taken an active leadership role in regards to the Tennessee Pipeline Expansion Project. Our Board also advocated for making the Town Manager position full-time. This position will play a crucial role in continuing to move the town forward. In the coming months we will be looking at the cemeteries in town as a means of putting together long-term planning for fixing and maintaining these important places.

These are but a few examples of the leadership initiatives taken by our Board. When that next history of Sandisfield is written, we believe that future generations will understand and appreciate the many accomplishments that were initiated by our group.

We appreciate the fact that the Sandisfield Finance Committee, as well as several town residents, have brought forward initiatives to try to raise revenue for the town by looking at ways to save money. Our job isn't to simply rubber stamp proposals, but to give them serious thought and understanding based on research and analysis before making a decision. We have done this repeatedly and in the process have in fact saved taxpayer dollars.

A perfect example of this was the suggestion to use taxpayer money in order to place a bid to open up a medical marijuana dispensary at the Town

Hall Annex. We asked Town Treasurer Theresa DelaGuistina to seek input from state officials about the viability of such a proposal. Her findings indicated that the state would not allow town funds to be used for this project and that placing the dispensary in a town building would invalidate our insurance policy. We consulted our state representatives who told us that Sandisfield would not be awarded this bid based upon our remote location. We also sat in on a phone consultation with the professional who was going to write the proposal. From this conversation we were told that this was a professional venture that would require a building to not only dispense the marijuana, but also an indoor facility for growing the product. Based upon this evidence, it was the Board of Selectmen who actively opposed the use of town money being spent on this venture. To date, no sites have been approved by the State for a medical marijuana facility in Berkshire County.

The Massachusetts Open Meeting Law stipulates that members of the public are allowed to listen to public meetings, but that participation is granted only at the request of the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. For years the perception in town was that the Sandisfield Board of Selectmen didn't listen to the people. Over the years our board has been encouraging residents to come to meetings and play an active role in their town government. During the selection process for the company to build the town website, we allowed any members in attendance to sit at our table to help make this decision with us. When hiring a new highway superintendent, we sought input from the two residents who took the time to attend every interview. Our Board goes out of its way to allow the residents who attend our meetings to have a say, because this is their community and government and we want them involved.

Ms. Kasky has a valid point in that our meetings could be more structured, and at times we can wander from the agenda. Moving forward, we will try to tighten up things so that our meetings are more focused. We could run our meetings more like other towns, but it would be at the cost of community input, and this is something our Board is committed to not sacrificing. It is our sincere hope that Ms. Kasky will reconsider her stance on not attending future meetings, for we value her as a citizen and appreciate her input. Had we been told in person, or in a phone call, of her frustrations we could have addressed them sooner. ❏

TAX PAYER NOTIFICATION

Town of Sandisfield
BOARD OF ASSESSORS
P.O. Box 145
Sandisfield, MA 01255
413 258-4701

Bethany Perry – Chairman Kathleen Burrows
and Teresa DellaGuistina – Members

AUGUST and SEPTEMBER 2014

REMINDER TO: Sandisfield Homeowners

Re: Yearly Data Verification Program/Site Visits

Starting August 20, Wednesday and Thursday of each week the Board of Assessors in Sandisfield will be continuing with its Data Verification Program site visitations. It is anticipated to take several weeks to complete the project. The mandated Massachusetts Department of Revenue Guidelines requires that the Board collect accurate, complete, and current information relative to property attributes.

Mr. Jim King, Field Appraiser for Mayflower Valuation, Ltd., will be working in an official capacity for the Board of Assessors on this project. Field appraisers carry a letter from our office as well as the property record card.

Your cooperation is appreciated. If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Board of Assessors at 258-4701 between 9:30 and 2:00 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday.



Primary Election

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9,
7 A.M.-8 P.M.**

Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road

Democrat and Republican candidates for U.S. Senate and several Commonwealth offices, including governor and state representatives. Most candidates are running unopposed, including the Democratic and Republican Senate contest, but the governor's race provides a choice between three Democrats and two Republicans. The final election will be held November 11. Absentee ballots for the primary are available at Town Hall. ❏

Store Wars, Part II

Cont'd from p.1

Silverbrook Road.

The initial public hearing, held at the August 11 Board meeting, drew about 40 people to Old Town Hall to hear the proposal and discuss its pros and cons.

As reported earlier by the Times, nearly everyone in Sandisfield is in favor of a store/gas station. Just what type is the stumbling block.

The site, on Rt. 8 across from MJ Tuckers, is also across the highway from the already approved site of Chandru and Kim Paspuletti's proposed gas station/store. The Paspuletti proposal is for a country store establishment with gas and food. Mr. Banga is proposing a Sunoco station with a sublet to a national food franchise, although as yet he has no partners.

Concerning the hours of operation, Mr. Banga's representative, Ron Fortune of Consulting & Design of Lee, said that his client needed the freedom to operate as many hours as possible – perhaps 24. One near neighbor to the property said that he would resent the potential loss of night sky. An abutter said that in any event the station would create a nighttime glow. "We live in the country. We need something in this town, but do we need something of this size?"

With few zoning regulations in place, the town considers vendor proposals through a "special permit process." A discussion ensued regarding what restrictions, if any, the Selectmen could impose on an applicant. One resident asked, "If the Selectmen can list conditions, can they say we need a small store, two pumps, no diesel?"

Town Counsel Joel Bard responded, "There needs to be a factual basis for imposing conditions. What would be the reasons, for instance, for no diesel?"

Another resident said that the Board can direct that the store/station be attractive and well maintained.


Another resident asked, "If the country store proposal has already been approved, why are we listening to this one?" Select Board Chair Patrick Barrett replied that in the absence of clear zoning regulations other parties are allowed to apply.

The room was divided between those in favor of the proposal and those who were not. One supporter said, "This is not Green Acres. If you moved here thinking it was, you're mistaken."

A resident opposing the plan worried that the section of Rt. 8 in question "could become a strip mall. This is a cookie-cutter design, not designed to fit the space or the town."

Asked if the Board could reject the proposal if the majority of residents in attendance didn't want it, Counsel Bard replied, "A roomful of people is not a basis for denying an application."

Patrick said in summary that the Paspulettis had begun their proposal with the statement that they wanted to be good neighbors. He added, "I would want Mr. Banga's proposal to approach the town in that mode as well."

He requested that attendees at the September 15 meeting not repeat the same comments made at the first hearing. It is anticipated that the upcoming meeting will focus more on the nature of the development rather than its pros and cons. 

Divide and Conquer

Cont'd from p.1

substantial additional environmental information.

Last May, in a big turnout, Sandisfield voters unanimously passed a non-binding resolution in strenuous opposition to this project. Town officials went on record as adamantly opposed. State Representative Smitty Pignatelli and State Senator Ben Downing did likewise. Organizations representing parties directly affected, including the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR, caretaker of Spectacle Pond and Otis State Forest), the local grassroots group, Sandisfield Taxpayers Opposing the Pipeline (STOP), and the Massachusetts Audubon Society, among others, voiced their opposition to the circumvention of standard application review policies by this company.

MEPA acknowledged all of these concerns, added a few of their own, and ruled that the company had to submit a "Draft Environmental Impact Report." The Secretary's statement of July 11 noted that Spectacle Pond in the Otis State Forest is permanently protected under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution.

Instead, on July 31, Kinder Morgan went directly to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the ultimate approval authority, requesting the agency to "expedite" its application by exempting the company from filing certain environmental impact statements. In other words, Kinder Morgan is attempting to by-pass State regulations and rulings and even ignoring Massachusetts Constitution Article 97. Those who attended the public informational sessions hosted by Kinder Morgan on May 8 and June 10 remember that the company promised to abide by "all rules and regulations." They made a point of their commitment to being "a good partner."

In its appeal to FERC, the company represented that the Sandisfield line was a separate segment, not related to the so-called Northeast Expansion project which includes a major new proposed 180-mile gas line through the northern part of the State. Apparently the company believes that by disingenuously separating the Sandisfield segment from the Northeast Expansion it can move ahead


the new Sandisfield line unfettered.

According to industry watchdogs, segmentation has been the industry's long-standing – and up till now successful – strategy to avoid environmental oversight. A lawyer familiar with this field said, "The industry has gone to great lengths to break projects into thousands of smaller pieces to avoid a true analysis of pipelines' environmental impacts." In fact, Kinder Morgan has employed this approach in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and elsewhere.

Jane Winn of Berkshire Environmental Action Team, working with many other organizations against unneeded gas transmission lines in the state, told the Times, "If successful (in Sandisfield), this maneuver will set a dangerous precedent for the rest of Kinder Morgan's expansion plans for Massachusetts, including the major proposed Richmond-Dracut line."

