

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

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FERC Listens to Pipeline Concerns **“Rabies!” “Quarantine!” “Yikes!”**

By Robert Tarasuk

A BAD PLAN FOR SO MANY REASONS

By Times Reporters

FERC came to town to hear directly from the community about the pipeline expansion Tennessee Gas has asked to build across a piece of Sandisfield forest and wetlands.

At the so-called “scoping” meeting, FERC got an earful.

About 85 residents, neighbors, and interested parties – including environmental activists, officials from state agencies, and union representatives – gathered at the Arts Center October 29 to express or listen to concerns about the proposed 36-inch, 3.8 mile extension, called “The Connecticut Expansion.”

At the end of the meeting, FERC (the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) indicated they are in no rush to issue the hurried-up permit Tennessee Gas has requested.

A team from Tennessee Gas (a subsidiary of energy giant Kinder Morgan) was on hand to answer technical questions. Earlier in the day, the company escorted FERC members and affected landowners on a walk-through of sections of the right of way.

Twenty-seven of 30 speakers did their best in the three minutes allotted to each to express misgivings. The

Cont'd on p.3



“Kill your animals,” the state suggested. “No,” I said.

“Mr. and Mrs. Tarasuk. We have imposed a 6-month quarantine on your farm.”

These words were delivered to us in early November last year.

The reason? A skunk bit a pig. Both got sick and both tested positive for rabies.

The quarantine meant that no animals could be consumed nor could any animals leave our farm alive. Any that did would have to be destroyed, their heads cut off, and their brains tested for the deadly and awful disease of rabies. Any animal brought onto the farm would be quarantined.

Let me explain the nature of the disease, because one would think that you could simply kill an animal, send the head out to be tested and if it tests negative, then you're all set. Not so!

Rabies does not travel through the blood. It's a disease that moves through the body from cell to cell until it gets to the brain. At that point the animal will die in about four days. For instance, if a pig was bitten in the lower leg the process could take four months before the disease reaches

the brain. If the animal were bitten, say in the ear, it would take weeks or less before reaching the brain. Another misconception is that is that you are in danger if the animal has rabies. The animal is not a threat to people or other animals until the disease has reached the brain and the animal becomes symptomatic.

At the time the quarantine was imposed we had 35 pigs on the farm, about 30 sheep and lambs, and six cattle. All were quarantined, even though the sheep and cattle did not come in contact with the pigs.

Seventeen of the pigs were butcher-ready and slated to be on a trailer or slaughter that very week to be consumed by friends and family. The others were baby pigs recently born and slated for shipment to other farms – also that very week as raising pigs through the winter is too costly.

The Powers-That-Be of the State of Massachusetts did give us an option to lift the quarantine: Kill all the pigs, the sheep and lambs, and the cattle, and bury them in a mass grave.

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State Municipal Association Comes to Town

SMALL COMMUNITIES FACE BIG CHALLENGES

By Ron Bernard

We don't know how she managed it, but Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer persuaded the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) to hold its regional legislative update meeting at the Arts Center on October 10. It was the first time this important committee had visited Sandisfield.

meeting, said, "We have more deaths than births, and enrollment is down to only about 4,000 in a huge area of some 500 square miles." He believes that the number and locations of districts and superintendents in South County cannot be sustained.



MMA Legislative Director John Robertson addresses the gathering at the Arts Center.

Photo: Sandisfield Arts Center /Alice Boyd

The association acts as a powerful voice for towns. It is particularly helpful to small rural communities like Sandisfield whose problems are often overlooked by the Statehouse and government bureaucracy.

About thirty selectmen and town administrators and planners as well as two state representatives attended the session here last month. Most of them represented towns and cities in western Massachusetts but there were delegates from as far as the eastern shore. Besides Lisa, Sandisfield was represented by Treasurer Teresa DellaGustina, Rita Kasky (Finance Committee), and Jean Atwater-Williams (Technology Committee).

No one from the Sandisfield Select Board attended the meeting.

Participants were briefed by the MMA legislative staff on issues of importance to all towns including economic, environmental, and educational matters as well as the need for legislative relief and reforms.


Organizers reviewed a litany of critical issues facing towns, including most of those in Berkshire County. For example, the student enrollment trend here is unfavorable. State Representative Smitty Pignatelli, who was very active at the

I'm also concerned about that," he said to a round of hearty applause. Several participants echoed the point that high-speed internet is crucial to the economic future of all Berkshire towns.

Another example of needed reform concerns liquor licenses. Removal of the caps set by the State in favor of more local control could spur economic development, according to the MMA.

Other initiatives involve smoothing the distribution of funds to small towns through Chapters 70 (state aid to local schools) and 90 (roadway improvement). Roads throughout Berkshire County are a problem, said Rep. Pignatelli. "Many need rebuilding, not just repaving."

Administrator Blackmer, voicing a concern held by many in the room, used Sandisfield as an example of what some rural towns face. She explained, "Fifty-seven percent of Sandisfield land is now in some sort of tax abatement status and the State continues to gobble up land." This pattern creates an economic stranglehold as the burden to fund even basic services is spread over a shrinking property tax base. The MMA has seen that under existing revenue sharing formulas small communities are unable to compete for resources with large towns and cities and are therefore falling behind.

It's never been easy for the hill towns, especially in the last half-century as employment has declined. But today's socio-economic forces, perhaps made worse by outdated arbitrary government policies and formulas described at this meeting, threaten not only the quality of rural life but also the long-term viability of municipalities. It is hoped that our elected representatives and organizations like the MMA are successful in bringing the case for promoting vibrant small towns to the Legislature. Otherwise, a slow but relentless death spiral is a very real prospect for rural communities. There is no time to lose. 



