

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

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Plebis

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Volume V, Number 10

January/February 2015

Public Weighs In On Nursing Home Proposal

THIRD AND MAYBE FINAL MEETING, FEBRUARY 17

By Tom Christopher

A pair of public hearings have yielded lots of information about Athena Health Care System’s proposal to build a 62,000 square-foot nursing home facility on Sandisfield Road, but the Select Board is seeking still more before deciding whether to give a go-ahead to this project.

Proposed for a parcel of land directly across the road from Firehouse #2, this project offers considerable financial benefits to our community. The 84-bed facility would bring the equivalent of 80 full-time jobs to Sandisfield and Athena has committed to hiring locally to the degree possible. Construction is estimated to cost \$7.1 million and, according to Athena, the taxes paid by the facility would add \$90,000 annually to the town coffers.

However, neighbors of the proposed facility (there are 16 abutting parcels), expressed a number of concerns at public hearings held by the Select Board on December 1 and 29.

There were worries that the nursing home’s need for water (an estimated 12,600 gallons per day) could draw down the aquifer,

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In the film as in real life, Bob calms down by hitting golf balls out into the snow.

Photo: Diego Ongaro

Diego and the Movie

“BOB AND THE TREES” SELECTED BY SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

By Bill Price

Sandisfield may soon be featured in a movie playing at a theatre near you.

Remember “Bob and the Trees?” Many of us were at the Sandisfield Arts Center in 2010 when town resident Diego Ongaro presented his short film inspired by the life of local logger/farmer Bob Tarasuk. Some of us loved it. Others thought it too raw, that the swear words came too fast and furious.

Diego kept working with the film, rethinking it, reimagining it. “Once the short film was finished,” he said, “it felt like an appetizer, like it was part of a broader story.” He began to see it as a feature film. “I was hungry to tell more stories about Bob and more deeply explore the work of loggers in today’s economy.”

Last winter, Diego, the cast, and a small crew shot a new version – the feature film that was in Diego’s mind. As they worked in the snow and the woods during three of the coldest weeks of the Polar Vortex, the short film became a full-fledged drama.

Like the short version, the new film uses documentary storytelling tools to tell a narrative. “It’s a blend of cinema vérité and fiction,” Diego explained. “I tried to create a story fueled by real life rather than plot, where fiction can cohabit and actually be strengthened by reality. We shot the film from an outline, but the dialogue was almost entirely unscripted.”

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PUBLIC WEIGHS IN ON NURSING HOME PROPOSAL

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affecting nearby wells. Concerns about waste water disposal were also expressed. Engineers representing Athena responded that the state carefully regulates such withdrawals and that the facility would have to perform draw-down tests before a state permit to build would be granted; the wastewater disposal is also, according to Athena, carefully monitored by the state and plans for the septic field would also be carefully reviewed.

Fire Chief Ralph Morrison had expressed concerns at the December 1 meeting about the height of the proposed structure and whether or not the entrances would be kept locked, points that would affect the town's ability to supply fire protection.

In addition, Chief Morrison questioned the potential increased demand the new facility could place on the town ambulance and EMT service. Athena Health Care, which already operates the Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center, the 50-bed facility across Rt. 57 from the New Boston Inn, has been a significant user of this service, which is staffed by volunteers; increasing Athena's patient population by 168% could raise the number of calls for service to a level unsustainable by the present system.

At the December 19 meeting, however, Chief Morrison expressed satisfaction on these points. In particular, he cited the fact that Athena has committed to keeping an EMT on staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to help with emergency calls, not just from its own population but from that of the town in general. Characterizing this as a significant asset, Ralph spoke for his own department, the building inspector, and Emergency Management Director John Burrows in declaring that "We think it's going to be a great thing for the town."

Other issues touched upon was the security

of the facility (all doors except the front entrance will be locked and monitored by cameras), a potential increase in automobile traffic locally, and an increase in storm water run-off from the facility's impervious surfaces and its potential effect on adjacent wetlands. The Select Board has commissioned an independent evaluation of Athena's storm-water management plan by engineering firm Tighe & Bond, Inc. Pending the submission of that report, the Board declined to rule on Athena's request for a special permit, and has continued the public hearing to 7:00 P.M. on February 17.

In the meantime, Athena will meet with the Conservation Commission on January 20. Gathering information in this fashion is essential to this process: it will enable the Board of Selectmen to make the best decision about whether or not to green-light construction of this major facility and will help to ensure that if this project does go forward it will be an asset to the community.

Should the proposal be accepted by the Select Board, Athena still has to apply to the state and go through a similar proposal/application before they can go ahead.

PIPELINE UPDATE

We Asked, No Reply

Some of our readers have legitimately complained that The Times has not presented a more balanced picture regarding Kinder Morgan's proposal to widen its 4-mile right-of-way across the Beech Plain in northeastern Sandisfield.

In recent weeks we twice contacted the company offering space in our newspaper for KM to explain how the pipeline expansion would benefit Sandisfield. To date we have received neither acknowledgment nor reply.

WARRANT FOR A SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2015

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, BERKSHIRE, SS.

TO THE CONSTABLES OF THE TOWN OF SANDISFIELD

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify all the inhabitants of the Town of Sandisfield, qualified to vote in the town affairs to meet at the Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Rd., Sandisfield, MA at 7:00 p.m.

ARTICLE 1: To see if the Town will vote to transfer \$25,069 from the Insurance Money Town Garage Account to the Operation and Maintenance Expense Account.

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$20,000 or any other sum for the Machinery Maintenance Expense Account and to meet that appropriation transfer \$7,862.49 or any other sum from Machinery Earnings and \$12,137.51 or any other sum from Free Cash.

You are directed to serve this Warrant by posting true and attested copies thereof at three public places within the Town of Sandisfield fourteen days at least before the time of said Town Meeting. Hereto fail not and make due return of the Warrant with your doings thereon to the Town Clerk at or before time of holding said meeting.

TOWN OF SANDISFIELD OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK YEAR 2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 22, 2015, Rabies Clinic for cats and dogs 10:00 a.m. to Noon at Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Rd. Dog licensing for 2015 will also be available.
- March 25, 2015, Last day to obtain nomination papers.
- March 30, 2015, Last day to submit nomination papers.
- April 9, 2015, Town Caucus – Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Rd., 7:00 p.m.
- April 13, 2015, Last day to object or withdraw nomination papers.
- April 27, 2015, Last day to register to vote for the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Election. Registration will be at the Town Hall Annex from 2:00 to 4:00 and 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- May 16, 2015, Annual Town Meeting. Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Rd., 10:00 a.m.
- May 18, 2015, Annual Town Election. Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Rd., 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Help Count the Birds

By Margaret O'Clair



The Great Backyard Bird Count, sponsored by the Audubon Society and Cornell Lab of Ornithology, will take place this year in mid-February.

Despite the name, the count doesn't have to stay in the backyard. Laurie Green, Kim Spring, and I thought it might be fun, depending on the weather of course, to visit different locations to see what species we can find. The three of us will be going out around Sandisfield on February 13, 14, 15, and 16.

If you would like to join us on any or all of those days, give us a call. Laurie can be reached at the library, 258-4966, and I am at 258-4400.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Our thanks to our many donors. In the long list on page 19 we hope we've included names of all who responded to our year-end appeal as well as those who donated through 2014. We also thank our loyal advertisers and hope we're doing them some good.