But the situation may have changed. According to Winn, "Just this June, in a landmark decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia (*Delaware Riverkeeper Network, et. al. v. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company*), segmentation was deemed illegal." The court determined that FERC has been violating the National Environmental Policy Act by permitting companies to avoid comprehensive environmental reviews. The ruling has major consequences for how the industry can, for example, easily add on more compressor stations, pipeline loops, and "pigging stations" such as the one on Town Hill Road.

Winn said that this is a critical moment and that "citizens, town governments, state legislators, and officials and federal office holders should formally request FERC to reject the segmented permit approach and require a full Environmental Impact Statement."

Comments to FERC on this proposal must be submitted by September 4 to be considered. Communication should reference Docket #CP14-529 and mention the Sandisfield, Massachusetts segment of the "Connecticut Expansion Project." Comments may be submitted on the FERC.gov website under the e-comment link. For more information, contact: Jane Winn at (413) 230-7321 / Jane@thebeatnews.org or visit www.sandisfieldtaxpayers.org for instructions on how to comment or file with FERC. Also, please visit www.thebeatnews.org. 

Cemeteries: To Regulate or Not?

By Bill Price



View of Sandisfield Center Cemetery from Rt. 57.
Nothing but scrub trees.

Cemetery Commissioner Ben Campetti has raised an issue that some residents feel could cause their ancestors to grow restless in their graves.

He asked the Select Board in July to create regulations regarding plants and trees in the Sandisfield Center Cemetery. "Other towns have rules and their cemeteries are orderly and simpler to maintain," he said. "We have trees and overgrown shrubs that are about to topple headstones and some have completely obliterated the markers."

Others, however, feel that since there have been no rules for 250 years, why start now. And if you want an 8-foot tree on the family burial plot you should be able to plant it, since your family actually owns the ground.

Ben's concerns have raised hackles even within his own family. A few Campetti relatives, cousins and some closer than cousins, are opposed to the imposition of any regulations. Ben's father, Jappy Campetti, served as Cemetery Commissioner for many years. His family built and for years have maintained the granite mausoleum that faces the main cemetery driveway. The mausoleum itself is rather overgrown with shrubs. "We're as guilty as anybody else," Ben said.

"But," he added, "take a look at the older cemeteries in town, particularly West New Boston. Most of the families are gone from Sandisfield, and the plots are not maintained. Trees and plants have toppled stones. Moss has deteriorated many of the stones. Invasive plants and trees have taken over. It becomes harder and more expensive to maintain these cemeteries.




Ben Campetti, Commissioner

That will happen to the Center Cemetery if we don't impose some order."

He added, "Plants are nice when they're planted, but they grow and can become an eyesore. People plant weeping willow trees that eventually become enormous."

New rules would not apply to current gravesites, only those to be used in the future. In a word, grandfather's gravesite would be grandfathered.

Select Board Chair Patrick Barrett is examining cemetery rules and regulations in other towns and has asked Administrator Lisa Blackmer and Ben to present a draft plan this Fall.

Ben has also asked if the trees that have overgrown the sides of the small brook that courses through the field between the cemetery and Rt. 57 could be cut back. "I'd like the cemetery to be visible from the road again," Ben said. "It's a beautiful view, the cemetery on the hill, and right now it's completely cut off." 

KWIK^{color} PRINT

INCORPORATED

EXPERIENCE • SPEED • QUALITY

- Full Color Digital Printing
- Full Color Envelope Printing
- Large Format Printing
- High Speed Copying
- Laminating
- Inline Bookletmaking
- Perfect Binding
- Folding
- Perforating
- Mailing Services
- Graphic Design Services

35 Bridge Street

Great Barrington, MA 01230

Ph: 413.528.2885 Fx: 413.528.9220

typesetting@kwikprintinc.com

www.kwikprintinc.com

music and more ¹⁴

Saturdays at 4:30 pm
August-September

At the
Meeting House, Rt. 57
New Marlborough, MA

Sept 6 Carol Wincenc, Flute

Escher String Quartet

Internationally acclaimed flutist, Carol Wincenc, is joined by the Escher String Quartet. Music by Mozart, Devienne, Haydn, Debussy and Yuko Uebayashi's *Misericordia* for Flute and String Quartet (composed in 2013 for Ms Wincenc).

Sept 13 Time Flies! Karen Akers

American Songbook *Don Rebic, piano*

One of America's premiere concert and cabaret stars. *Post-concert gala wine tasting hosted by Domaney's of Great Barrington.*

Sept 20 Lydian String Quartet

Free Pre-Concert Talk at 3:30pm

Daniel Steptner and Judith Eissenberg, violin; Mark Berger, viola; Joshua Gordon, cello

Franz Schubert: Quartet No. 13 in A minor, Op. 29, D. 804, "Rosamunde"; Maurice Ravel: Quartet in F major; Dmitri Shostakovich: Elegy and Polka; Lee Hyla, Quartet No. 3 (composed for the Lydian).

Sept 27 Award-Winning Authors

Host: Mitchel Levitas of The New York Times with Roy Blount Jr., Paul Auster, Siri Hustvedt, and Filmmaker Ellen Weissbrod

Award-winning authors discuss their careers and current work. *Book-signing at the reception.*

Receptions with the artists after the performances

FOR TICKETS, DISCOUNTS & INFORMATION:
www.newmarlborough.org • (413) 229-2785



An operator for Gary Pease Logging clears the downed trees.

Progress at the Pavilion

By Maria Domato

Last month a group of American Legion volunteers with some community help began a major cleanup of the pavilion grounds.

The pond and the pavilion are no longer shrouded by overgrown trees and brush. As beautiful as the trees that were removed might have been, several were fungus infested and rotted. Two mallard ducks have already visited the pond.

The work party was organized and everyone worked together smoothly. The volunteers were Ron Loring, Carl Bartow, Steve Carroll, Sal Correnti, Bob Bull, Ted Locke, and Lester Walker.

Carl brought his big fork lift and Steve had his backhoe transported by Ron Perry. Many thanks to Gary Pease Logging for chipping up our mess – without his help, we would still be cutting up trees.

And our thanks to Warren Blass for coming to our rescue by dropping the four pines along the driveway that suffered with red rot.

All rotted support beams in the building have been replaced with steel posts; no more rot, ever! Next on the list is the driveway and landscaping the entrance.

We are working with limited funds and greatly appreciate donations of cash or manual labor. We need painters, carpenter helpers, brush cutters, help cleaning out the pavilion, and more. To help out, call: Maria Domato at 413-258-4578 or write us at Pavilion Building Fund, PO Box 88, Sandisfield, MA 01255. ♡



Local Authors Tell All

At the Arts Center in August, Courtney Maum (left) and Miriam Karmel, read from their recently published novels and discussed the pleasures and hard work of writing fiction. Courtney published *I Am Having So Much Fun Here Without You* in June. Her book was reviewed in these pages in June and in *The New York Times Sunday Book Review* the day after she and Miriam appeared at the Center. Miriam's novel, *Being Esther*, published last year and now available in paperback, will be reviewed next month in the Sandisfield Times. ♡

tony indino

master carpenter

Custom Interiors
Cabinetry
Fine Furniture

100 Whiting Street
Winsted, CT

www.tonyindino.com
860.658.4332

TINA SOTIS

NEW PAINTINGS

Deb Koffman's Art Space
137 Front Street, Housatonic
Sept 2-Sept 30

ARTIST RECEPTION
Sat, Sept 6, 3:30-6:30

www.tinasotis.com

Casting Call! Boys and Girls Needed for "CHRISTMAS CAROL"

On December 12, 13 and 14, The Sandisfield Players are putting on a staged, costumed production of Charles Dickens' famous "Christmas Carol."

We need some children up to the age of 14 to take part in this wonderful play.

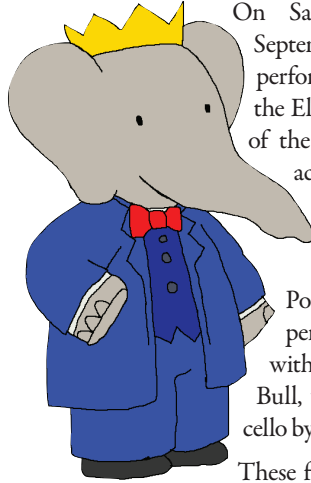
The rehearsal schedule will not be too demanding.

Please apply by emailing benjaminluxon@gmail.com or call Ben Luxon or Susie Crofut at 258-4994.