The MMA

A nonprofit, nonpartisan body, the MMA provides advocacy, training, publications, research, and other services to the 351 municipalities in the state. It is the only statewide organization that brings municipal officials together to establish unified policies and advocates before the Legislature, the governor's office, regulatory bodies, and the courts. It was founded in 1961.

Schools are also facing possible expensive new unfunded state mandates. Owing to studies by the Legislature to prevent (gun) violence in schools, certain proposals, if voted in next year, may seriously impact town/school district budgets. Specifically, legislation may require schools to hire full-time on-site police, to install 2-way radio systems, and even to establish as yet undefined but certainly costly mental health programs.

The MMA will advocate for legislative reform and relief in the 2015 session and intends to be involved as early as possible in the post-election transition.

Monica Webb, chairman of Wired West, the municipal cooperative that is working to bring high-speed internet to all residences and businesses in underserved western Massachusetts towns, spoke of progress being made. Rep. Pignatelli applauded the group's efforts and said, "I have never seen an organization as effective as Wired West which has held together 43 towns in common purpose. They are on the right track and have my full support."

Referring to the Massachusetts Broad Band Institute (MBI), the agency officially tasked by the state to resolve the lack of broadband access here, Pignatelli expressed concern over the slow pace of progress and apparent inefficiencies. "The last thing we need is more layers of bureaucracy and

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Push Me-Pull You in the Sandisfield Hills

Dr. Doolittle invented the Push Me-Pull You, an animal with two heads at opposite ends of its body. When the animal walked, the heads tried to move in opposite directions.

Like the Push Me-Pull You, well-meaning people working with the same set of facts can arrive at opposite conclusions, as in the case concerning the Town's Finance Committee and the Select Board. Last month, the two reached an impasse over committee proposals to inject the town with a few "best practices" from the business world. (See page 6.)

The Select Board is still considering some of the committee's proposals, but rejected those that would impose a strict supervisory accounting for our highway employees. The proposals, though intended to lead the town into a more regulated and cost-effective future, seem at least to this editor more appropriate to a town the size of Pittsfield. For now, the five DPW employees of our spread-out hill-town are doing a damn good job.

– Bill Price
West New Boston

On Reading Mitchell's Odyssey

The promise of Aegean Seas,
A weeping canvas of the Gods,
Enriched, imprudent history
As poetry, unshod.

Bring me some ships
Before the winds
And bring me her lips
Before she sins.

At last I can swim in the wine dark sea
And watch the dactyls stream.
I can meet Penelope,
Unfasten Homer's dream.

Suddenly it's there to see,
The healing glance of poetry.

Val Coleman
Town Hill Road



FERC & PIPELINE CONCERNS

Cont'd from p.1

well-prepared presenters reminded FERC and the audience of the long list of environmental concerns.

A repeated theme was the critical need to protect Spectacle Pond, which lies in a section of conserved land under Massachusetts Constitutional Article 97. Select Board Chairman Patrick Barrett eloquently reminded FERC that in 2007 the Town agreed to forego full taxes on the 900 acres as a condition of permanent protection.

Several Beech Plain residents recounted the day in 1981 when blasting to make way for a second line ruptured the original 1952 line. They were told to evacuate immediately, in effect to run for their lives. Luckily there was no explosion – that time. A member of the original blasting crew rose to explain how that incident happened, which added even more drama.

Earlier this year Tennessee Gas was criticized for failing to acknowledge in its original filing with the State that blasting was likely. Called out on this, a revised plan was issued, confirming that significant blasting is likely, particularly in the Spectacle Pond segment.

One speaker presented a litany of serious accidents and incidents – including negligence – by Kinder Morgan operations over the years.

Others spoke passionately about the need to preserve the quality of life in town. A Richmond resident, a retired hospital CEO, warned that in the event of a serious incident, residents were at risk because the nearest major hospitals are an hour's drive away. Another speaker quoted an industry trade journal that gas pipelines have been identified as potential "soft targets" for terrorism. The company has not indicated any kind of a security plan.

Three proponents, members of local labor unions, told the panel and the audience that the project would create some badly needed construction jobs and that training was thorough and rigorous.

Tennessee Gas is counting on receiving FERC approval by next July so it can meet its November 2016 completion goal. FERC, however, indicated that they may deliberate for as much as 18 months.

Stay tuned.

Next up is a meeting by the Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board on Wednesday, November 5, 7 p.m., also at the Arts center. ♣

Is This Your Coin?

A coin was found at the Sandisfield Post Office that is old and with some dollar value. It appears to be someone's lucky coin or family keepsake. Call Frank Verderber at 413-858-5143, or email: fjverd333@gmail.com. ♣

Last Call at the Silverbrook

CONNIE CLOSSES THE CAFÉ, TOO

Last month the Times reported that Connie D'Andrea was closing the store portion of her Silverbrook Café' and Country Store to remodel into a café only. Connie has, instead, decided to close both. She writes:

"I want to thank The Sandisfield Times. You have all been here for support.

"But I have decided it is time to close. This decision has been carefully decided for my family, health, and happiness.

"The Silverbrook Café is closed...for the time being, and the property is for sale.

"I want to send sincere good wishes to all my customers, family, and friends for the good times, all the stories, and most of all the laughter. God Bless." ♣

Connie D'Andrea
Sandisfield

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NOVEMBER

November 15 4 PM

Readings by authors
**NELL LAKE and
KATHERINE BOUTON**

Nell Lake's *The Caregivers: A Support Group's Stories of Slow Loss, Courage, and Love* chronicles the members of a support group for people caring for aging family members with chronic illness.