Our small but growing staff includes reporters and editors, proofers and distributors who generously donate their skill and time. But it takes money to hire the professionals who design and print our paper, and our website needs to be paid, too. So, as we said last year, thanks again to our many donors for keeping us going.

We'd like to introduce two new reporters.

Tom Christopher, who writes this month on both the Athena nursing home proposal and the idea of harvesting the ash trees in Yanner Park, is a former columnist for House & Garden and contributing editor to Martha Stewart Living. He has published occasional articles in The New York Times. His local memoir about the 2004-5 construction of his family's timber-frame home on Sears Road appeared in our September 2012 issue.

Since November, Bogart Muller has taken on the serious task of attending and reporting on Select

Board meetings. His reports are intended to keep readers up-to-date and do not replace the official minutes prepared by our Town Clerk, which are available at Town Hall and online at www.sandisfield.info.

After attending his first few board meetings, Bogart said that he found it interesting "how a very small handful of people can operate in such an efficient manner" and that despite every-day obligations "they still seem to put 100 percent into the needs of the town." Also, Bogart writes this month about the work of the town's new cemetery committee (page 8).

The coming year will be important for Sandisfield. An election will be held in May to choose two of our three Select Board members. Two new businesses are proposing to locate in town. The Strategic Planning Committee is proceeding with plans for new town buildings and asks for your help (page 5). Voters will decide at the Town Meeting if Sandisfield will be served by high-speed internet (also page 5).

Facing the town, perhaps more clearly and directly than in the past, are questions of how to step into the future while holding onto the best of what we have. How do we decide what is the best we have? Can we guide what comes to us or do we take what comes?

Bill Price, West New Boston

Nomination Papers and Offices Up for Election

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK

We are preparing for the upcoming Town Meeting and Election in May.

Nomination papers will be available the week of Jan. 12, 2015. To run for an elected position you must be a registered voter in Sandisfield. Only the candidate wishing to run can request nomination papers.

When collecting signatures please make sure the signatures are legible. If signatures are creative and illegible, please have the voter print their name next to their signature. An unrecognizable signature will not be counted. Addresses must include house number and street name. Unacceptable are addresses listing only PO boxes and route numbers.

Registered voters will be receiving the 2015 Calendar of Events which will have all deadlines and list of offices up for election.

The Annual Street Census forms are being mailed out. Please review all the information

and list all persons living in your household. If someone has moved away and is a registered voter, provide their address and phone number. I cannot remove them from the household without their permission.

Any questions call me at 258-4711. Thank you Dolores Harasyko, Town Clerk

OFFICES UP FOR ELECTION THIS YEAR:

Office	Term	Currently held by
Moderator	1 yr	John Skrip
Selectman	1 yr	Vacancy
Selectman	3 yrs	Patrick Barrett
Auditor	1 yr	Bethany Perry
Board of Assessors	3 yrs	Kathie Burrows
School Committee	3 yrs	Sandra Snyder
Board of Health	3 yrs	Margaret O'Clair
Planning Board	5 yrs	Thomas Jacobs



Falling in Love

I tumbled like a middleweight
 After a right cross, bless me oh Lord.
 But the feeling was warm ... just below the eyes.
 I could see her in a sweet orange blouse
 On that winter morning.

Falling in love, grave as it may be,
 Needs cheering,
 Needs thousands cheering,
 Needs an orchestra of words,
 The terrifying score of a harpsichord.

And then, the setting done,
 The sun, sierra in the western sky,
 I finally can counterpunch, embrace
 My perfect, angry butterfly.

Val Coleman
 Town Hill Road

Selectman Messina Resigns BOARD TO CONTINUE WITH TWO, AGAIN

By Bill Price

Selectman Rosario Messina has resigned from the Town's three-person Select Board.

In a letter directed the Board, Rosario wrote that he resigned effective January 8, 2015. He added, "It's been a pleasure and honor serving on the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Sandisfield and working with Mr. Patrick Barrett and Mr. Jeff Gray."

The letter was read aloud at the January 12 Select Board meeting by Chair Patrick Barrett, who made a motion to accept. Selectman Jeff Gray seconded the motion.

There was no discussion of the reasons behind Rosario's decision. What may have played a part was that Rosario had experienced difficulty attending Board meetings due to his night-time hours as a Stockbridge policeman. He was elected to the Board May 2013.

Patrick said on behalf of the Board he would like to thank Rosario "for his service to the Town of Sandisfield. We wish him well in all future endeavors."

Asked how the Board could conduct its business with only two Selectmen, the Board reminded residents of its response two years ago following the resignation of Selectman Richard Campetti. The two Selectmen left standing at the time, who happened then also to be Patrick and Jeff, continued their responsibilities from October 2012 until the election in May 2013 with the blessings of town counsel and the advice of other towns that had faced similar situations. If necessary, the Board can invoke "the rule of necessity," which allows the town to function without a majority vote on the Board.

Jeff said, "Pat and I agree on most everything, and we don't anticipate any outstanding issues based on upcoming agendas."

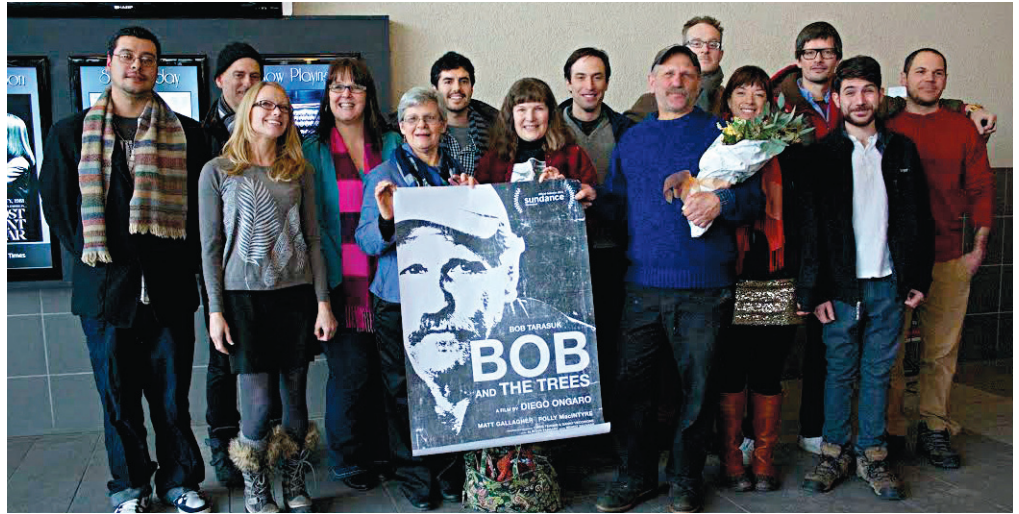
DIEGO AND THE MOVIE

Cont'd from p.1



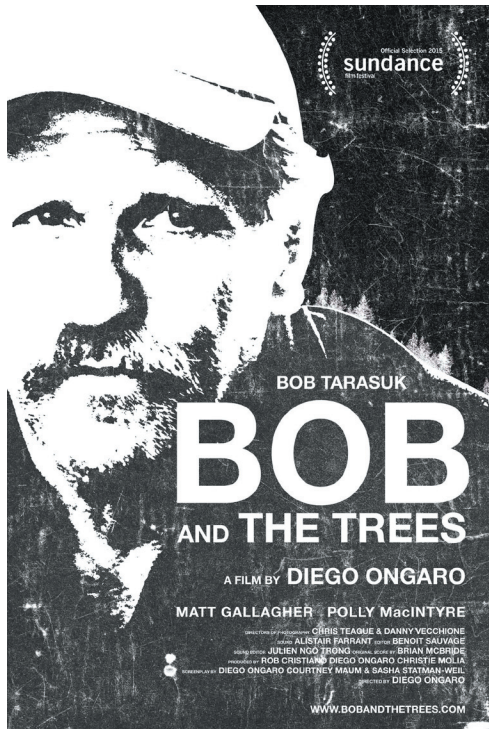
Diego Ongaro of Sandisfield and Paris.