Babar and Ferdinand, Together

A SPECIAL CONCERT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

By Susie Crofut



On Saturday afternoon, September 6 at 4 p.m., a performance of Babar the Elephant, a recitation of the much loved story accompanied by brilliant music written for the piano by Francis Poulenc, will be performed along with Ferdinand the Bull, with music for the cello by Eliot Bailen.

These famous and favorite stories were read to us as children, and we read them today to our children and grandchildren. This concert is a special opportunity to hear them narrated by Ben Luxon accompanied

by some of the country's finest chamber musicians, the outstanding Arron Ensemble. Jeewon Park, the renowned South Korean pianist, will play the piano score for Babar and Eliot Bailen, the composer of the music for Ferdinand the Bull will play for this performance. Other music honoring our September animal theme will be performed by this fine ensemble.

A Pet Parade and Magicistry Show

On Sunday afternoon, September 7 at 2 p.m., a Pet Parade! Bring your favorite pet, gerbil or camel, cat or dog, bird or frog for all to see and enjoy. There will be special categories and prizes. Local veterinarian Dr. Emily Newman will be the judge. This will be followed by a Magicistry Show – magician and sorcerer CJ May will entertain and inform the audience about sustainability issues. ♡

Consolati Insurance

Frank A. Consolati • Jeff J Consolati
Homeowners / Business
Auto • Boats • Flood • Life • Long-term Care

413-243-0105

413-243-0109

Fax: 413-243-4622 • 71 Main St., Lee



WHEN PIGS FLY FARM

A FAMILY FARM WITH FAMILY VALUES
222 SANDISFIELD ROAD
SANDISFIELD, MA 01255
whenpigsflyfarm1@verizon.net
413-258-3397

FARMSTAND
OPEN FOR
THE SEASON

Open Sunrise-Sunset



Eggs. Maple Syrup.
Honey

Come see what's growing

The Hillside Garden Inn

An intimate B & B, offering gracious hospitality and charming, immaculate accommodations in the historic c. 1784 Elijah Twining house.

The perfect place for your out-of-town guests!

Innkeepers

Rosanne Carinci-Hoekstra
Steven Hoekstra

3 Tolland Road
Sandisfield, MA
413.258.4968

www.hillsidegardeninn.com

A Month of Animals

ART, POETRY, STORIES, MUSIC, BABAR, PET PARADE, SORCERY, AND MAGIC!

By Hilde Weisert

Animals! At the Arts Center?

Animals?

Yes. What else could appeal to everyone in town? Whether you're a year-round resident or second-home owner; cow, sheep, chicken, or pig farmer; pet owner or front-porch observer of birds and bears, animals are a vital part of daily life (and drama) in Sandisfield.

The Arts Center celebrates animals with its Wild & Woolly September line-up:

The month kicks off on Friday September 5, with the ANIMALS IN ART EXHIBIT (through September 30), with paintings, sculpture, quilts, cartoons. Opening wine & cheese reception, 6-8 p.m.

That evening, stimulated by art and relaxed by wine, we'll raise a toast to CELEBRATING ANIMALS IN POETRY read by Berkshire luminaries Michelle Gillett, Antonia Lake, Nathan Smith, Hannah Fries, and Sandisfield's Val Coleman and Hilde Weisert. Hilde will be a host and will be signing her new book, *Animal Companions, Animal Doctors, Animal People*. 8 p.m. \$10.

The next day, Saturday, September 6, begins at 10 a.m., with WILD & WOOLLY: ANIMAL STORIES THAT MAKE SANDISFIELD SANDISFIELD. Gather around the (virtual) potbellied stove to tell your animal tale and

hear those of your neighbors. With moderators Barbara Penn & Hilde Weisert. No charge. Bring the family.

After going home to walk the dog or feed the chickens, come back at 4 p.m. that same afternoon for BABAR THE ELEPHANT and FERDINAND THE BULL with the Arron Ensemble and renowned South Korean pianist Jeewon Park, narrator Ben Luxon.

Just when you thought you could take a day off to reflect on the human-animal bond, the family fun continues on Sunday, September 7 at 2 p.m., with PET PARADE & SORCERY, MENAGERIE & MAGIC. Bring your favorite pet to the Arts Center's Pet Parade (registration at sandisfieldartscenter.org). Prizes in many categories! Judging by local veterinarian Dr. Emily Newman. Magictristy show with Sorcerer CJ May. Entry fee for your pet is \$5. But you get in free.

The month ends on Saturday, September 30, at 8 p.m., with the swinging, animal-inspired jazz of THE SIR WILLIAM TRIO: ANIMALS IN POETRY & JAZZ. Four jazz artists juxtaposed with poetry of birds, lions, tigers, dolphins, elephants, fish, read by Ben Luxon and Tina Sotis. If you heard their amazing performance last season, you know you need to get your tickets early. \$20. 🍷

Big Cat

I'm afraid. They kill animals
much larger than themselves – Big horn sheep,
horses, elk. Much larger

than me. Are they even here?
People disagree. In New England
it's been a hundred years,

but people keep seeing them.
Three golden retrievers stand
like a bronze statue on a rock,

then ripple into shadows and go.
Like that, they disappear when you see them,
like the Great Dane ambling up our driveway

at dusk, an amble turned low and shouldery
before fading into night. Catamount,
they called them here. I call it a creature

made of dusk, though it's broad daylight
that scares me now, my walk a watch
for something copper in the hills

watching me from a high rock.
It's said they run from barking dogs –
Will my dog bark?

And what about me,
with only a dog
and a pounding heart?

Hilde Weisert

Local Poet Knows Animals

Hilde Weisert of Hammertown Road is co-editor of the 2012 anthology, *Animal Companions, Animal Doctors, Animal People: Poems, Essays and Stories on our Essential Connections*. Two copies of the book will be given as door prizes at the September 5th poetry reading at the Arts Center.

Featured in an article in The New York Times in August, Hilde is co-founder of the Society for Veterinary Medicine and Literature. The Society helps veterinary students and vets "retain their sense of joy about becoming/

being a veterinarian." Hilde helped develop a pet-friendly pedagogy at North Carolina State using animal stories and poems to debate ethics and life-or-death decisions unique to vets.

Hilde's poem "Diagnosis" was included in The Times article.

*Archie trembles — in pain, or fear?
No words, but the vet's hands bear.*

In 2015, Hilde's poetry collection, *The Scheme of Things*, will be published by David Robert Books. 🍷

SUZANNE HOYNOSKI

FLEUR DE LIS CLEANING

A "White Glove" Housekeeping
Service Company

860.309.6598

fleurdelis@yahoo.com

references available upon request

Sandisfield Historical Society



By John Kuzmech

Members and guests at the August meeting heard Cora Roraback who has lived in Sandisfield more than 90 years share stories of her life here. New people are attracted to our monthly meetings to hear our unique and amusing speakers and our regulars seem to have renewed enthusiasm about this. Consistent with our mission, Sandisfield history has been gathered and recorded at each of our meetings this year, and we have speakers lined up.

On September 13 at 11 a.m., we will hear Jim Parish, the architectural historian who performed Sandisfield's first official architectural assets survey in 1979. He will speak of colonial life here and the town's role in the struggle for independence."

Following Jim's presentation, we'll have a brief (I promise) business meeting, ending with a pot luck luncheon which is a lively social event. Norton, who many of you know was a professional cook at the New Boston Inn over 60 years ago, knows how to please the palate. So does Vicki Bakunis with a crock pot recipe she got decades ago. It will be up to her to tell you the amusing story behind it. Please come on September 13th so we can keep this momentum going.

Our other event in September is the Apple Fest, September 27. If you want to be a vendor, call Marcia at 258-2898. We will have baked goods and a big tag sale (I am seeking donations, call 258-4906). This year we will try our hand at grinding and pressing apples for the juice, using an antique press. This event pays our bills, so please support us.

Roberta Myers donated a welcome gift: a collection of old school work and letters and ancient advertisements for a Jewish "summer resort" on Town Hill Road. One of the letters was written 111 years ago by a presumably very young Ada Hawley who lived in the Myers house. Ada described her family dog Rover: "He used to

sleep in the barn in a big box, but now he sleeps in the house by the sofa and lies just as still all night. In the day he drives the cows and goes with us if we go anywhere. He has milk, potatoes and meat three times a day!" The Society is planning a rotating public display of the letter and other paper "relics." Watch for it in the foyer at Villa Mia and perhaps other public locations.



Society leadership both changed and stayed the same. Right, Norton Fletcher shakes hands with new president, John Kuzmech. From left, returning to office were secretary Vickie Bakunis, Treasurer Barry Freedman, and vice president Marcia Ignace.