Katherine Bouton's *Shouting Won't Help: Why I – and 50 Million Other Americans - Can't Hear You* explores the ramifications of mid-life hearing loss.

A book signing will follow. \$10



November 29 4 PM

"IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE"

A Radio Play

Herstory Theater presents this holiday classic by Joe Landry and directed by Virginia Wolf.

It will be performed in the style of old-time radio theater, including a Foley (sound effects) artist.

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

Two Big Jobs

STRATPLANNINGCOMM TAKES BIG BITES

By Bill Price

Moving ahead with simultaneous projects that could overwhelm most small-town committees, Sandisfield's Strategic Planning Committee is – cautiously – optimistic.

They are attempting to develop a town Master Plan while, with the other hand, they examine the needs for and potential replacement of town buildings.

Said Kathy Jacobs, committee co-chair: "We quickly understood that doing both projects at the same time with limited resources would be a challenge. Our current model is to partner with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and our Planning Board to complete the Master Plan, which will allow the committee to move forward with the Town Building Project."

In October the committee changed its meeting structure to help it not get lost in the details. A page for the committee was added to the town website. Ongoing content, meeting agendas, and minutes will be posted as time allows. Selectman Jeff Gray, a

member of the committee, has been able to attend only two meetings. The committee felt it would be very helpful for a Selectman to attend the meetings, possibly in an advisory position.

Kathy said: "A lot of information needs to be circulated and discussions held within the next year or so. These include discussions with the Select Board, Treasurer, Finance Committee, and the Planning Board."

Master Plan

According to the division of labor, the BRPC will be responsible for public meetings, communications to the community, and writing the final document. The committee will assist with documenting the current state of the town and monitoring progress.

"The Master Plan is under the aegis of the Planning Board," said Kathy, "and our committee will work with them to share tasks. I see our committee helping to set deadlines with the Planning Board and BRPC to ensure the Master Plan is developed and implemented. We need to stress to BRPC the importance of scheduling public meetings within the next few months to keep residents engaged."

At the meeting, comparisons with Master Plans for other towns were discussed. New Marlborough's 2009 plan, which was completed by BRPC, seemed most similar to Sandisfield's needs.

Town Building Project

"We're still many months from presenting proposals to the community," Kathy said. "We're working on tasks that can be completed and getting discussions started. We're setting up a meeting with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue to begin the discussion of financing."

Committee member Gordon Chapman has drawn a revised computer sketch of a Town Hall Complex to be used for discussions with the DOR of construction costs. The committee is considering ways to condense and consolidate the buildings. The committee also discussed the process of identifying possible building sites.

Committee members visited Colebrook to tour the town hall for comparison of needs and space. A tour of Granville's town hall will be arranged soon.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, November 19, 7 p.m., at Firehouse #2 on Rt. 57. All are welcome.

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RABIES QUARANTINE

Cont'd from p.1

This was the only option other than to try and raise these animals through the winter. As I've already said, it's very costly to raise animals through the winter. But we'd raised them, and we couldn't kill them.

And, well, I don't need to remind you of the winter we had last winter. It was a tough winter to feed and care for over 60 growing animals.

Then the rumors began to fly. One day two of my most friendly big pigs got free and were on the side of the road rolling over on their sides being scratched by a neighbor until he could reach me to get them back in the pen. In the meantime others passing by yelled at him, "Stay away from those pigs! They have rabies!"

Later, another passer-by stopped to tell me, "Bob, I heard all your animals died."

I won't bother to tell rumors that spread beyond that. I am sure you can imagine or maybe heard some yourself.

After four months of feeding these animals, I appealed to the state to lift the quarantine as no other instance of rabies had appeared. It was clear



Our cows and sheep shared the feeder, but during the winter it got crowded.



Frieboffer's Bakery in West Springfield donated bread to help us survive the quarantine. All our animals loved it.



Our cows, for the most part, were patient all winter.

that the disease had been destroyed when I killed the skunk and original pig.

The state official said, "You had your chance to destroy all your animals and you chose not to." And "There is nothing we can do."

I am sure you can visualize all these animals standing in mud up to their bellies when March came and the ground started to thaw. The barns inside and the paddocks outside were overcrowded with animals.

Thanks to a brilliant idea from a very close friend and the kindness of many people, we survived the quarantine and all animals were not destroyed and buried. My friend collected deposits from people for future pork. This money and donations from many other folks in the form of pig food and barn help saved our farm.

Rabies!! One of the most feared diseases on our planet. And I might add, feared for the right reasons.

We were not taking this lightly. Unfortunately the decisions were made from an official in Boston who never visited our farm to assess the situation. The sheep and cattle were unnecessarily quarantined.

Personally after living through this nightmare I still don't wish to kill every skunk, raccoon, fox, etc., that happens to come to the farm. But it does become understandable why so many people feel these animals should be destroyed without consideration as to whether they are sick or not.

Thank you everyone who helped us through this nightmare. Dr. Fred Mack, State Veterinarian from Pittsfield, was amazing in helping us through this. Kim Spring, our own Animal Control Officer, really rose to the occasion in helping us. And Dr. Jim Leahey from Lee, without whom we could not have made it through. We will always be grateful for his knowledge, patience, and availability to answer our questions. 🙏

Sincerely,

Bob and Sue
Snow Farm



*Photos:
Diego Ongaro*

Finance Kerfuffle

FINANCE COMMITTEE PROPOSES ... SELECT BOARD DISPOSES

By Bill Price

Last month, after serving five years on the Town's Finance Committee, Rita Kasky abruptly resigned from the committee over a grievance with the Board of Selectmen.