Post-production took place between Sandisfield and Diego's hometown of Paris where he worked with his production team to cut, shape, and finish the film. In September, he submitted a work-in-progress version to the Sundance Film Festival,



A private screening for the local cast and crew and a few friends was held at the Triplex Theater in Great Barrington in early January.

Photo: Rob Cristiano



The Sundance poster.

arguably the most prestigious film festival in the United States.


Of more than 12,000 films submitted, "Bob and the Trees" was one of the handful accepted to premiere during the January festival in Park City, Utah.

Still titled "Bob and the Trees" and still starring local logger/farmer Bob Tarasuk, the new film was one of ten accepted in the Next category, a group of independent films considered by Sundance as "riskier, lower-budget dramas."

As described by the Sundance program, the film's plotline reads: "Bob, a 50-year-old logger in rural Massachusetts with a soft spot for golf and gangsta rap, is struggling to make ends meet in a changed economy. When his beloved cow is wounded and a job goes awry, Bob begins to heed the instincts of his ever-darkening self."

In the next few months, Diego will learn if his 90-minute film will be selected to be shown in other festivals or if it will even find distribution.

Diego and Bob are not the only Sandisfield locals who contributed to the film. Diego's

wife, novelist Courtney Maum, was a co-writer. Former Sandisfield resident, Matt Gallagher, who worked the woods for many years with Bob, plays a feature role. Matt and his wife, Emily, Bob's daughter, currently live on the New Hampshire seacoast where he works as a craft beer brewer for Smuttynose Brewing Company. The four filmmakers – Diego, Bob, Matt, and Courtney – will be at Sundance for the premiere. 

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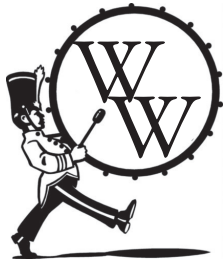
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Wired West Broadband Update

By Jean Atwater-Williams

After three years of extensive planning, a state-of-the-art fiber-optic internet will soon be a reality for homes and businesses in western Massachusetts.

WiredWest and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute are now undertaking the building of just such a network. The state will contribute \$40 million to the roughly \$100 million project.

The question for Sandisfield is “Will we take advantage of this unique opportunity?” It is, to be sure, a costly and complicated project and will take several years to complete.


But this is the single best hope for the economic future of our town. It will create the kind of infrastructure our town needs in order to attract new residents, home-based and small businesses – growth our town desperately needs to expand its tax base and spread the costs of running our town over a larger number of taxpayers, reducing the burden on the existing ones. Overall construction costs will be reduced by

40 percent because of the state contribution. The project will allow residents to pay less for telephone, TV, and internet while providing far superior service over what is currently available.

But, it is a one-time opportunity.

For Sandisfield to qualify as a “Fiber Town” and be included in the network, three things must happen. The first has already been accomplished: in December the Select Board signed a resolution in support of the project.

The second step requires that 40 percent of the town’s households sign up for service.

The third step is that, at town meeting, voters must approve a borrowing authorization that will guarantee the town’s portion of the funding. Voting on the third step will be at the Annual Town Meeting on May 16. If any one of these three things fail to happen, the town will lose this opportunity, putting Sandisfield at a disadvantage for years to come. 

A LETTER TO THE TOWN Call for Ideas

The Strategic Planning Committee is asking for your input regarding the possibility of building a new Town Hall complex.

The realization that we need to build a new complex is based on the information provided in the building evaluations done last year by Bryarly Consulting. This complex will probably include all administrative offices, Council on Aging, and space for all town committees and boards.

We know that this new complex will help the town grow and support all of us into the future. Our group has been to other neighboring towns to gather information to see what works for them and what they would improve in their town buildings.

We are planning several informational meetings over the next several months. Please look for updates in The Sandisfield Times with dates, location, and times of these meetings


We are looking for your ideas about where in Sandisfield a new Town Hall complex should be located. We anticipate a minimum of ten acres of

land will be needed. The final decision will be up to all of us in town so please post your ideas, questions, or suggestions to Sandisfieldsuggestionbox@gmail.com. And, if you can, please attend our public meetings on the third Wednesday of every month at Firehouse #2 on Rt. 57.

We look forward to your ideas. We need your input for this project to be a success.

Kathy Jacobs and Ralph Morrison
Co-chairs, Strategic Planning Committee 

Number of Notaries Public Doubles

Residents often need forms or signatures notarized. John Skrip (258-4788), Sandisfield’s Town Moderator, is a justice of the peace and notary public who can perform that service. Also, Joanne Olson (258-4465), an attorney in Staten Island, New York City, is a notary public licensed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth. She is often at her Sandisfield home on weekends (2 Tolland Road) and is willing to serve residents as a notary. 

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Innovative, Resourceful and a Holiday Smash!

by Barbara Penn

All photos: Ali Uzpurvis

Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," directed by Benjamin Luxon was performed by the Sandisfield Players at The Sandisfield Arts Center on December 12, 13, and 14, 2014.

How do you take a story that's very familiar to most audiences and make it feel brand new?



If it's Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," you get Ben Luxon with Val Coleman to adapt it, and the Sandisfield Players to put it on. The performance by the Players in mid-December was their fourth production and the most ambitious to date. And it worked like a holiday charm.

Directed by Ben Luxon and performed by our own community theater, this staging was innovative, resourceful, and magically imbued with new life.

One of the innovations was how the numerous scene-changes were managed on a stage that's challenging for its lack of depth. The ingenious solution was a grand floor-to-ceiling black curtain (sewn by Jean Atwater-Williams) strung across the stage, with Susie Crofut drawing the curtain to open and close the scenes (or "staves" as Dickens called them), making a literal fade to black!

The sets, constructed by Ben and some of the players (everyone in

this troupe does double or triple duty), worked beautifully. Marley and Scrooge's office was perfect down to the oil lamp by the front door, as was the schoolroom, the Cratchit house, and Scrooge's bedroom. All were sketched with only a few key strokes and yet completely believable.

Val Coleman as Charles Dickens simply IS Dickens, from his clothes to his assured narration which weaves the telling of the story into its coming to life on stage. Val was perfect and, should he want it, could carve a new career reading Dickens for audio CDs.

All of the 20-plus players were quite good, but a few need to be singled out. As Scrooge, Ben Luxon was simply brilliant, with every emotion, facial expression, body movement, and tone of voice about as close to perfect as any actor could achieve. His direction and adaptation equalled the brilliance of his acting.



Evers Whyte as Bob Cratchit; Reid Sinclair as Scrooge's nephew Fred; and Charles Fidler as Jacob Marley give performances that one could see in the big city – professional and believable. Tina Sotis gave an interesting modern interpretation as the Ghost of Christmas Past. Jean Atwater-Williams made a marvelous Ghost of Christmas Present, gliding smoothly over the stage in a long green robe (her own creation), sweeping us into the magic of this Christmas present.