History or Memories WHO DECIDES?

By Lois Platt

After my first trip to the Historical Society, in June, to hear my dad, Willard Platt, discuss his life in Sandisfield and my second, to interview Cora Roraback last month on her long life here, I have been thinking a lot about Sandisfield history.

How to preserve it. How to make the very old historical material more visible for townspeople. How and what in the more recent past should be documented.

My thoughts take me in many directions but I sit here with just a small list of memories from when I was a kid that are relevant to the town's history.

Each year, the Sandisfield Youth Group sponsored a block dance party at the end of Roosterville Road. The whole town and many people from Winsted would attend.

The Ladies Auxiliary would cook food in the old bus that was turned into a chuck wagon. That

bus would be hauled up to Spectacle Pond for the steak roast each year.

Canoe races were held every year on the Farmington.

And what about the old Grange? Betty Wilbur and many other "older" people held Grange meetings and somehow they would talk us kids into joining the Grange and attending those weekly meetings.

Then, of course, there is the little school, now gone. Does the town have any of the class photos of the kids that went through that school?

Imagine the stories Mrs. Rowley could have told about all of us. Sadly, those stories were lost when we lost Mrs. Rowley.

Are these just my memories or town history? Who gets to decide? Is it us or is it the people of the future? Sure, right now my memories/history are only 50 years old, but in another 50 years they could be important.

If we start to locate photos, documents, memories from that time period, say 1940-1980, the next generations won't have such a hard treasure hunt to learn about us. Maybe our past should be stored with intent and not by chance.


When I was at the Sandisfield Historical Society I heard Norton talk about a man who would come to town with a horse and wagon to sell meat. A few years ago an elderly friend of mine

was telling me how she would ride on a meat wagon with her father, when she was a child, and they would go to Sandisfield to sell meat. When she passed away she left me her family photos. I think I may have a photo of that man and meat wagon. Just by CHANCE! If I do have that photo, does it have more value because it was found by chance instead of stored with intent?

Sandisfield has lost many important people in the past few years whose stories have gone undocumented.

The way I see it we all are members of the Sandisfield Historical Society, whether we've signed up or not. If you have any history here at all you are part of it. It is up to ALL of us to document our time here. No matter when it started or ended.

So before we lose more history, why don't we all look in our photo albums, dig those boxes out of storage, contact anybody you know who moved away and may have photos or information. Let's store as much as we have and let the next generations decide if it is history or just our memories. The Sandisfield Historical Society is interested!

Just a little fun fact. Stan Penridge, the co-writer of the song "Beth" sung by the band Kiss, once lived in Sandisfield. 

An Eyewitness to Sandisfield

A WOMAN'S VIEWPOINT

By Bill Price

Cora Roraback has known that women work harder than men for a long time.

At a presentation at the Historical Society in August, the month she turned 92, Cora described what she meant by "harder."

"Women wove the cloth and made the clothes for the entire family," she said. "My grandmother wove 700 yards of cloth per year. She made the soap and candles. She and my mother did all the cooking on a wood stove. They did the washing and ironing. They worked all day and kept working until they went to bed at night. Grandfather and father came home from the fields and sat down with their pipes."

Born on the family farm on Beech Plain Road in 1922, Cora grew up knowing hard work and farming and long walks to school and back.

Cora is a Spring. At the Historical Society, she said, "I don't think there ever was a time in town with no Springs here."

The first of her family arrived in Sandisfield in the 1760s. Henry Spring operated a tavern at Upper Spectacle Pond, very likely the tavern where Knox's army stopped when they were pulling the cannons to Boston over what was then the Albany Road.

According to *Sandisfield Then and Now*, the Springs cleared and farmed the land near the pond but running the tavern was likely their primary activity. In 1885, Town Clerk George Shepard wrote that the place, in its heyday, could accommodate 20 horses and "was crowded with customers most of the time." The tavern closed early in the 1800s. The Springs were still on the farm until Cora's father, Howard Spring, moved the family to South Beech Plain Road in 1903. Cora and her siblings were all born in the birthing room in the "new" house.

86 South Beech Plain Road was built about 1780 by Ebenezer Jones. While Cora and her six siblings were growing up there, the house was heated by wood stoves, one in each of the three main rooms and all connected to a central chimney which still stands.

Cora remembered, "Our indoor plumbing was a hand pump in the kitchen sink. There was no hot water. No electricity."

The farm had its own cider mill. "Everyone came to fill their barrels. We picked the apples,

squeezed them for juice. Other people brought their own apples for squeezing."

Her parents grew vegetables, hay, and apples. They raised sheep, cows, pigs, horses, chickens, and rabbits. They made and sold cheese from their dairy herd. The barns, Cora said, were across the road, and there was a large ice house with ice cut from what Cora said was the big pond at Thurston's place (now Snow Farm).

Cora had three brothers, Arthur, Oliver, and Homer, and three sisters, Helen, Fanny, and Mabel, the youngest. The kids trudged down steep Beech Plain Road nearly 2¼ miles to the West New Boston School on Silverbrook Road, which Cora attended from grades 1-8, same school, same teacher, Katherine Pool, all eight years of her schooling. During winter they came home up the hill by horse and sleigh.

Cora remembered every spring harvesting syrup from nearly 100 maple trees behind the house by horse and sled. The sap was boiled down over wood fires, some poured into candy molds but most going into 50-gallon drums.

Asked what the family did with that much syrup, Cora said, smiling, "We shipped it to Vermont."

After the sons left home, Cora's father sold the farm. "In 1941 we moved down to West New Boston to a house on Route 57 just south of the Silverbrook."

Cora said, "We had indoor plumbing. That was such a treat."

During the 1955 flood, she said, "We were at the house when 57 was completely washed out. Art Church's house across the river washed away. At the time one of my brother's lived above the Silverbrook. At the time it was Palmer's Bar and Tavern. His car washed away."

Cora married Earl Roraback in 1950. They met when Earl was delivering grain for the



At the Historical Society presentation: Cora with her granddaughter Laurie Loring (left) and her daughters Evelyn Loring and Sandy Morrison.

family's two cows after they had moved to 57. "I was outside with the mop when he made the delivery. He told my mother, 'I have to meet your daughter.' Mother said, 'We have a dog. You should be careful.'"

Cora joked, "I should have stayed in the house that day. We were married in Monterey, at the home of Reverend Thomas." Cora was a homemaker, mother to two children, and she worked as a housekeeper. In 1965 she moved to a house on Rt. 8 that was formerly the parsonage for the New Boston Congregational Church. Today she is still at the same location, in a new house living with her grandson and granddaughter, Rodney and Laurie Loring.

Cora's sisters, Helen Genung, Fanny Hamilton, and Mabel O'Brien, lived nearby in West New Boston. Many family members are scattered throughout Sandisfield and southern Berkshire County: the Springs, Rorabacks, Hamiltons, O'Briens, Margrafs. All are old Sandisfield family names related directly or by marriage to the Springs of Beech Plain.

Asked if she was happy she'd stayed in Sandisfield, Cora replied, "I don't know where else I'd want to go." ❧

At the Society, Cora was interviewed by Lois Platt.



Walking Through the Woods

By Trail Volunteers

Sandisfield's first public hiking trail will be open for visitors by the end of September.

The 1.25-mile Clam River trail begins at the Town Hall Annex and is entirely within BNRC's Clam River Reserve. From the Annex, the trail winds through a pretty hardwood forest, follows existing wood roads to the Clam River, parallels the river for a half-mile through pine and hemlock forest, and returns to the Annex spur trail by existing wood roads.

The trail is open to the public for passive recreation. BNRC's Mike Leavitt said, "We know the hiking is great and snowshoeing will be, too. We think the trail will accommodate cross-country skiers, but we'll wait for a report from someone this winter." The trail is not open to mechanized vehicles.

BNRC broke ground on the trail at the end of June with teen volunteers with the Appalachian Mountain Club working with BNRC staff for two weeks. A crew of eight paid local teens from Great Barrington-based Greenagers also put in a full day.

BNRC also noted the efforts of volunteers Gail Palmer, Ken Kelly, Sandy Parisky, and Alex Laifer. Mike Leavitt said "we have the best volunteers." He also thanked the many Sandisfield residents who supported the project from the start. "Our friends' enthusiasm is what got this trail started," he added.

Leavitt said "we were lucky: the ground under the Clam River trail has very little rock and the soil is beautiful. We built as much as 300 feet in a day here versus 50 feet at a very rocky site in Alford." Easy to build upon, the finished product on this rock-free ground will also be a nice, smooth trail, he added.