In her e-mailed letter of resignation to committee members, she wrote that she had hoped there would be more interest on the part of the Select Board to better manage town finances, beginning with "systems that would account for time, costs, etc., involving, as a first effort, the highway department."

Later she said to the Times that she was fed up "trying to convince the selectmen that the proposals the Finance Committee made to them at the beginning of the summer were not nonsense and deserved their serious and unbiased attention."

The pot simmers

The Finance Committee is an advisory body that seeks to save taxpayer money by finding ways the town can raise funds or reduce costs. Early in 2014 the committee submitted a list of initiatives to the Select Board that included increased meal/motel taxes, reclassification of Chapter 61b forest lands, an increase in the gas pipeline tax, reducing school costs, increasing timber revenue, and recommendations for managing town employees.

The Board replied that a few of the suggestions – such as school costs and forest lands – could not be addressed because of mandated state regulations. Other initiatives were forwarded to the Board of Assessors for cost analyses or researched by the selectmen and town administrator.

Five suggestions regarding the town highway department proved particularly contentious:

- Installation of a biometric time-card machine at the town garage
- A fleet management system to track where the highway department trucks were at any given time
- Privatizing snow removal
- Privatizing road-side mowing
- Privatizing the department itself.

At the July 21 Board meeting, Selectman Jeff Gray said some of these initiatives would cost the town even more. Rosario Messina pointed out that the suggestions regarding the highway department were subject to collective bargaining and a 3-year union contract had just been signed. Patrick Barrett said that he hoped the highway department was not demoralized by the

initiatives, adding that the department consisted of "a dedicated group of people who always respond to town emergencies."

When the Select Board didn't send a written reply to the initiatives, the Finance Committee renewed the highway department proposals at the August 11 meeting.

The selectmen, having conducted further cost analyses, repeated that some of the suggestions, if carried out, would cost the town more money than was currently being spent. They said that a GPS tracking system in each of the town's five trucks seemed excessive and unnecessary, as were biometric time cards for four highway employees. And the selectmen indicated they were not seriously considering privatizing snow removal, roadside mowing, or the highway department.

The pot boils over

Six weeks later, Finance Committee member Rita Kasky asked to be on the Select Board's October 20 agenda. She wanted to review and discuss funding for legal research by the town attorney for installation of a biometric time card machine for highway department employees.

During discussion, the Select Board said that the highway superintendent should be allowed to manage the employees. They repeated that a biometric time card – in effect, a thumbprint time clock – for four highway employees was unnecessary. They also did not want the town attorney to research, at town expense, a time-card machine.

Ms. Kasky then left the meeting and resigned from the Finance Committee.

About these issues, Select Board Chairman Patrick Barrett earlier wrote in The Times in October: "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."

For detailed Select Board minutes regarding these discussions, see Select Board minutes for July 7, July 21, August 11, and, when available, October 20 online at www.sandisfieldinfo.org or in person at Town Hall during business hours.

AN APPRECIATION FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

– Kathy Jacobs, Chairman

Rita Kasky recently submitted her resignation from the Finance Committee. Rita has been an active, valuable member of this committee since 2009. Speaking as the chairman, committee member, and Rita's friend, I'd like to say that her attendance at our monthly meetings will be greatly missed. The Finance Committee is one of those behind-the-scenes groups that generally is heard from once a year when the annual Town budget cycle is in full swing. However, our committee meets each month to review the expenditures and discuss ways the Town can increase revenue or "save a dime" here-or-there. Rita's vast experience in the corporate arena added a valuable perspective when addressing issues pertaining to the public sector. Thanks, Rita, for all your help these past years.

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Letter from the Selectmen

By Patrick Barrett

Late summer and early fall was an extremely busy time for our town government. Between the special permit hearing for Happy Banga's proposed gas station on Rt. 8 to dealings with Kinder Morgan's Connecticut Gas Line Expansion Project, town officials have been working hard on behalf of the citizens of Sandisfield. My thanks to our town boards and the staff at Town Hall for their hard work and dedication.

Sandisfield Highway Department member Tim O'Neil has resigned to take a similar position in his hometown of Otis. We thank Tim for his service to Sandisfield and wish him well in his new job. We have advertised this position, received some excellent applications, and may have a person by the time this publication goes to print. We expect to be able to introduce our new town employee in the next edition of The Sandisfield Times.

We would like to apologize to residents who use New Hartford Road for the delay in fixing one of Sandisfield's main thoroughfares. We believed the responsible thing was to hire Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to put together the bid specifications for finishing the road repair. When the BRPC took longer than expected to finish the plans and over the summer there was a spike in paving material costs, it became apparent that we would not have the funding necessary to finish the entire road this season. Kathy Stevens, our consultant with the Massachusetts Highway Department, recommended that we patch the road to the best of our ability and finish the job all at once next summer. She indicated that if we tried to do the job piecemeal the quality would be greatly compromised. We regret the delay, but under the circumstances it was more important to get this project done correctly than spending coming years wasting taxpayer money to repair a road that wasn't re-constructed properly.

Bill O'Brien resigned from his position on the Sandisfield Finance Committee. Bill spent many dedicated years working on behalf of the Town as a member of the Highway Department and on various town boards. We thank him for his service and wish him well in his future endeavors. Donna Newman has been appointed by Moderator John Skrip to take Bill's place. We thank Donna for her willingness to participate on this important committee.