However, in this reviewer's opinion, Mary Anne Grammer stole the show. She took a character role, the Laundress, and elevated it to star quality. Her performance was delivered beautifully – perfect accent, posture, facial expression, intonation – everything. It was another



performance that could easily qualify for off-Broadway, or maybe even on.

The children were terrific (Haven Westcott, Lotus Cohen, Julian Lassar, Pia Whyte, Chloe Whyte, Keller Westcott). They were believable and natural. Tiny Tim (Gabriel Lassar) was indeed perfect for the part. And a proud note – all the children in the play were children of cast members. Community theatre at its best!

The players were helped along by four superb musicians: flutist Rosemary Snyder and fiddlers Joe Baker, Charles Fiddler, and John Funchion.

Lighting by Abbie Lombard and sound by Jerry Herman were non-obtrusive and supported the illusion that we were in 19th-century England. The London skyline,

a sweeping panorama extending across the top of the stage, was created by the talented Susie Crofut and was more than worth the price of admission (which, by the way, was priced affordably for families). We hope there'll be more plays set in London so that this wonderful backdrop can be seen again! 🇬🇧



Cemetery Spring Clean-Up Planned

COMMITTEE SAYS "LET'S GET TO WORK"

By Bogart Muller

The newly formed Town Cemetery Committee will begin the work of restoring the town's burial grounds with a volunteer effort next spring at the West New Boston Cemetery on Route 57.

The committee has been comparing regulations used by surrounding towns in order to present possible rules and guidelines to the Select Board for our currently unregulated cemeteries. The committee is examining how best to maintain the upkeep of these areas so they don't become even more overgrown with shrubs and trees, some of which were planted decades ago.

The main concern now is that a few older trees are either falling down or threatening to. And years ago people planted forsythia and evergreens to pay homage to their loved ones and then failed to manage the plants. Some families moved away or died off themselves. Some just forgot about the aging plant life that by now can be invading the plot next door. Root systems have in some cases penetrated the base of the headstone causing it to buckle and fall.

What to do?

First, the committee asks that residents take a walk through our cemeteries or just look from the road. You will see damage caused by time and neglect. Sure, the lawn looks nice but what about the stones with the trees grown around them to an extent that the names are illegible. Or the stone totally hidden by brush. That's the kind of thing they are talking about.

How can you help?


The committee has some ideas in the works. One idea is an all-volunteer day this spring at the West New Boston Cemetery next to Carr Field. John Fields has offered to remove a

huge pine that needs to go, as well as some other trees in the area. Smaller bushes and overgrown shrubs can easily be tackled by a pair of loppers and gloves and a little muscle. Other issues include cutting back existing foliage to expose the stone, removing invasive species of trees and bushes, and resetting headstones that have fallen over.

This won't be an easy task, but with the help of a small army of townspeople outfitted with proper tools, a willingness to help, and some coffee, the committee believes we can certainly make the West New Boston Cemetery regain its dignity.

Any questions please contact Chairperson Kathie Burrows, Secretary Barbara Cormier, or committee members Vicky Bakunis, John Kuzmecz, and Ron Pachulski, or advisors Ben Campetti, Cemetery Commissioner, and Lisa Blackmer, Town Administrator. And help the committee with your ideas and opinions. Watch for further updates in the Times.

Veteran's Markers

Kathie is also working with the Historical Commission to place markers in honor of veterans of America's early wars buried in our cemeteries. The proposal was approved at the Annual Town Meeting last May. Kathie is compiling a comprehensive survey from a wide variety of sources of several hundred native sons who served in the Revolutionary War, The War of 1812, and the Civil War. So far she has confirmed that 33 early-wars veterans rest at West New Boston and 24 at Center Cemetery. Research is also underway for World War I veterans buried in Sandisfield. For more information contact Kathie 258-4943; email kkburrows@verizon.net. 

Arts Center Asks for Your Help

PLANNING WORKSHOPS FOR 2015 AND 2016


By Linda Mironti

The Arts Center wants to develop a series of workshops that are intended to serve the community, inspire friends and neighbors to attend, and provide an opportunity for ideas and for workshop leadership.

At their December meeting, the Center's Programming Committee began the process of selecting the mix of workshops music, theater, lectures, and book readings that will be included in the 2015-16 seasons.

If you have an idea for a workshop, would like to conduct one or know someone who would, please let me know. Six workshop ideas being considered so far are:

- Cooking series
- Organic land care management
- Planting – what to plant, when, where
- Woodworking
- Wellness and pain relief
- Yoga and personal development

This is your Arts Center. Please send ideas to lindamiro@mac.com soon, and if possible before the committee meets again on January 24. Join the conversation. We look forward to hearing from you. 



THE SANDISFIELD LIBRARY

By Laurie Foulke-Green, Librarian

New Books:

- March Home: Union Veterans and Their Unending Civil War/Brian Jordon Matthew
- The Color of Courage/Julian Kulski
- Eyes Only/Fern Michaels
- Trust No One/Jayne Ann Krentz
- The Assassination Option/W.E.B. Griffin
- Insatiable Appetites/Stuart Woods
- Raven Heights Manor/Sharol Louise
- Winter at the Door/Sarah Graves
- Descent/Tim Johnson
- Private Vegas/James Patterson
- Burn No.7/ James Patterson
- Saint Odd/Dean Koontz
- A String of Beads/Thomas Perry
- The Third Target/Joel Rosenberg
- White Plague/James Abel
- All the Presidents Menus/Julie Hyzy
- Twisted Threads/Yea Wait
- Broken Bonds/Karen Harper

Council on Aging

By Susan Galik

Well, the holidays are over. And hopefully everyone had an enjoyable and safe time. The seniors finished out the year in style. Twenty-one of us gathered at the Vila Mia for a wonderful Christmas dinner. The pie was to die for. Thank you, Villa Mia ... for a fantastic meal.

The floral class had 11 people attending this year ... and it looks like word is spreading. Look for us to have another class soon.

Do keep watch for Spring when we'll have more classes and meetings. We will arrange for an Elder Lawyer to visit again and update everyone on the latest laws regarding your retirement and estate. A quilting class will be held again, this time for answering questions about how to ... whatever.

And we may host another Candidate Introduction session prior to the Town elections to let us all know who we are voting for and why.

We are looking for people to teach classes. Can you knit? Sew? Crochet? Do you have a craft that you would care to share? Computer lessons? Exercise?

We need the following ... Baskets ... our raffle this year netted us over \$500. It was won by Wicky Spring. We also need Birthday Cards, Thank You cards, Get Well cards, and Sympathy Cards. All those freebies that you probably throw away ... throw them toward us.

Remember, we have drivers available on Tuesdays to take you wherever you need to go. Please call Linda Riiska, 258-4816.

As always, your blood pressure can be checked by a nurse ... 4th Wed of every month. We meet at noon for a potluck lunch and then play Bingo at 25 cents for two cards. ♡



Christmas Service, The New Boston Congregational Church

The musical portion of the traditional Christmas Service at the New Boston Congregational Church, Sunday, December 21, was led by musicians from Montgomery and Southwick in Massachusetts and from Bristol, Connecticut. The group included, from left, Scott Darling, Jeanne Tinker, Dale Rogers, Mary Darling, and Bob Liberty. Far right is Reverend Toby Quirk, with guitar. Following the services, the congregation was invited to a lunch at the New Boston Inn, which was reported to be "very enjoyable."