While the trail is already open to the public, Leavitt cautioned that navigational signage and maps will not be in place until late September. "It's a fairly easy trail to follow, but if you've never been to the property before, you should wait a little longer."

If you are interested in helping put the finishing touches on the trail, please e-mail Mike Leavitt at mleavitt@bnrc.net.



Soggy trail sections were bridged by volunteers.

Sandisfield Historical Commission Historical Assets Survey Making Progress

By Ron Bernard

Phase II of the town's updated official historical and archeological assets inventory kicks off this month when the next group of antique houses will be surveyed by the Commission.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission requires towns to update their inventories periodically in order for parties to qualify for preservation grants or to submit applications for listings on the National Register of Historic Places.

Sandisfield's inventory, last performed in 1979, is incomplete and obsolete.

Last year the first group of about 30 structures was identified, photographed, and assigned inventory forms that include standard architectural and historical narratives (see Sandisfield Times, June, 2014). Based on this review, the Commission's outside consultant, Bonnie Parsons, indicated that upwards of thirty antique and historic houses

and buildings may ultimately qualify for consideration for inclusion on the National Register. The Survey is expected to be completed by late 2015.

At the annual Town Meeting in May, the Commission received approval to review a similar number of properties this year. This month Ms. Parsons and I will take roadside photos of selected houses and other buildings. If you see us, don't be alarmed!

If you have questions about the survey, the National Register program, or about any topics of potential interest to the Historical Commission, contact me or any member. Following a two-month summer hiatus, our next public meeting will be September 17, Wednesday, at 7 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library.

Biking for a Cause

By Adam Manacher



Daniel and Adam, back home in Sandisfield.

Dreams can become reality. I've dreamed for over 20 years of riding my bicycle from Cambridge across Massachusetts to our family house in Sandisfield. My son Daniel dreamt of doing something "epic" this summer. My wife, Carol dreamt of creating a new fundraiser for the FSH Society in memory of her mom, Barbara Birnbaum, who died 3 years ago from complications of this muscular dystrophy. Carol and her sisters each have a 50% chance of inheriting the disease. Our individual dreams coalesced into the Trans-Mass bike ride for FSHD.

Daniel and I, with two friends, began our bike ride to Sandisfield in Cambridge with early morning sunshine, quiet roads. We pedaled our way through the Wellesley hills, Hopkinton, and Upton, to Sturbridge. Then, the real challenge of afternoon: the steep hills of Monson and Wilbraham. We coasted, exhausted, into Springfield at the 101 mile mark for dinner and a night's rest. Rising early, we tackled our final 35 miles over the Berkshire hills with fresh energy, eager to reach our goal. Through the 17% grade climbs of Granby (no stopping for peaches!), the long gradual slopes into Tolland, and the wild descent into New Boston, avoiding the truck runoff ramp, we cheered as we pedaled our way along 57 past town hall. A brief stop at the town dump to catch our breath, wipe our glasses, and hear some town news (it's Sunday!), we tackled the final hill of our journey.

All along our ride we reflected over our task at

hand and the everyday challenges of those with FSHD: Our struggles to combine energy and courage to make the climbs and to safely navigate the rapid descents resonated with the struggles FSHD patients face in their daily physical tasks. We felt honored to ride in memory of Barbara and all those who work hard every day to live with FSHD.

Our ride and outreach to friends and community to educate and raise funds for the FSH Society are far from complete, yet we feel exhilarated at fulfilling a dream. 135 miles of road, an elevation gain (all our ascents together) of 10,146 ft and a successful fundraiser; the first FSHD Trans-Mass bike ride is behind us. We now look forward to next year's ride with great anticipation!

For more information please go to the FSH Society web page at fshsociety.org/pages/about.




THE SANDISFIELD LIBRARY

By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

Hank Wingate of Otis has asked if we could include some information regarding the Otis Library & Museum. The newly renovated museum in the Otis Library is open until October 15. The new "Old Otis Law Library" is located in the Conference Room at the Otis Town Hall. Non-fiction historical books are available for check-out. Please see Town Clerk Lynne Minery or Curator Hank Wingate for access. Phone 413-269-0100. The library is located on the town square on Rt. 8. Summer hours, until Oct. 10, are M-T-W, noon-6 p.m., Th-Fri 1 p.m.-7 p.m., Sat 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Our next genealogy class will be September 30.

NEW BOOKS

- Bones Never Lie/Kathie Reichs
- A Sudden Light/Garth Stein
- The Eye of Heaven/Clive Cussler
- Top Secret/W.E.B. Griffin
- Edge of Eternity/Ken Follett
- Blood in the Water/Anne Perry
- Raging Heat/Richard Castle
- Robert Parker's Blind Spot /Coleman
- Close to Home /Lisa Jackson
- Haunted/Kay Hooper
- The Lost Key/Catherine Coulter
- Virtue Falls/Christina Dodd

SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER



5 HAMMERTOWN RD SANDISFIELD, MA
413-258-4100

INFO & TO BUY TICKETS ONLINE
SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG



september


IS ANIMAL MONTH

At the Arts Center!

FRI SEPT 5 Animal Themed Art Exhibit
RECEPTION -6PM - 8PM

Poetry reading hosted by Sandisfield poet **Hilde Weisert** with **Michelle Gillett, Antonia Lake, Nathan Smith, Val Coleman, Hannah Fries.** Book signing! 8 PM \$10.

SAT SEPT 6 10 AM Tell your animal tale and hear your neighbors'. With fiddler **Maggie Holtzberg.** Moderators **Barbara Penn** and **Hilde Weisert.**

SAT SEPT 6 4 PM \$20. The Story of  **Babar the Elephant,** for piano and narrator, by **Francis Poulenc.** Featuring **The Arron Chamber Ensemble** and **Ben Luxon.**

SUN SEPT 7 2 PM Pet entry fee \$5. (Spectators Free) **PET PARADE** Prizes in many categories! Judging by local veterinarian **Dr. Emily Newman** followed by a Magictistry show with Sorcerer **CJ May.**

SAT SEPT 20 8 PM \$20. Animal-inspired jazz from the Sir William Trio featuring **Bill Stillinger, James Argiro, and Gregory Caputo,** with singer **Stacy Grimaldi.** Poetry read by **Ben Luxon** and **Tina Sotis.**



Funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and Local Cultural Councils



Emergency Repairs at Connie's

By Barney Oldfield

Photos By Bill Price

If you were lucky enough to drive past the Silverbrook Café & Country Store mid-morning August 13, a very rainy Wednesday, you saw something rare.

Up to fifteen vintage cars, all pre-1915 originals, restored and perfect, pulled up in front of or beside the store or under the willow tree across the road.

The drivers and guests were on a 1,000-mile New England tour when one of the cars, a 1910 Buick, began to break down in the rainstorm. The Model 16 is susceptible to rain seeping through the hood and soaking the valves and shorting out the engine. And the rainstorm was threatening to get worse.

The driver slipped the front of his car under the awning of Connie D'Andrea's store and Connie went on a search for something, anything, to protect the hood. She came up with a wide piece of shelving paper. Maybe that would work. The driver thought so, duct-taped it across the hood, and after enjoying coffee and other refreshments at the store took off again.

The group, sponsored by the Autoneers, a New England group, liked to keep to back roads, which had led them inexorably toward Sandisfield. Starting in Foxborough, the tour had gone up through Maine, across New Hampshire, back down Vermont, and were heading across Tolland Mountain for Simsbury, Connecticut, where they planned to spend the night in a country inn. They were wished God speed, and went on their way.



I NEED A GOOD HOME!

I am a red 2005 Sebring GTC 2-door convertible with about 75,000 miles in very good condition.

Maybe you have seen me about town.

If you give me a good home we will have fun together.

Call Roberta Myers, 413-269-4928

for sale

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

TOLLAND MOUNTAIN BUILDERS LLC

HIL #144855

MA LIC #38268

"When Quality and Professionalism Are a Must"

Nick DellaGiustina
413-258-2821

"We Handle All the Details"
Local references available.

Steve DellaGiustina
413-258-4996

Successful Fund Raiser for the Kids

By Mary Anne Grammer

Congratulations to the parents and school staff who organized the Farmington River Elementary School's second Benefit Concert and Silent Auction. The funds benefit all students from Sandisfield and Otis who attend FRRSD.

The PTA-sponsored event, held August 12 at the Stanmeyer Gallery, raised funds for playground improvements and outdoor enrichment. The upper loft of the barn of the Gallery was transformed into a spectacular gala space. 120 items for the silent auction were displayed, from the practical to the elegant such as gift certificates from Guido's and Domaney to an autographed Dustion Pedroia RedSox Jersey.