Lisa Leavenworth resigned from the Sandisfield Recreation Committee after many years of service to the children of our community. Many thanks

to Lisa for a job well done. Bethany Perry and Teresa DellaGiustina have joined the Recreation Committee and we appreciate their willingness to help out.

Eric Pachulski was re-appointed to the Sandisfield Historical Commission. This committee has done a lot in the last couple of years; we look forward to the continued work by this active group.

We would like to thank Kathie Burrows, Barbara Cormier, John Kuzmech, and Ron Pachulski for joining the Cemetery Commission. This group will be working on a comprehensive review of needed repairs and possible rules and regulations. By forming this group we hope to put together long-term planning to ensure the preservation and proper maintenance for these special grounds. Our Board looks forward to supporting this group in the coming year.

Two volunteers deserve special mention. Gene Riiska takes care of the town monument at the corner of Route 57/New Hartford Road free of charge to the town. We appreciate his time. We would also like to thank Ralph Morrison for his work on the park across from the former New Boston Store. Over the summer and fall we've often seen picnickers using the tables and seating area and Ralph does a great job keeping the area in beautiful condition.

We hope everyone has a happy and healthy Thanksgiving. 🍂

A Christmas Carol

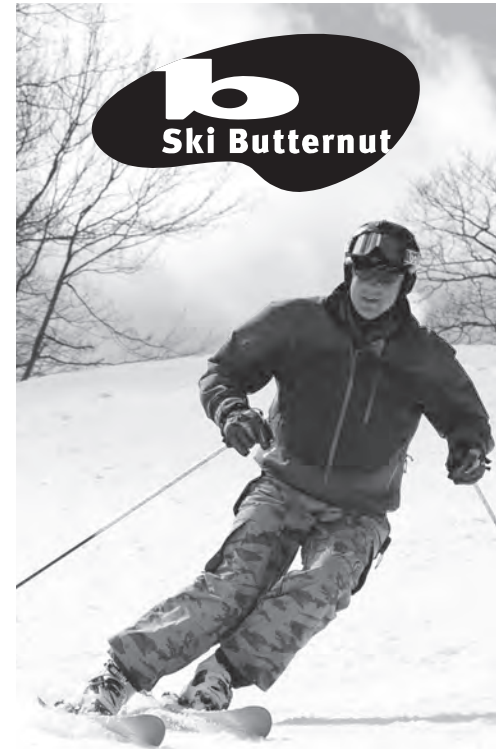
By Ben Luxon

Rehearsals are well underway for the production of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." We have assembled a wonderful cast.

The set has been built and is awaiting painting. Before too long we will be choosing costumes.

There will be three performances: December 12 and 13, Friday and Saturday, at 7 p.m. and December 14, Sunday, at 3 p.m. Tickets are available online at www.sandisfieldartscenter.org \$15 for adults, \$5 for under 12.

Book early – tickets will go fast! 🍂



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We Are All Caregivers


AUTHORS' TALKS TO BE INTIMATE AND PERSONAL

By Susie Crofut

Come spend an afternoon with two extraordinary authors. On Saturday, November 15, two accomplished writers, Nell Lake and Katherine Bouton, will talk about their recent books at the Sandisfield Arts Center at 4 p.m.

In *The Caregivers*, Nell Lake has written an insightful and compassionate account of a year in the company of caregivers. She writes about the people she came to know with empathy, insight, and an eye for detail. With more and more people spending their late years ill and frail and 43 million Americans caring for family members over age fifty, *The Caregivers* is an important chronicle of a widely shared experience and a public concern. The Boston Globe reported that Nell wrote about these people with "warmth and vividness" and that she has written "a book that bears witness to their 'necessary, intimate, private heroism.'" Nell grew up in Worthington and now lives in Northampton.

In *Shouting Won't Help: Why I – and 50 Million Other Americans – Can't Hear You*, Katherine Bouton writes about a widespread and widely misunderstood phenomenon – hearing loss. She gives a moving account of her own journey into deafness and reveals how deeply deafness and denial are linked. She explores the medical and environmental causes of deafness, technologies that help, and the experience of others, weaving their stories into her own. Her book is of tremendous interest to anyone suffering from some form of hearing loss. The New York Times wrote that "Bouton is one of the millions of people whose hearing began failing when she was much younger, and she masterfully depicts its effects on her personal and professional life." Katherine divides her time between homes in New Marlborough and New York City.

A book signing follows the discussions. Tickets, \$10, are available at the door or on-line at www.sandisfieldartscenter.org. 

"A Wonderful Life," on Radio Right Here

By Sandy Parisky


A professional theater company will perform a live radio-play with sound effects at the Sandisfield Arts Center, November 29 at 4 p.m. The program is part of SARc's "storytelling month."

The holiday classic "It's A Wonderful Life" will be performed in the style of old-time radio theater. Based on the popular 1946 film with James Stewart, the play was written by Joe Landry and directed by Virginia Wolf of the Connecticut-based Herstory Theater Company as a radio-style performance with breaks for old-fashioned commercials and jingles.

The Arts Center becomes Bedford Falls as George Bailey, Mary, Clarence the Angel, and




grumpy banker Mr. Potter tell the story of a man who gets to see what life would have been like if he had never been born.

The Herstory Theater cast and crew is from seven towns across Connecticut. The performance is 90 minutes with no intermission. Tickets are \$20 adults (\$15 under 12) and available on-line at www.sandisfieldartscenter.org. 

OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Colebrook, our neighboring town to the south, will celebrate the re-opening of its historic Colebrook Store. **Jodi Marinelli** of the Riverton Store has signed a lease with the Colebrook Preservation Society to run the store. Jodie, who has worked in food retail most of her career, plans for the store to open in December.



Our crusty former Town Treasurer, **Joe Riccio**, now lives in Mt. Dora, Florida, near his daughter Amy. To celebrate Joe's 90th birthday (on Halloween), Joe's four children – Amy, Joel, Suzanne, and David – engineered a surprise celebration. Many family members and friends attended, coming from near and far. Roberta Myers took this photo of Joe and his friend Liz Booth showing Joe's surprise on seeing his older brother, Frank, at the gathering. The Riccio family lived in Sandisfield for many years. 



Council on Aging

By Susan Galik

The seniors went to Foxwoods Casino and sat in on the traveling show of "The Price is Right." None of us were called to come on down ... but we had fun watching others go on down.

We will be having a Thanksgiving-themed flower arrangement class on November 24, Monday, 1-4 p.m. As we have learned, if you do the greenery properly after the holiday you can pull your orange flowers out and replace them with red and white for Christmas. Most arrangements will last for over a month. At least the greenery will. Charge for the class is \$5.

We only had 23 at the Flu Clinic in October. Blame me ... I had guests and seem to have sent the announcement out into ether space. Remember next year: we have a Flu Clinic in the early fall.

We will not have our December 10th meeting. Instead, we will be at Villa Mia having our annual Christmas dinner.

Remember, we are at the Town Hall basement every Wednesday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Potluck lunch at noon, followed by a game or two of Bingo. Bingo cards cost 25 cents for two cards.

We have a blood pressure clinic on the 4th Wednesday of each month, but not the month of November because of Thanksgiving. Nor will we be having a meeting the day before Thanksgiving. And we will have meetings the last two Wednesdays of December due to Christmas and New Year. In fact, we may not hold any meetings in December. Watch for a note in next month's Sandisfield Times.

But we'll see you at the Christmas Fair, December 6, at Firehouse #2, starting at 10 a.m. 🍷

Another Scam

You get a call from "Medicare" about a doctor coming to your house. They even give you a number to call back to verify. THIS IS NOT MEDICARE. It is a scam. They come to your house all right, but they try to sell you insurance. Don't bite for this scam. 🍷

The Next Generation Of Veterans Needs Us

Maria Domato: Commander, American Legion Post 456

Planning your tax deductible gift is vital.

We think a lot about the future of those we love.

We know we won't always be around to care for them, but we want to make sure they're taken care of after we're gone. It's the same for the American Legion. Every day we shape the future of our country. Our Americanism Programs teach children to respect our country and flag. Our education programs ensure the sacrifices of our veterans are not forgotten. Through our legislative advocacy, we refuse to let lawmakers ignore the needs of our veterans and military. We do a lot. Our mission is important. But mission outreach requires money.

We must ensure the American Legion's future is strong, because who we are and what we do truly does matter, and we will be needed more than ever after more than a decade of war.

Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in their bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same. ~ Ronald Reagan

Make your tax-deductible contribution check to "Pavilion Building Fund" and mail to: The Pavilion Building Fund, PO Box 88., Sandisfield, MA 01255. 🍷



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TOWN BUSINESS

Submitted by Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko

Edited by Mary Anne Grammer

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

Selectmen Board minutes, September 8, 2014

Present: Patrick Barrett, Jeffrey Gray, Lisa Blackmer, Steve Harasyko

Absent: Rosario Messina

Steve Harasyko, Road Superintendent, provided highway updates. Tryon and the town crew have replaced twelve culverts on New Hartford Road and are working on roadside drainage. They also worked on Silverbrook, Fox, and the town cemetery roads. Roadside mowing, pothole repair, line painting and grading continues on town roads.

Ann Wald and Gordon Chapman appointed to the Strategic Planning Committee.

Letter of resignation from Lisa Leavenworth from the Recreation Committee accepted and Bethany Perry and Teresa DellaGiustina appointed to the Recreation Committee. The Selectmen thanked Lisa, a wonderful advocate for our town's children.

A letter from Moderator John Skrip that Donna Newman has been appointed to the Finance Committee.

Lisa Blackmer reviewed the upcoming FERC Intervener Status regarding the pipeline issue. Patrick will make calls to Warren, Markey, Pignatelli, Neal, and Downing informing them of an upcoming meeting. All have been taken by surprise by how quickly the pipeline issue is moving forward. Patrick commented that he has asked for an extended comment period.

The status of Happy Banga's proposal was reviewed.

Creation of a cemetery committee was discussed. Among issues were: state regulations, maintenance, landscaping and painting of the fence at the Route 183 cemetery. Steve Harasyko stated that he has contacted a company to supply a quote for road repair at the Sandisfield Center Cemetery.

Ron Pachulski questioned why the dump exit gate was left open on Aug. 28 from 6:30 to 7:30 with no one in attendance. Other items discussed in

reference to the Transfer Station were: installation of a telephone land line, more lighting in the winter months, battery canisters and florescent bulbs. Steve Harasyko stated that he will contact Berkshire Engineering on the plans for the layout of the transfer station.

Updates were provided on the repairs to the men's room at the Town Hall Annex. Jeff responded that he continues to receive bids on the roof repair for the Town Hall Annex.