FIRE AND EMT CALLS NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014

NOVEMBER FIRE CALLS

Power line down/hazardous conditions 8
Assist EMS 1
False alarms 2

AMBULANCE CALLS

EMS Medical 4
Motor vehicle accident 2

DECEMBER FIRE CALLS

Power line down/hazardous conditions 1
Chimney fire 1
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historia (Greek) - "inquiry, knowledge acquired by investigation" The discovery, collection, organization, and presentation of information about past events.

Historia

Ceremony Memorializes Victims of 1934 CCC Accident

"YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN"

By Ron Bernard

December 16, 2014 was a cold, raw, and dreary day. Fresh snow blanketed the ground and roads were slippery. Bone-chilling fog reduced visibility. The kind of day when sensible New Englanders stay indoors and think about warm things.

Nevertheless, on that day an intrepid little group ignored the weather and gathered at the main entrance to Sandisfield State Forest off Rt. 183 just west of the Sandisfield town line. They were there to commemorate the 80th anniversary of a tragic, almost forgotten event as well as the legacy of the remarkable Depression-era public works project called the Civilian Conservation Corps.

We can imagine that conditions were similar on the early Sunday morning, December 16, 1934, when 16 young recruits in uniform from CCC 196th Company, Camp S-71, at Sandisfield State Forest piled into the open bed of a dump truck and headed out with two other trucks for Great Barrington to attend the 8 a.m. Mass at St. Peter's Church.

They didn't make it.

The official report blamed steering mechanism failure as the truck picked its way down precarious Three Mile Hill, a steep section of Rt. 23 near Ski Butternut. There it skidded on an icy patch and slammed into concrete barriers, careening wildly, finally stopping 540 feet away. Driver William Pillar, 20, survived but was very shaken. He was initially blamed for careless



driving but later exonerated.

Five of his passengers – Benoit Helie, Elden Holland, Francis Kippenberger, James Lavey, Ralph Penta – were killed.

All were 18 or 19 years old and mostly from the Boston area. They died at the scene or the next day at Fairview Hospital. Five other boys were badly injured. The site of the accident was described by the Berkshire Evening Eagle as resembling a battlefield with "the dead, dying and critically injured scattered about." The priest from St. Peter's administered last rites on the spot.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was established in 1933 by the Roosevelt administration as an ambitious national public works and employment project. Single men aged 17 to 28 were recruited for 6-month stints to improve and

preserve natural resources on state and federal lands. Under the auspices of the US Army, the CCC was active until America's entry into WWII. In the Berkshires there were 14 camps including two companies in Sandisfield – the 109th at Otis State Forest (1923) at the Spectacle Ponds and the 196th (Camp S-71) at Sandisfield State Forest (1922) which straddles the town line with New Marlborough.

At its peak the CCC engaged up to 300,000 men in about 1,100 camps around the country under both civilian (engineers) and regular military supervisors. Pay was \$30 per month of which \$25 had to be sent home to their families. At first recruits lived in tents and were given surplus WWI uniforms. According to a 1979 interview with former 196th member John Dow, "we got three square meals a day (and) we were kept off the streets."

Boys became men in the CCC, acquiring practical skills and learning about team work and the Army way of life. It proved to be valuable experience for them and a strategic advantage for the country because most CCC men enlisted in the Services at the outbreak of WWII.

The 109th set out to construct a concrete dam at Upper Spectacle Pond while the 196th built a 700-ft. earth dam to expand York Lake to about 40-acres. Work included reforestation, conservation, constructing campgrounds, trails, bridges, roads, and fire and flood control. This was dangerous axe-and-shovel hard labor.

Eighty years later, the work of the CCC is still easy to see at both locations. We might take our marvelous local state forests and parks and their beautiful ponds and natural environment for granted. Wasn't all this always here? No, it was not. The jewels of these forests were constructed by and are the legacy of the CCC.



Members of the 196th load gravel for construction of the dam at York Lake, c. 1934. (David Kinne / Bernie Drew Collection)



CCC 109th Company photo, December 4, 1933. Note the WWI uniforms and the "camp dog," far left, first row. (Otis Town Hall/Hank Wingate)

The 1934 accident was reportedly the worst on-duty mishap in the history of the Corps and might be the worst accident of its kind in Berkshire County. But it is not surprising that the event has faded from collective memory. Eighty years is a long time. The victims were not local boys. The story is upsetting. So events get forgotten.

Except by one man.

Kevin Titus of Canaan, Connecticut, a career veteran of both the US Navy and US Army, has for many years been interested in American military history, including the role of the CCC. He is currently president the DEOA Historical Association, a national organization established in 1984, which is best known for historical re-enactments.



The truck, after the accident. This image has not been seen since 1934. (Massachusetts DCR archives / Kevin Titus)

an opportunity for our generation to pay respects to these poor guys. And I hope we can keep their memory alive from now on."

"My grandfather used to tell stories about the CCC," Kevin told me, "and the more I looked into that period, the more fascinated I became.

In fact, as a child I heard about the Great Barrington crash, and it stuck in my mind. It was horrible. As the 80th anniversary approached, I saw

Titus reminded the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, the caretakers of state forests, of the anniversary. Together, they organized the December ceremony at York Lake which was attended by DCR employees, members of the DEOA, friends, and a number of local residents.

The monument at the Rt. 183 entrance to Sandisfield State Forest is well-maintained by the DCR. It consists of a large circle of boulders surrounding a flagpole and a weathered stone carved with the names of the accident victims. Now barely legible, the monument was placed by the Corps in June 1935. The circular entrance is all that is left of the 196th barracks which were located there.

At the ceremony, Kevin recounted the circumstances of the accident, adding, "It is a privilege to know of these people who served in the CCC who also served their country." After the circa 1930s American flag was lowered and Taps sounded, Titus suggested that these young men who essentially served the United States as soldiers deserve the same respect as fallen military heroes. He reminded the small group of the CCC maxim, "The Seeds of Victory in World War II were planted by the personnel of the CCC."

But there is more to the story.

It turns out that these unfortunate lads have not been totally forgotten after all. As the ceremony ended I noticed a fresh wreath propped against a stanchion and inquired about it. DCR Sandisfield State Forest Supervisor, Bernie Gogowski said, "I've been here for six years and every Memorial Day when I open the grounds for the season there is a wreath like this one right here. I have no idea who brings it, but I would love to know."

We may never learn who the thoughtful anonymous donor of the yearly wreath is. But that's all right. The five lost boys know.



At the ceremony, left to right: Michael Esposito; John Caron; Kevin Titus, Alec Gilliman, DCR, at flagpole (Ron Bernard)

If you have recollections, stories, scrapbooks, or memorabilia of any kind related to the CCC, especially about the camps in this region, or if you are interested in supporting future CCC memorials, please contact Kevin Titus, PO Box 421, Falls Village, CT 06031. Tel: (860) 453-4219 or cell (469) 735 9501. Email: Kevincrashtitus@yahoo.com.

All Boards Meet

DISCUSSIONS OF HOW MUCH TO SPEND AND WHERE, WHEN

By Times Reporters

At the All Boards meeting on December 22, Town officials polled department heads and the commissions and standing committees for their outlook for the remainder of this budget year and for FY 2016. Traditionally this meeting also affords a chance for early warnings about possible significant events or issues which could impact town finances. Several dozen residents attended, including most committee and department heads.