Delectables included Spanakopita, sandwich pinwheels, salads, meatballs, and sweets bursting with fruits, chocolate, and cream. Homemade drinks included apple cider, beer and wine from local wineries and breweries.

Jon Berman, pre-eminent saxophonist/guitarist and singer songwriter, entertained with his blend of folk, rock, blues, and jazz. Attendees were swaying and tapping their feet as the barn rafters began to shake. 🎷

A few of the organizers, from left, Ilona Packie, Kathy Adams, Principal Thomas Nadolny, Wendy Berman, Kenly Brozman, and Sherry DeCelle.



wm. brockman real estate

the berkshires

You should not list your home or land with us because we have sold 14 properties just in Sandisfield (or almost half of all sales) in the last two years, from \$70,500 to \$3,500,000. Or because we have the Top Selling Broker for 2013 in all of Berkshire County.

You should have us represent you because what we do "best" is custom-tailored every time, to every client, and every experience.

Achieving your goals is what we do best.

Your satisfaction is our only measure of success.

Visit berkshiresforsale.com and brockman.us (coming soon) to see our nearly 60 listings and to search for your new home!

- West St. 6.77 Acres with wide road frontage and two brooks. \$55,000
- Otis Wood Lands Premium Building Parcels \$150,000 to \$178,000
- 1850's farmhouse bordering Silver Brook. 3 bedrooms \$163,000
- 2 BR Contemporary - Private & affordable! Big screened porch! \$200,000
- 1 bedroom home a short stroll to West Lake & 1200 ac. State Forest Just \$125,000

Chapin Fish, Broker-Partner 413-258-4777



LUXURY & PRIVACY! Stunning 6 BR Colonial, Kitchen with Wolf Range, Subzero fridge, Great Room+stone fireplace; Full Home Automation. Amazing land & views! **\$1,750,000**

info@wmbrockman.com (413) 528-4859
berkshiresforsale.com

Dirt Under the Tires

Cont'd from p.1

Local historian and author Ron Bernard said of the most common thread of antiquity in town, "We have a love/hate relationship with dirt roads."

I lived at the end of a dirt road in Vermont, and I live at the end of one here. Dusty in summer, Dodd Road presents more of a challenge in March's mud than even the harshest winters. Before roads had talented regular maintainers, mud more than snow stranded farmers and slowed commerce. Mud season was a regular school vacation.

I wonder about the men who chose the route to Thomas Dodd's farm, and the sound of two-man saws and axes used to cut it more than two centuries ago. Today the unimproved narrow section beyond the farm is a one-lane antique – pressed by use to eight feet below its embankments.

It takes training and years of experience to correctly navigate through mud – stay out of the ruts and ride the high points – drive early on a cold morning to ride the ice. Slow down in the summer to quiet the dust. Of course, close the windows.

You have to be willing to be left stranded every now and then, and sacrifice an occasional hubcab, shock, or muffler to the quagmire or to a big stone heaved up by frost. Even the old section still gives up an occasional iron wagon wheel rim or metal harness buckle.

Sandisfield Highway Superintendent Steve Harasyko recalls that a couple



Men who know dirt roads.

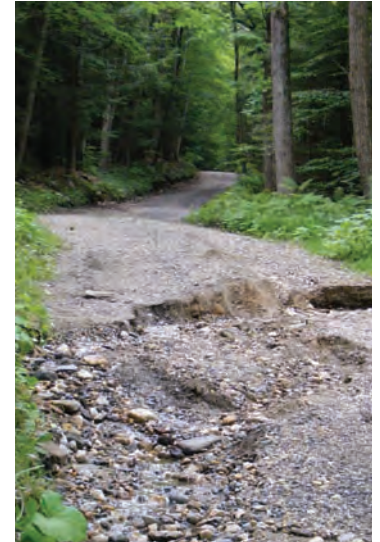
From left, Scott Worcester, Superintendent Steve Harasyko, Billy Perry, and Tim O'Neil. Missing is Dave McCuin; he was out for the day.

of years ago a man on Silverbrook Road called for a taxi car to deliver him to Bradley Airport. The first car, following GPS directions, got stuck in the mud. A second car was sent, and it too got stuck. The man missed his flight. Lessons learned – don't follow GPS instructions through the mire. And don't, Steve quips, put your head in the door and shut it just because your GPS says so.

Heavy rains this spring washed out Dodd Road a half dozen times. Just when it seemed it couldn't rain that hard again, it did. The last deluge dumped five inches of rain that quickly filled the trenches along either side, the force of



An August rain makes a river of Dodd Road.



On this steep portion of Hammertown, rain gets ahead of the crews.

water carrying four inch stones and carving back through gravel replaced three or four times just this year at \$10 per ton. New streambeds were left in the storm's wake.

Still, Steve reports that the roads are in good shape, and in keeping with a long-term plan for road repair. Selectman Patrick Barrett reports that improvements to dirt roads – short of paving them – makes them more stable against heavy downpours, plus it leaves money to rebuild other – earthen – roads.

Repairing washouts is still cheaper than pavement. Culverts are another story. Fixing all of the problem areas with culverts and bridges, Harasyko suggests, could bankrupt the town. Fixing what's broken also begs the question – what of the roads that have been more or less abandoned – like Sullivan Road – still on the books as a town right of way, accessible to developers but too costly to upgrade to even a good dirt road.

The preservation of unpaved roads, wrote the Berkshire Regional Planning Agency in 2001 in a report to the Commonwealth's Department of Environmental Protection, is important to the character of the landscape "offering a sense of timelessness, and a reminder of the days of cart paths and carriage roads."

How nice.

Aside from their value as a scenic and often historic resource, the Agency wrote, unpaved roads are a measure of Yankee thrift. They have low construction costs, save on speed limit signs, and should be considered a legitimate road surface option, not just a temporary solution until asphalt can be laid.

Except in March when the top few inches of dirt thaw and mix with water over underlying frozen ground. The resulting quagmire can swallow a small car up to its gills with no means of plowing it free.

Like a lot of things desirable about living out of bounds, it works today only if you aren't in a hurry. Even 25 years ago, Steve reminds, you just stayed home if the roads weren't passable.

It occurs to me every time a car comes flying to the top of the hill here, and either comes to a screeching halt in time to back up or lands in a ditch in the unimproved section that leads into Sandisfield State Forest, that the pace of life is related to the sacrifices for it.

The excuse when I fish them out with the tractor, near a graveyard of car parts, is usually that the GPS told them to go there. 🚗

The Pew Poll in Sandisfield: Resolved

By Val Coleman

Well, I finally got mobilized ... got to talk about some old housing grievances on a Saturday morning last month down in the café section of the Arts Center.

I bow to nobody when it comes to that wonderful building, a graceful old edifice that now permits almost anyone to do anything all the way from lovely to outrageous on a summer morning or an early winter night.

Just think about it ... plays and poems and songs ... Dickens and Dylan and Vincent Van Gogh, not to mention folk songs and idiotic jokes, old music and new music and the real reason I'm writing this ... the new upstairs.

It was like this ... a couple of years ago, somebody had what I thought was a crazy idea to take out the pews and open the upstairs floor, buy some comfortable chairs, make the exiled pews moveable, install a "lift", and gussy up the front and the lobby.

I had a fit and raised all kinds of hell. I thought I was honestly trying to protect the historic nature of the building. I was, ultimately, out-voted, and out-foxed and I'm here to tell you that they were right, and I was wrong.

The whole new set-up works like a charm. Did you see (and hear) the Grand Opera Night? There were tables and wine and delicious food brought up the lift and the stairs. To say nothing about the arias and the singers (one of whom was my kid, by the way). We even fitted the floodlights with amber gels and pointed them at the ceiling, creating a grand café while my historic pews rested quietly around the edges of the evening.

By the way, that Saturday morning talk that I made? I got lucky. The distinguished Columbia University planning genius Dr. Peter Marcuse was in the audience. Afterwards he talked some sense into some of us. He has an exciting world view, and I recommend his excellent blog at pmarcuse.wordpress.com.

Anyway, I love this town and all the sturm und drang of it. 



The Militia Returns

New Boston Inn, mid-August.

Today's version of the Lebanon Militia camped over a weekend in the backyard of the Inn, living in tents and cooking over open fires. The dozen or so participants provided anyone who stopped by with an experience from the late 1700s. Here, John Kuzmeh of Roosterville Road, dressed much like one of his own ancestors, stokes the early morning campfire.