Selectmen Board minutes, September 15, 2014

Present: Patrick Barrett, Rosario Messina, Jeffrey Gray, Lisa Blackmer, Attorney Joel Bard, Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko

The original hearing, 8/11/14, on Happy Banga's proposal was reconvened. Items discussed were: increase in tank storage for gasoline/diesel fuels, lighting, the canopy over the gas tanks, landscaping, signage, hours of operation, idling trucks and setbacks. The special permit for the proposed gas station and convenience store was unanimously passed. For further information see The Sandisfield Times, October, page 3, also available online at www.SandisfieldTimes.org.

Regular Selectmen's meeting was called to order. Frank DeMarinis, representing Athena Nursing Homes, presented a plan to build a nursing/rehabilitation center on Sandisfield Road across from Fire Station #2. Athena Nursing Homes is a for-profit organization which could bring approximately 30 new jobs to town. Dolores prepared a packet for Athena including: town bylaws, special permit packet, building permit, and contact information for all boards and inspectors.

A letter prepared by Patrick being sent to gubernatorial candidates regarding the FERC meeting for the pipeline on October 29, Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center was reviewed and discussed.

Reviewed and signed Chapter 90 paperwork. Reviewed and signed the second half of the New Hartford Road Loan Bond.

September 22, no meeting. Selectmen attend other boards.

Agenda, September 29, 2014 (minutes not yet available)

Tax Classification hearing

Assessors in to discuss the town's website data base access

Discuss letter from the Planning board regarding access roads

Review request from the Sandisfield Taxpayers Opposing the Pipeline (S.T.O.P.)

Discuss annual business license fees and dump sticker fees

Vote on requests for appointments as follows:

Historical Commission – Eric Pachulski
Reappointment

Cemetery Committee – Kathie Burrows, Barbara Cormier, John Kuzmech, and Ron Pachulski

October 6, no meeting

No agenda items. Meeting cancelled.

Agenda, October 14, 2014 (minutes not yet available)

Snow Plow Bid Opening

Highway Department updates

Review and sign Chapter 90 paperwork

Review and sign warrant for November State Election

Vote to accept revoked All Alcohol Beverage License from the Silverbrook Café

Agenda, October 20, 2014 (minutes not yet available)

Tom Ryan, Service Forester for the Department of Conservation and Recreation, to discuss forest management of Yanner Park

Review and discuss funding for further legal research for a Biometric Time card machine

Review and sign decision for the special permit for Happy Banga Akaal Properties

Jean Atwater-Williams to review Cornerstone bills and service

Due to FERC meeting on Oct. 29, Board meeting cancelled. ♡

October 27, no meeting

Due to FERC meeting on Oct. 29, Board meeting cancelled. ♡



SUGGESTIONS NEEDED!

The Town Suggestion Box needs your constructive ideas. The Suggestion Box can be accessed through its email link: SandisfieldSuggestionBox@gmail.com.



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

– John Skrip



*Sandhill cranes in
Sandisfield
September, 2014*

*Photos:
Good Eye, Sandisfield resident*



Sandisfield Historical Society



By John Kuzmech

Next Speaker, Francis Deming, November 8

Our thanks to all our volunteers, donors, and visitors to the Apple Fest in early October. People enjoyed the cider from the antique Apple Press, and thanks again to the Riiskas for donating the apples. Our VP Marcia Ignace thanks especially Warren and Karleen Blass who donated cake, homemade jams, and several tag sale articles.

In our October meeting, guest speaker Hank Wingate of the Otis Historical Museum described what was going on regarding the history of our neighboring town. Diane Lynch also visited from the Otis Museum, and Hank introduced guest Tom Ragusa who discussed his own significant work on identifying the Sandisfield portion of the Knox Trail. In his talk, Hank mentioned that his family can be traced back to the Arabella, one of the 11 ships in the Winthrop Fleet that arrived at Wethersfield in the 1630s. Guests Francis Deming and John Burrows are also descendants of passengers on the Arabella.

Our next monthly speaker will be born storyteller Francis Deming. A true local character, Francis can often be found at his farm stand in Otis. His family ties run about as deep as you can get in this town. It will be hard to confine

his colorful and unique life stories to around an hour. Come hear Francis at our next meeting on November 8 at 11 a.m., at the Meeting House on the corner of Rt. 183/Sandy Brook Turnpike and South Sandisfield Road. This year we will combine our end-of-year Wine and Cheese party with Francis' speech, which should make it all the more lively. We will then have a potluck luncheon.

Looking ahead, our town's Christmas Fair will be December 6 from 10-3 at Firehouse # 2. If you would like to be a vendor, call Marcia at 413-258-2898, who is handling organization for the event. Tables are only \$15, and space is limited. We estimated 500 visitors last year. There will be food and crafts and Santa Claus. We are looking for donations that will make sought-after Christmas gifts for our raffle table.



Hank Wingate, curator of Otis historical records, displays a memorial to Otis war veterans.

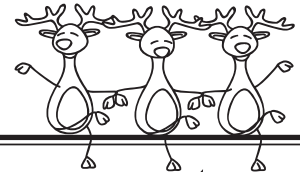
Photo: John Kuzmech

Last-Mile Broadband Outreach Meetings

WiredWest and the MBI have partnered to finally make broadband internet available to homes and businesses a reality, but the state has allocated only part of the funds required. Town participation will be essential. Come to a meeting in a neighboring town to hear more about how Sandisfield (or any town) can become a "Fiber Town."

Next closest upcoming meeting is Becket, November 18, Becket Town Hall, 557 Main Street (Route 8)

All meetings 6-8 pm. Pizza served. Please RSVP to info@WiredWest.net.



Sandisfield Historical Society Christmas Fair

Join in the Fun & Excitement

Sat. December 6

10am - 2pm

Vendor Set-up Time: 8 AM

Fire Station #2, Route 57

Santa Will Be There!