The apparent conclusion: in the short-term (balance of this year and FY 2016) the Town should squeak by, assuming no surprises. After that, without growth, we may face financial crisis. Most departments indicated they will be "level funded" next year. The Board of Health was the only government body in town to REDUCE its anticipated budget.

According to a planning schedule provided at the meeting, the latest estimate of costs for this current fiscal year is \$3,178,796, up 4.7% from the original plan. The increase is mostly due to increases in several Highway Department accounts.

For FY 2016, which begins July 1, all boards are required to submit their budget requests to the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee no later than January 29.

John Skrip of the School Committee reported that while talks are underway with the school administration there appear to be difficulties providing firm estimates, normally in hand by now. Skrip, a former teacher, said that the Town may face another 4% increase in the school salary account which is unreasonable, he feels, since salaries are already generous. John added that the committee is aiming to hold salary increases to about 2% but that the union is resisting. A major area of concern again this year concerns health insurance for the staff. "We are paying 85% of the premium and that should not be continued," John said.

Another factor that is pressuring the budget is an expected 4% increase in the tuition charged by Berkshire Hills. With enrollment steadily declining across the County, the Town may have more bargaining leverage.

Kathie Burrows, representing the new Cemetery Committee, said that recent site visits to the two main cemeteries, West New Boston and the

Center, was dismaying and "sad." She described the West New Boston cemetery, the focal point of the Town's Memorial Day ceremony, as being "in deplorable condition." The committee will offer suggestions for improvement, but as yet had no cost estimates.

Kathy Jacobs reported that Strategic Planning Committee has a pretty good idea about requirements and parameters for a new municipal complex. She added that the committee is considering the possibility of new highway department facility on the current site in order to save costs.

Speaking as Chairman of the Finance Committee, Jacobs recounted Sandisfield's predicament. "About two-thirds of our land is tax-reduced or exempt," she said. "There is virtually no commercial base, little growth, and we have a relatively high amount of roads to maintain." Since costs invariably rise, the increase has to be absorbed by the same few property owners. She warned, "The situation is bad. Without growth in the tax base we will soon be at the cliff, a financial crisis."

The Finance Committee announced that in FY 2016 it will not endorse requests for any spending increase except those contractually mandated. It will encourage cuts and more efficient management. A discussion about this and the need for growth ensued.


Jean Atwater-Williams, Technology Committee, made a compelling case for building a high speed (fiber optic) network town-wide as soon as possible. A crucial decision point is coming soon at the Annual Town Meeting when voters will decide whether to approve a borrowing authorization up to \$2.2 million. Then, assuming the warrant passes, in order for the network to be installed at least 40 percent of homes and businesses have to commit to taking the service, which would include high-speed internet, custom-menu options for streaming television, and educational features not currently available. The program could, in fact, pay for itself and possibly generate income as it would be owned and operated by the municipal cooperative, WiredWest, of which Sandisfield is a member.

"If we lose this opportunity," Jean said, "there will be no chance to attract new businesses, including home-based ones. Prospective home buyers have plenty of options and many, especially on the high end, will look elsewhere, leaving the same small - or shrinking - tax base to fund the ever increasing cost of operating the town. This network is the single best hope for growth for this town."

There was a motion made to adopt a non-binding resolution to help move this project along. It was passed by Select Board members present, Patrick Barrett and Jeff Gray. 🇺🇸

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Yanner Park to Bloom Again?

DOOMED TREES REVIVE HOPE

By Tom Christopher

After several years in limbo, Yanner Park is experiencing a flicker of renewed life. Indeed, the stage could be set for finally completing a version of the original dream of a public recreation ground and gathering place for town residents.

The ray of hope came with a proposal at the Select Board meeting on November 10. Tom Ryan, a Massachusetts state forester and a former town resident, proposed that the town apply for grant money available from the state to fund a forest management plan for the 257-acre parcel that the Yanner family donated as the site for a memorial park. Included in any such plan would be recommendations for selective harvesting of timber.

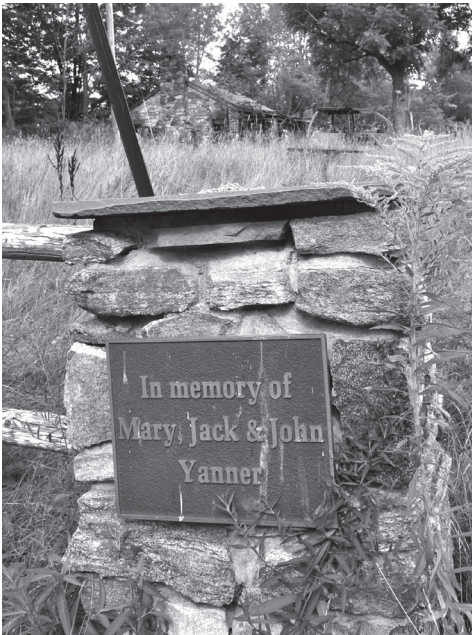


Photo: Setsuko Winchester

In the course of an inspection of the property, Ryan found considerable stands of saleable red oak and white ash. The white ash, in particular, has what Ryan calls “an expiration date,” because if not harvested it will almost certainly fall prey to the Emerald Ash Borer currently sweeping through Berkshire County, killing all species of ash trees.

The income from such a cut could be significant: a forest assessment commissioned by the town Recreation Committee in 2002 found, at prices current at that time, \$20,000 worth of saleable timber on the property. The condition of the forest and the market has changed somewhat over the last 12 years (hence the need for a new management plan), and Ryan suspects that the original estimate was conservative. In

addition to the financial benefit of a cut, he also suggests that the logging roads the cut would create could serve as the basis for a recreational trail system.

The former treasurer of the Friends of Yanner Park, a non-profit formed to raise money and promote development of the park, Liana Toscaninni, noted that the timber income, combined with the \$12,000 already raised by that organization, could bring the amount of available funds close to the \$40,000 she estimates would be necessary to realize a simplified version of the original plan for a baseball field, picnic area, and butterfly garden.

Such a use of the income from any timber sale is, however, by no means a sure thing. Select Board member Patrick Barrett says that the board seems united in its desire to have any timber income spent in this fashion – “That would be our hope.” He pointed out, though, that the money from a timber sale would come under the category of “free cash” and would be transferred automatically to the town’s General Fund. The select board may advocate for dedicating money earned from a Yanner property timber harvest to the completion of Yanner Park, but actually doing so would require a vote to that effect by the town residents.

Robbin Campetti, who served as founding president of the Friends of Yanner Park and one of the project’s most enthusiastic advocates, says that, for her, the fundamental issue is one of children and families. For Sandisfield children to have fun outside the home, at this point a parent’s only option is to take them out of town, to Winsted or Great Barrington. Even for a baseball game, they have to go to Monterey to find a field.

Robbin remembers when Sandisfield was full of events and activities: volleyball games, fishing parties, turkey shoots, even block parties with dancing in Roosterville. Such events not only nurture families, she said, they help build community spirit and bring neighbors together, but they need a public place, a facility, where they can take place.

A few years back, when Friends of Yanner Park was still active in soliciting support from townspeople, Robbin Campetti notes, there was opposition to developing the park from residents who worried about the expense. However, if the town were to use the timber harvest income for this purpose, there would be no out-of-pocket expense for the community. The result might not measure up to the Friends’ most ambitious dreams for this park, but as Robbin says, “Anything is better than nothing I just want something for Sandisfield.”