Photo: Bill Price

Cultural Council Grants Available

Applications for 2015 Sandisfield Cultural Council Grants are available at the Town Hall Annex, the Sandisfield Post Office, and the Town Library. All applications should be post marked on or before Oct 15, and sent to:

Sandisfield Cultural Council, PO Box 84, Sandisfield, MA 01255

The next meeting of the Sandisfield Cultural council will be held on October 22. Location and time will be announced according to open meeting rules.


The Council is seeking new members to serve in various positions. The group, which meets about three times a year, is of great benefit to the town. Speak to any council member about volunteering (Connie Canty, Clare English, Peter Levine, Anina Carr, or John Skrip). For more information, call John, current chair, at 413-258-4788. 

New Coffee Shop in Town

Villa Mia has everything you need.

You don't have to go to Winsted or Barrington for wi-fi. You don't have to park by the library to poach off theirs.

You can have wi-fi AND get your espresso fix. You can relax with a cappuccino or a bowl of soup while catching up with a week's worth of email.

Drive to Villa Mia. Take your computer. Dia will provide the Villa Mia access code. Order a little something while your lap-top is firing up. Then get to work. They're open 11-9, Wednesday through Monday. 



1873 East Otis Road
East Otis, MA 01029

413.269.4309

**Bruce's
HARDWARE**



TOWN BUSINESS

Submitted by Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko

Edited by Bill Price

Detailed Select Board minutes and agendas for upcoming meetings are available at the Town website, www.sandisfield.info. Go to Meetings, then to Board of Selectmen. Minutes can also be reviewed at Town Hall during business hours.

Select Board minutes, June 23, 2014

Highway Superintendent Steve Harysko provided highway updates. Discussed culverts and grading and roadside mowing. Steve and Lisa will attend a Highway Superintendent meeting regarding Chapter 30B.

John Burrows in as Emergency Management Director, with Police Chief Michael Morrison, to discuss trading his emergency management van and the 1977 Oshkosh assigned to the police department for a used Ford Ranger pickup. The value is under \$5,000. Selectmen agreed, if legal to do so.

Anina Carr appointed to Strategic Planning Committee.

Discussed cemetery rules and regulations (see article, page 4).

Discussed Town Council for FY2015. Discussed keeping current town council in place and using Kopelman & Paige, a municipal law firm, for specialty issues. The selectmen will contact town council and discuss their concerns.

At 9:25 p.m. motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiation with the Town Administrator and to re-enter the regular meeting after to vote on the contract.

Meeting resumed, motion by Patrick, second by Jeff, to accept the 3-year contract for Lisa Blackmer as Town Administrator.

Select Board minutes, June 30, 2014

Steve presented highway updates. Grading on dirt roads and crack sealing on Route 57 and Route 183 are continuing. The cost for crack sealing is approximately \$10,000 per day. At end of the fiscal year, Steve said budgets in good shape.

Phil Granin, from Tolland, in to volunteer to write a Strap Grant for the town for the Tolland Road section of Route 57. He requires letters from town boards and authorities. Lisa will coordinate, Jeff the contact person. We need to be ready to proceed spring 2015.

Steve introduced Doug Plachinski from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, who with Steve is writing the bid to complete New Hartford Road. The selectmen agreed with his proceeding and thanked him for the support he provides the town.

There was a discussion that led back and forth between the Board of Assessors, the Selectmen, and the Finance Committee. Some of the discussion dealt with questions of state-regulated stumpage fees and whether they could be increased. The assessors and Selectmen said they could not; the committee wanted additional investigation.

The committee had asked the Selectmen to hire an independent appraiser to reassess the Kinder Morgan pipeline to increase the pipeline's taxes paid to the town. The assessors had agreed that it was not cost effective, because of the expense of the abatement process, for the town to attempt a higher assessed value to the

pipeline property, which is assessed now at \$7.5 million. Agawam had attempted to increase the value of the pipeline as it crossed the town; the result was a lower assessed value, costing the town significant back payment to Kinder Morgan and less future revenue. The committee felt the assessors should pursue additional opportunities for increasing taxes from Kinder Morgan. The assessors responded that they had reviewed all the options over the past two months and done due diligence on behalf of the town, but the committee disagreed. The town administrator and Select Board will negotiate with Kinder Morgan, if the pipeline expansion occurs, regarding benefits to the town, such as police, fire, road improvements, and the DPW.

A representative of a municipal law firm, Janet Pumphrey from Kopelman and Paige, presented an overview of the firm. Kopelman and Paige is a firm with over 40 specialized attorneys available 24 hours a day. They are doing significant work regarding the pipeline issue. They can help with legislation issues and offer free seminars for towns and updates on law changes. The selectmen will review and address at a later date.

Select Board minutes, July 7, 2014

At the request of Emergency Management Director John Burrows, Steve reported minimal damage from Storm Arthur of approximately \$3,000.

The Selectmen commended the work of the DPW over the past three years on the dirt roads. Jeff continues to work with Steve regarding the roadwork. Patrick commented that Steve presented a plan when he was hired to improve the dirt roads by concentrating on ditch work, culvert replacements, widening the roads, and a different gravel product. With all the rain we have had this summer it appears the plans are working. Most neighboring towns have had washouts and major damage.

Cont'd next page

GOT MUD ??

GIVE US A CALL...
WE CAN HELP !!

413-329-8083

LEE-WESTFIELD RD., EAST OTIS, MA

www.crushed-stone.com email: info@crushed-stone.com

f FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK f

Orchid Blossom Healing Arts

Lauren Paul, Dipl. Ac

413-258-4296

Acupuncture and Shiatsu

Town Business

Cont'd from previous page

The Board re-addressed a letter from the Finance Committee regarding revenue initiatives. One was a suggestion of a meals/luxury tax, which could be an article, along with a motel/hotel tax, at a future town meeting. Another item of the initiative letter regarded Chapter 61B forest lands tax classification. The Board responded that this is state law and cannot be superseded by municipalities. When asked why the Board had not addressed the questions to town counsel, Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer said that instead of paying counsel to research the answers they went straight to the state departments and boards for direct answers.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission has asked the town to appoint a representative from the town. Traditionally, the representative is a member of the Planning Board.

Kathy Jacobs updated the Selectmen on the progress of the Strategic Planning Committee which is in the process of doing a mailing to all households regarding their "Vision" meeting to be held July 23.

Select Board minutes, July 21, 2014

Steve provided highway department updates. Kathie Burrows commended the highway department for the great work done on New Hartford Rd. Steve thanked her and will pass this on to the crew. Patrick thanked them for their quick response in taking care of downed trees. Road-side mowing continues. Steve reviewed the timeline for New Hartford Road completion.

The Finance Committee had asked the Selectmen to look at seven suggestions for town government and the highway department. The Selectmen had referred the suggestions to the Board of Assessors for consideration and the assessors had answered some of the questions. The committee asked for a written reply from the Select Board by September.

The suggestions were: (1) status reports for town employees to provide oversight and governance; (2) Biometric time card machine at the town garage; (3) job descriptions for town employees; (4) DPW fleet management; (5) privatizing snow removal; (6) privatizing road-side mowing; and (7) privatizing the DPW.

In October the Times will publish a summary of the Finance Committee suggestions and the Board's response. In the meantime, detailed minutes are available at the town website,

www.sandisfield.info, or at Town Hall during business hours.

Discussed the need for a vote to support the town master plan being prepared by the Strategic Planning Committee. Motion by Rosario, second by Patrick, passed unanimously to support the work.

Re-appointed Richard Campetti to the Conservation Commission, and Kathie Burrows to the Historical Commission.

Select Board Agenda, August 11, 2014. Minutes not yet available.

Agenda included:

Public Hearing on the Special Permit application from Happy Banga (Akall Properties) for construction and operation of a fuel station and convenience store with accessory drive through food service. (See article on page 1.)

Discuss responses to the Finance Committees initiatives regarding the school and DPW

Review response to Out on a Limb column, Sandisfield Times.

Select Board Agenda, August 25, 2014. Minutes not yet available.

Agenda included:

Discuss and vote on recommendations from the Board of Health and Planning Board to hire Kim Spring and Andy Snyder as secretaries for the BOH and Planning Board.

Discuss and vote to file for Intervenor Status with FERC regarding the pipeline.

Update on the Town Hall Annex roof repair.



Quick Reminder: ServSafe Certification Offered

The Board of Health is conducting a certification/re-certification course and exam on September 22, Old Town Hall, 9 a.m. The course is open to anyone in the food service field required to hold a ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification. For details and cost, please call Kim Spring, 413-258-4450, or write kim.spring@ymail.com, or Margaret O'Clair, 413-258-4400.