Tag Sale, Crafts
Bake Sale, 50/50 Raffle

Lunch Available

Fee of \$15 for a Spot



Info: Marcia 413 258-2898

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Sandisfield Home Lost to Fire




Sometimes a fire can be prevented. Sometimes not. Pictured here are the remains of a home in the Sandisfield portion of Otis Woodlands that burned in September.

The Sandisfield, Otis, and Becket Fire Departments responded, and the Monterey Fire Department provided back-up for Otis.

“Fire prevention needs to be all year, every day,” says Fire Chief Ralph Morrison. “Check your fire alarms. Make sure they have new batteries. Clean out storage cabinets. Get rid of things that could cause a fire. Have your electrical systems up-to-date. Prevent a fire. But if you have one, call 911 before you try to put the fire out. You’ll save minutes, and maybe your home.”

Photo: Bill Price



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Look both ways before taking the kids across the road.

Photo: Good Eye, Sandisfield resident



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Correction to Town Directory

Justice of the Peace/Notary Public

The only Sandisfield Justice of the Peace/Notary Public is John Skrip: 258-4788. Elaine O'Brien's commissions expired in September and she did not renew them.

The Clothing Drop

MIND YOUR MANNERS!

Thanks to all the people who put clean, usable clothing (in tied bags) in the St. Pauley Clothes Drop by the former American Legion Hall next to Firehouse #1.

To all the people who threw in loose, dirty items with holes and mouse nests and rusty hangers, and – worst of all – household garbage, “What the hell is wrong with you?”

Maria Domato, Commander
American Legion Post 456

HOUSE MANAGER WANTED

The Sandisfield Arts Center is seeking an individual to assume the role of "House Manager" for the 2015 season. The position includes working with volunteer Program Coordinators, managing reservations, tracking attendance, routine banking and handling facility rentals.

A stipend of \$5,000 will be provided.

For a job description and additional information please e-mail info@sandisfieldartscenter.org



By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

The library has a new email address: library@sandisfield.info

Genealogy Assistance Classes will begin again in April. Any requests call the Library, 258-4966.

NEW BOOKS:

- Love Without Limits/Nick Vujicic
- Ho-Ho -Homicide/Kaitlin Dunnett
- Revival/Stephen King
- Flesh & Blood /Patricia Cornwall
- The Job/Janet Evanovich
- Blue Labyrinth/Preston & Childs
- The Escape/David Baldacci
- Hope to Die/James Patterson



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NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

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



NOVEMBER EVENTS

Sunday Service on Sunday, November 2, at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Church.

State Election on Tuesday, November 4, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road.

Pipeline hearing, on Wednesday, November 5, 7 p.m., at Sandisfield Arts Center. Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board. To allow state board to hear from residents and elected officials.

Scholastic Book Fair on Wednesday, November 5, from 12:30 to 7:00 p.m. and Friday November 7, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., at the Farmington River Regional School on Route 8 in Otis. For more information, contact the Farmington River PTA at PTA@frrsd.org.

Birds of Prey Presentation with Tom Ricardi, Massachusetts Birds of Prey Rehabilitator, on Friday, November 7, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at Farmington River Regional School. The public is invited to this free presentation sponsored by the Otis Recreation Commission.

Family Fun Night on Friday, November 7, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., at the Farmington River Regional School. The Farmington River PTA will provide a complimentary dinner to the families of the school with a Mad Science show at 6:30 p.m. For more information, contact the Farmington River PTA at PTA@frrsd.org.

Sandisfield Historical Society Meeting/Wine & Cheese Party with Speaker Francis Deming on Saturday, November 8, at 11:00 a.m. Francis is a natural storyteller who will provide colorful and unique life stories of Otis and Sandisfield. A potluck luncheon will follow the presentation. The event will take place at the Meeting House on the corner of Route 183/Sandy Brook Turnpike and South Sandisfield Road.

Authors Nell Lake and Katherine Bouton on Saturday, November 15, at 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. In their new books, authors Lake and Bouton explore different facets of caregiving and loss. A book signing will follow. (\$10)

"It's a Wonderful Life" Radio Play on Saturday, November 29, at 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. A performance in the style of old-time radio theater including a Foley (sound effects) artist. \$10, tickets available at www.sandisfieldartscenter.org or at the door.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sandisfield Christmas Fair on December 6, 10:00 a.m. - 2 p.m., at Firehouse #2. If you would like to be a vendor, contact Marcia at 258-2898. Space is limited and the cost is \$15 per table to benefit the Sandisfield Historical Society.

A Christmas Carol, Dicken's Christmas classic performed by the Sandisfield Players. December 12 and 13, Friday and Saturday, at 7 p.m., December 14, Sunday, at 3 p.m. Sandisfield Arts Center. \$15 for adults, \$5 under 12. Tickets available online at www.sandisfieldartscenter.org.

NOVEMBER EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Last minute date: **A Walk Thru Gould Farm** on **November 1**, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Gould Farm Harvest Barn, Gould Road in Monterey. Chat with local woodland owners, foresters, land conservation professionals. Ask questions about forest, wildlife, and farm management. Picnic by the book. RSVP was to have been by October 29, but maybe exceptions can be made. Call Fletcher Clark, 413-262-2367 or fletcher.clark@state.ma.us.

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, third 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.; Thursday, 2-5 p.m., Saturday, 9 a.m.-12 noon. Phone: 258-4966.

Historical Commission: New venue and hours. First Wednesday, 7 p.m. at Fire House #2, Rt. 57. Next meeting, Nov. 5.



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