Meet Amy Carriveau at the Post Office



Just before Christmas, our post office operations were assumed by Postal Clerk Amy Carriveau. With this appointment the realignment of service hours and personnel is complete. Local officials are still considering the possibility of extending available hours for the inside lobby boxes.

Amy said, “I’m thrilled to be here and for many years to come. Sandisfield was my first choice but there was no guarantee. Already people are coming in to introduce themselves. It is a very friendly town.”

We agree and are delighted that our service is secure and stable. We welcome Amy. We liked Geoffrey Coelho, who superbly filled in as interim postal clerk since August, and we wish him well.

A resident of East Otis, Amy joined the USPS last year and received basic training at the Springfield Center followed by a number of months gaining experience at the Otis post office. Prior to this Amy had been an early education teacher in the Springfield area.

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**LETTERS
TO THE
EDITOR**

Thank You for the Help

I want to say thank you to all the First Responders of the Sandisfield Fire Dept. who came to my aid on the night of November 18th. I had a nasty fall and had broken four ribs and everyone was so helpful. You have jobs and families, and I appreciate you coming out on a cold dark night to help me. Again, thank you very much.

Peter Rock
38 Stump Rd.

No Sanding, Except on Sunday

On December 3 our dirt road was icy. I talked with one of the DPW employees that day about the road. He said NO dirt roads were sanded, only paved roads. Don't they think people on dirt roads have to get to work? Sunday December 7, at 11:45 a.m., a sander went by, hardly any ice and at time and a half or double time. Does this make any sense? Maybe if we had people that know how to take care of the roads in Sandisfield the town would not be in this mess. Let's try and stay in budget this winter not like last year, and that would include overtime ONLY if needed!

Holly Rines
Viets Road

Dear Sandisfielders,

In 1971, Ronny Myers brought me to Sandisfield where we resurrected one another and bravely decided to create a family of nine. We moved here in 1975 and put down deep roots.

What a treasure these many years have been as we all worked together to make and keep Sandisfield the town we love so much.

When we lost Ronny in 2012, I saw that moving was the rational and responsible thing to do but I was flattened. I had lost him, I would lose our wonderful Cold Spring Farm, the treasured place where our children grew up, and I would have to leave Sandisfield, where I have lived longer than any place I have ever lived or will ever live. Ronny believed in me and helped me grow stronger, so I

knew I could do it, but once more I thought my personal life was written in the past tense, To my surprise and delight, I see that I get to carry you all in my heart just as I keep Ronny there. In blustery winter you can visit me and I'll take you to the world's best aquarium, and we will walk on the beach.

And besides, I'll be back to see you. And when I return, I will bring a friend, someone who has shown me that, just as Ronny predicted, life for me includes a future tense after all. Kahill Gibran said, "A life without love is like a tree without blossoms or fruit."

I still glory in my lovely and loving send-off hosted by the Goldsmiths. I miss you all but am doing quite well in Monterey, California.

Fondest regards,

Roberta Myers
331 Monroe Street
Monterey CA 93940

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Honor for the Clam River Trail

By John Muir

Outdoor Life magazine honored the BNRC for its work on the Clam River Trail with its Open Country Awards in December. The magazine selected only three other locations for its 2014 awards: Idaho, Nebraska, and Michigan.

The Berkshire Natural Resources Council's work to conserve land and keep it open to the public for recreation drew the magazine's attention to Sandisfield. In 2012, BNRC and its supporters conserved a 55-acre tract that completed a two-mile, 548-acre linear greenway along the Clam, all of which is open to the public.

Last year, with volunteers from the town, the BNRC started work on a 2.5 mile trail through the reserve. (See "Walking Through the Woods," Sandisfield Times, September 2014). Further work on the trail will be supported by an Open Country grant, as well as an Indiegogo campaign launched by Outdoor Life. The trail traverses massive boulder fields, mature forests, 150-year old cellar holes and millworks, and a cascading river. It benefits people who come to the Berkshires for the beauty of the place, as well as residents who live "just up the road."

"Our supporters care about scenery and farms and clean water and wildlife," said Tad Ames, BNRC president, "and they want to be sure that future generations have the chance to get out to feel and smell and hear the outdoors with the same excitement we've enjoyed."

Sandisfield is described on the Indiegogo website as "one of the smaller towns in the Berkshires. Despite hosting tanneries, mills, a logging operation, and even Merino Sheep farms the area's landscape has remained relatively untouched. It's an ideal spot for nature lovers to enjoy."



Christmas Crafts Fair, at the Fire House

All available tables were subscribed by vendors at the Christmas Crafts Fair that again ushered in the holiday season. For the past 17 consecutive years the Fair has been sponsored by the Sandisfield Historical Society.



Above, Santa greeted youngsters and passed out presents. In Santa's day job, he uses John Kuzmech as a pseudonym. Left, the Silly Hat Contest resulted in a 3-way tie between Barry Freedman, Ron Bernard, and Norton Fletcher.

Photos: Jean Atwater-Williams

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TOWN BUSINESS

Reported by Bogart Muller

Edited by Bill Price

Select Board summaries are intended to keep readers up-to-date regarding the ongoing work of the board and do not replace official minutes prepared by Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko. Official minutes are available at Town Hall and online at www.sandisfield.info.

Select Board, December 1, 2014

Present were Selectmen Patrick Barrett, Jeff Gray, Rosario Messina. Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer. Town Counsel represented by Jon Silverstein.

The agenda was a hearing for the Athena Health Care proposal to build a nursing home facility on Rt. 57. Results of this meeting and a subsequent meeting held December 29 are included in the report beginning on page 1 of this issue of The Times.

The meeting at Old Town Hall was attended by about 30 people, including representatives from Athena and abutters of the proposed facility. One concern voiced at the meeting was "Why Sandisfield?" The response from Athena was that the state dictates geographically where care facilities such as this can to be built, considering capacity, median age, population, and long-term applicability. None of the abutters were happy with the response and asked that the proposers of the plan hire appraisers and assessors to determine property values. A concern was voiced about increased taxes due to property being worth more or value decreasing due to commercial zoning.

Select Board, December 8.

Cancelled due to lack of quorum

Select Board, December 15

Present were Selectmen Patrick Barrett and Jeff Gray. Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer, Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko, Highway Superintendent Steve Harasyko, and Treasurer Teresa DellaGuistina. Also present were all the members of the Finance Committee.

According to the superintendent, the highway department had a rough week. The engine in one truck failed at a cost of \$7,800. The transmission on another failed at a cost of nearly

\$10,000. Operating and maintenance costs are approaching redline numbers and will need funding soon. Selectman Barrett asked if the town could get away without one truck – the reply was no, that the entire fleet is needed this winter. Teresa suggested if we need to replace the cost of the repair we should add funds to account for unforeseen expenses to avoid the time and expense of extra town meetings to approve the costs. Discussion followed regarding the cost of a new truck of roughly \$155,000 and a two-month waiting time.

The meeting was moved to the basement of the Town Hall annex in order to better discuss fiber-optic internet and how it could be implemented. Jean Atwater-Williams presented reasons how this could all come together. See article by Jean on page 5 of this issue of The Times.

At 8:30 p.m., Selectmen entered into executive session, closed to the public, to discuss a personnel issue.

Select Board/All Boards Meeting, December 22

Present were Selectmen Patrick Barrett and Jeff Gray. Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer, Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko. All chairpersons of boards and heads of all town committees, more than 40 individuals meeting downstairs at the Town Hall annex.