TOWN LEADERSHIP QUESTIONED

Rita Kasky did a real good job with her Out on a Limb last month. I agree with it 100 percent.

Gene Riiska
South Sandisfield



VILLA MIA RESTAURANT & PIZZERIA

413-258-4236
90 S. Main Street, New Boston

Specializing in Italian food,
Seafood, Veal and Chicken
Pasta, Salads, Subs & Calzones
Sicilian & New York style pizzas

September Special:
Two large cheese pizzas
for only \$17.95.
Additional toppings -
\$1 each, per pizza.

•

Open Wed - Monday
11 a.m. to 9 p. m.

 Like us on Facebook.

A Local Student on the Aegean Sea

By Sophie Linscott



Sophie at the top of an ancient windmill on Paros.

I recently returned from an amazing three-month art program in Greece, made possible in part by the Bill Crofut Arts Fund here in Sandisfield.

I attended The Aegean Center for the Fine Arts on the little island of Paros, about 100 miles south of Athens. Paros is an incredibly beautiful place and looks like what you think of when you think of a Greek island: hillsides of white stucco buildings with blue trim and shutters, patios and balconies overflowing with geraniums, rocky cliffs surrounded by turquoise water.

The Aegean Center is a tiny not-for-profit art school in this magical setting. The Center's philosophy is that art is for everyone and that anyone can become a skilled artist with the proper instruction combined with lots of practice. As a life-long homeschooled, this approach fit perfectly with my own philosophy about learning.

With only about 23 students admitted each semester, the classes are small with lots of individual attention. The school has a classical approach to teaching visual arts, creative writing, and music: students learn and acquire skill by studying the great artists of the past and by working closely with teachers who are practicing artists themselves.

While at the Aegean Center I studied art history, printmaking, painting, figure drawing, and photography. We spent four days a week in classes with Fridays reserved for day-long hikes around the island. Each student shares with one other student a beautiful, light-filled studio space that

is accessible any time. Meals are not provided by the school because part of the philosophy is to encourage students to engage in the local environment as much as possible, so we usually had lunch and dinner in town at one of the many great restaurants or bought delicious locally grown produce from the market.

Absolutely everything about the school was inspiring: the incredible location, the teachers who are amazing working artists, the fellow students who came from all over the world with a wide variety of backgrounds, and both the ancient and contemporary Greek culture. My drawing and painting skills improved greatly, but now more than ever I see how much further I have to go.

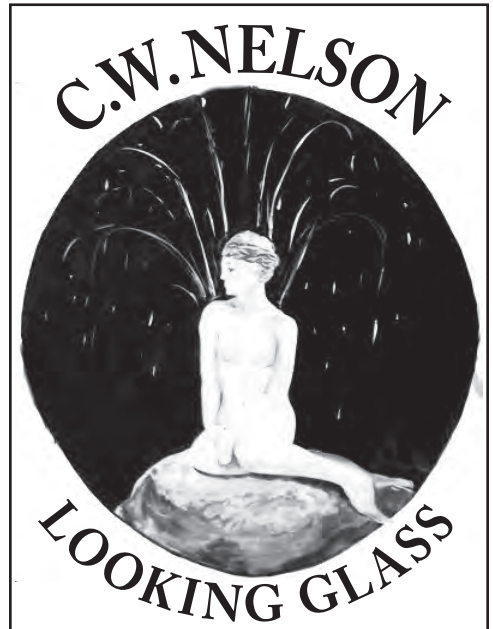
I learned so much while I was at the Aegean Center, about life as well as art that I'm still learning from my stay there and probably will be for years to come. Thank you again to the Bill Crofut Arts Fund for their part in helping make this dream possible. 🇬🇷

Sophie Linscott, 17, home-schooled since first grade, will graduate high school in 2015. She lives on Sandisfield Road.

You Can Apply

Sandisfield residents under the age of 18 interested in participating in an arts program can apply for financial assistance from the Bill Crofut Arts Fund. The Fund has helped young residents take part in more than fifty music, art, crafts, theater, camp, and dance programs. In addition, teachers, instructors, and organizations are encouraged to apply for expenses directly related to arts training for Sandisfield children. To apply, write to the Fund describing the program, activity, or item you are interested in, the cost, your background, and why you would like to participate. Applications for the school year must be received by September 15; requests for summer funding by June 1.

Mail applications or questions to: Bill Crofut Arts Fund, c/o Sandisfield Arts Center, PO Box 31, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or to soconnell@wesleyan.edu.



GARDENS

*A Full Service
Nursery and
Design Center*

Trees · Shrubs
Perennials · Mulch
Water Plants · Stone
Waterscaping
Site Development
Stone Work
Landscaping
Large Ponds

Our 30th Anniversary

www.lookingglassgardens.com

www.cwnelson.com

Mon-Sat 8am - 4pm

19 Dodd Road
Sandisfield, MA 01255
chuckwnelson@earthlink.net
(413) 258-3375

NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

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

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Art Exhibit Opening & Poetry Reading on Friday, September 5, Art Exhibit Opening from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.; Poetry Reading hosted by local poet Hilde Weisert at 8:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. (\$10 for Poetry Reading).

Wild & Woolly Animal Stories that Make Sandisfield Sandisfield on Saturday, September 6, at 10:00 a.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Moderators Barb Penn and Hilde Weisert and Sandisfield residents share their animal tales during September's Celebration of Animals.

Special Concert for Young People. Saturday, September 6, at 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Babar the Elephant, a recitation by Ben Luxon of the classic children's story accompanied by the Arron Ensemble, and Ferdinand the Bull, with music for the cello written and performed by Eliot Bailen. The Ensemble will perform music related to animals. (\$20; up to age 18, \$5)

Pet Parade & Magician on Sunday, September 7, at 2:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org for registration (\$5) and information. Spectators are free! Buy ice cream bars to support the Sandisfield Scholarship Fund.

State Primary on Tuesday, September 9, vote from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road.

The Sir William Trio: Animals in Poetry & Jazz on Saturday, September 20 at 8:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. This program juxtaposes the spoken word with live improvisational music using works that reference a wide variety of animals. (\$20)

Genealogy Assistance Class on Wednesday, September 24, at 6:30 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library. Free.

Turkey Roll on Friday, September 26, at 7:00 p.m. at the American Legion on South Main Street (Route 8) in Sandisfield. This is the Legion's annual fundraising event. If you cannot attend, buy a raffle ticket or make a donation! The funds raised will be used to repair the pavilion.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Folksinger Ben Grosscup performs a free concert for the community on Saturday, September 27, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Monterey United Church of Christ, 449 Main Street. For more information, call 269-0220.

Music & More! on Saturdays in September at 4:30 p.m. at the historic Meeting House on the Village Green in New Marlborough. For ticket information and event details call 413-229-2785 or visit www.newmarlborough.org. (For more details, see ad, p.4)

Photography exhibit. The photographs of Goffrey Coehlo, who is in charge of the Sandisfield Post Office, will be displayed at the Otis Library & Museum, Otis Town Square, during September and October. Call ahead for hours: 413-269-0109.

ONGOING EVENTS

Select Board: every Monday at 7 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

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

Planning Board, second Tuesday 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 Saturday of the month, 9:30 a.m., Sandisfield Library.

Strategic Planning Committee, second Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m., Fire Station #2 on Sandisfield Road.

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.

Historical Commission, third Wednesdays. Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 17, 7 p.m., Library.

JAZZ IN SANDISFIELD

SEPTEMBER 20 8 PM
ANIMALS IN POETRY & JAZZ



The Sir William Trio
\$20

OCTOBER 4 8 PM
EVENING OF AMERICAN JAZZ

with Kris & Jen Allen

(sax & piano)

& Henry Lugo

(bass)

\$20



SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER

5 Hammertown Road

tickets/info
sandisfieldartscenter.org

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

P.O. Box 584

Sandisfield, MA 01255

www.sandisfieldtimes.org

*We acknowledge with gratitude
donations from the following:*



Andrew and Tina McDowell

Myrna Rosenberg



The Sandisfield Times is a 501(c)(3) 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 Transfer Station, Post Office, the New Boston Inn, New Boston Crane & Sled, 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.

The Times can be mailed to your home by paid subscription (see form below left) or you can read it (free) online as a PDF document at www.sandisfieldtimes.org.

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

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

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

PO BOX 584, SANDISFIELD, MA 01255

Name _____

Address to where *The Times* should be delivered: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email address: _____

Phone (only used if paper is returned by USPS) _____

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