Results of the All-Boards Meeting, including parts of Bogart's summary, are included in the report on **page 12** of this issue of The Times.

Select Board, December 29, 2015

This meeting was the follow-up to the Select Board hearing on December 1 regarding the Athena Health Care proposal to build a nursing home facility on Rt. 57. A third and final meeting will be held February 17. Results of this meeting are included in the report beginning on page 1 of this issue of The Times.

Select Board, January 5, 2015

Present were Selectmen Patrick Barrett and Rosario Messina. Also Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer, Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko, Highway Superintendent Steve Harasyko, and six residents.

Regarding the highway department, all town trucks and related equipment are up and running. A series of bad breakdowns a few weeks back will required a special town meeting on Jan. 20 to move money around in order to pay for the repairs. Sand and salt are in plentiful supply. Much of the highway budget has been used to ensure the town doesn't run out of materials for the roads. Sand is available to local residents at the left inside the

large white shed. Soon, sand for local residents left outside and clearly marked.

Ron Bernard and Eric Pachulski in for the Historical Commission. They proposed a new award to be called "Heritage Heroes" which recognizes significant efforts by home owners who perform renovations on historical properties that preserve historical integrity, for example, by the use of period-appropriate materials and building techniques. Certificates of Appreciation will be presented by the Commission and town officials at Select Board meetings.

Rosanne Hoekstra was appointed to the Sandisfield Cultural Council.

A letter drawn up by the Town Clerk requested money for electrical work to be done at Wilbur Park near the Town Library. Fire Chief Ralph Morrison asks that some kind of lights be installed there and hoped that electrician Jay Reynolds would donate his skill and time to install them.

Resident Walter Linkovich in to report that the culvert adjacent to his driveway does not drain properly, resulting in now a thick layer of ice over his entrance. The highway superintendent said he would look at it but could not promise anything could be done due to the frozen ground.


Select Board, January 12, 2015

Present were Selectmen Patrick Barrett and Jeff Gray and Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer. Others, including the Town Treasurer, were absent due to illness, so some items on the agenda were dropped.

A letter of resignation from Selectman Rosario Messina was received by the Board. The letter was read aloud by Patrick, who made a motion to accept, seconded by Jeff. An article about the resignation and how the Board plans to proceed with only two members is on page 3.

Jean Atwater-Williams, who heads the town's Technology Committee, recommended the hiring of Brian Cruet for the part-time position of maintaining and updating the town's website. Brian, who has web design skills, will attend some town meetings but would do most of the work from his home. The Select Board approved.

The Board was asked why there were so many cars parked at the town garage during the day. It seems the Highway Department has invited former highway employees Ed Riiska and Wikki Spring, both highly skilled in snow removal, will battle the elements during Old Man Winter.

Reminder: Due to the King holiday on January 19, the next Select Board meeting will follow the Special Town Meeting at Old Town Hall, Tuesday, January 20, 7 p.m. 



Thanksgiving Snow

The snowstorm on Thanksgiving was beautiful visually but otherwise not. The broken electrical pole on Rt. 57 near the Town Hall Annex caused a rare Sandisfield traffic jam. The downed transmission lines also made it necessary to bake Thanksgiving turkeys in outdoor barbecues or ovens of kind neighbors with generators. One couple returned from Florida after the holiday to find their home buried under 18 inches of snow; they had to buy a snow shovel in Winsted just to get into their house and retrieve the other shovel

Photos: Tom Jacobs.



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NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

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

JANUARY/FEBRUARY EVENTS

Special Town Meeting, Tuesday, January 20, 7:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road. Two articles up for vote. For more information, see page 2

Blood Pressure and Health Counseling Clinic sponsored by the Porchlight Visiting Nurse Association and the Sandisfield Board of Health on Wednesdays, January 28 and February 25, 11:00 a.m. to noon at the Sandisfield Senior Center.

Strategic Planning Committee, Wednesdays, January 21 and February 18, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Firehouse #2, Rte. 57. For more information, contact Kathy Jacobs, Tel 413 258-4535.

Valentine's Day, Saturday February 14. Take your sweetheart to dinner at one of Sandisfield's fine eating establishments!

JANUARY/FEBRUARY EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Hot Chocolate Saturdays through March 21, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Bartholomew's Cobble in Ashley Falls. Free hot chocolate with admission. Snow shoe rentals available. For more information, contact rwendell@ttor.org or 413-229-8600.

Frosty Snowshoe, Toasty Yoga, Sunday, January 25, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at McLennan Reservation in Tyringham. Sponsored by the Trustees of the Reservations and Tracy Remelius. Also, on Sunday, February 15, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at Tyringham Cobble. \$25 Trustees members, \$30 for non-members. Pre-registration is required. Snowshoe rentals must be reserved. Yoga inside at Ashintully Gardens. Contact Tracy at 413 243-3582 or tracyremelius@gmail.com

Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Stockbridge, Tuesday, February 3, at 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 29 Main Street, Stockbridge. The Stockbridge Library's Museum & Archives will present a series of programs on the first Tuesday of each month about the interesting people who have made their homes in Stockbridge over the years. Each program will include stories of two existing homes, as well as another that has been lost.

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.

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: First Wednesday, 7 p.m. at Fire House #2, Rt. 57. Next meeting, Feb. 4.

COMING NEXT MONTH

Francis: Mr. Deming Tells Some Stories. Reminiscences of eight decades in Sandisfield.



Let's Read and Discuss

THE WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP INVITES YOU

By Anita Carr

Every fourth Wednesday, some extraordinary women get together to discuss books that we have read in common. The group was started over 18 years ago and has been going strong ever since.

We would like to invite new members to join us.

The way it works is that we formulate a list of books for the coming year, and all of us get the book and read it. We have a great time talking about the book and people present ideas that were perhaps not thought of by others in the group.

We meet the evening of the fourth Wednesday of every month. Usually we meet in the library but since the library is closed Wednesday evenings during the winter we meet at each other's houses. At this point in time, we meet at different locations, so if you are interested in joining us or would like more information, please call me at 258-4930.

Here are the books we will be reading in 2015.

January: Daughters of Mars by Thomas Keneally

February: Deer Hunting with Jesus: Dispatches from America's Class War by Joe Bageant

March: Rebecca by Daphne DuMaurier

April: Orphan Train by Christina Baker Kline

May: The Girl You Left Behind by Jojo Moyes

June: Stoner by John Williams

July: Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown

August: Luncheon of the Boating Party by Susan Vreeland

September: Prague Winter by Madelaine Albright

October: Unbroken by Laura Hillenbrand

November: The Senator's Wife by Sue Miller

December: Until I Say Good-Bye: My Year of Living With Joy by Susan Spencer-Wendel

Our Thanks to All of You

Readers have generously responded to the Times' Annual Appeal for 2014 and through the year. You have ensured that your community newspaper continues with a high-quality format that provides "Reliable, Regular, and Relevant" local news and features for another year.

If you have not had a chance to make your (tax deductible) donation, please consider doing so by sending a check to us at PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255. Donations may also be made securely on our website, www.SandisfieldTimes.org.

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| <i>Marion Bernstein (deceased)</i> | <i>Hal Holt & Pam Kittredge</i> | <i>Charlie & Laureen Pease</i> |
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THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

P.O. Box 584

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www.sandisfieldtimes.org

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