

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume VI, Number 8

November 2015

Master Plan Survey Results

By *Eammon Coughlin*, Planner
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

The Town of Sandisfield has partnered with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) to help draft the Master Plan for the town.

A Master Plan is a forward-looking document intended to guide town decision making for the next 10-20 years. It is sometimes compared to a “blueprint” or “roadmap” for the town’s future.

The Master Plan takes a broad and holistic view of the town and addresses a range of topics, including demographics, the economy, transportation needs, natural and cultural resources, and recreation, to name a few. BRPC has recently completed work on a public opinion survey and a series of personal interviews, both crucial components of the open and public process to develop the Master Plan.

Public Opinion Survey

The public opinion survey received 132 total responses, with 33% of respondents identifying themselves as year-round residents and 48% identifying as seasonal residents or second homeowners. The remaining 19% of survey respondents did not answer demographic questions, so their residency status cannot be determined. Most survey respondents were over the age of 45, and the survey received no responses from those younger than age 19.

The survey revealed that seasonal residents and second homeowners are an important part of the town’s population growth. Many year-round residents reported being former seasonal residents and conversely, many

seasonal residents and second homeowners indicated their intentions to become year-round residents of Sandisfield in the future.

Survey respondents chose Sandisfield’s natural and scenic beauty, peace and quiet, small town atmosphere, and people and community as the aspects of life in town they liked the most.

However, respondents cited the town’s roads, lack of business and services, high taxes, and lack of internet or cell phone service as what they liked least about life in Sandisfield.

Respondents weighed in on a range of other topics in town. Overall respondents were in favor of encouraging new business and services in town (70%) and encouraging housing development (52%), with respondents wanting to see more housing options for seniors and young families.

Respondents supported many potential town initiatives, including possible energy efficiency upgrades to town buildings (83%), establishment of a town center (66%), making “some use” of Yanner Park (56%), and a new multipurpose town building (55%). Respondents were also in favor of asking the Commonwealth for more facilities and amenities on state-owned lands in town (73%).

Overall, respondents did not support potential commercial development along Route 8 (only 49% support) and a potential new DPW garage (only 40% support). However support for these two items was above 50% when the responses of year-round residents were examined individually.

Personal Interview Survey

In addition to the survey, town staff, board and committee members, and members of other local organizations – including this newspaper – were interviewed to inform

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Two Critical Pipeline Hearings This Month

ONE IN BOSTON, ONE IN SANDISFIELD. BE THERE

By *Hilde Weisert with Barbara Penn*

Readers of this newspaper and residents of Sandisfield, Otis, Monterey, and other affected towns have been making their voices heard over the last 18 months in opposition to the construction of a new 3.8 mile, 36-inch pipeline (actually a storage loop) proposed by energy giant Kinder Morgan. This new line will parallel the two existing pipelines running through the Otis State Forest/Spectacle Pond conservation land and across the Beech Plain section in Sandisfield.

The project name is “Connecticut Expansion” for a reason – the destruction is here, but the gas will go to Connecticut.

In 2013, when the Connecticut Expansion was proposed, New England’s energy picture was very different from what it is today. Think about the cost of oil. Think about the flourishing of alternative renewable energy sources

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Around Town Hall

By Alice Boyd, Select Board Chairman

As I look out of my window on this crisp fall day the season's first snowflakes are falling, a prelude of what is to come. My plants have been brought in, wood is stacked under the porch, and our freezer bulges with this season's harvest. My husband and I are making every effort to prepare for the siege better known as a Sandisfield winter.

And at Town Hall this past month we've been doing the same.

The Highway Department is preparing for a long tough winter while the Selectmen are praying for a mild one. In an effort to avoid deficit spending, we are holding a Special Town Meeting on Monday, November 9. We need approval to allocate funds for a legal bill that was not paid during the last fiscal year. There will be three other warrant articles, one of which will fund the hiring of contractors to plow if one of our trucks goes down during a storm. Again, preparing for the worst.


While we're wrapping up final negotiations with Kinder Morgan we're also preparing to testify against the pipeline expansion on November 10 at the Statehouse. The Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight is providing Sandisfield residents with an opportunity to speak against H. 3690, the conveyance of an easement over state lands allowing the proposed new pipeline to cross into our beloved Spectacle Pond. The irony of negotiating while fighting is not lost on me. However, as Ben Franklin said, "By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail." So we're being pragmatic, negotiating protective covenants and compensation to protect our roads, our residents, and our town while speaking out against the exception to Article 97.

What else is happening? The list is long.

- This month we received a \$3,500 Forest Stewardship grant that will allow the town to hire a licensed forester to outline options and develop a plan for Yanner Park. We're working with a very generous landowner regarding the donation of land for a new town hall. We're initiating a new budget

process that will bring every committee and department head in front of the Selectmen to hammer out their FY2017 budget.

- We're looking into the possibility of merging two town departments, and we're interviewing candidates for the part-time Town Administrator's position.
- During the next few weeks we're hoping for a positive response regarding the highly competitive STRAP grant submitted to fund repairs to our Route 57 bridge. We are selling a piece of property taken for non-payment of taxes with the intent of getting this parcel back on the tax rolls.
- And did I mention that you can now check your property's assessment online through a link on our town website? Oh, and more to come regarding our website.

Be assured that while our focus is on the "bottom line" our goal is to provide the best services possible with the dollars available. We have our work cut out for us. And we thank you for your patience. 

Master Plan Survey

(Cont'd from p.1)

the master plan. Those interviewed were asked about the town, the changes it has gone through, the challenges it faces, and how to address these challenges as Sandisfield moves into the future.


Information provided by those interviewed helped to reinforce and build upon the data gathered in the public opinion survey, with interviewees reporting the town's buildings, roads and other infrastructure as crucial issues to be addressed. However, much work-in-progress was also revealed – efforts already in motion to address these challenges. This includes grant writing to help fund the replacement of the Route 57 bridge, ongoing road work and efforts to regionalize equipment, the recent replacement of the roof on the Town Hall Annex, and replacement of a town computer "fried" by a recent lightning storm.

The individuals interviewed expressed a deep fondness for the community and commented on the willingness of "Sandisfielders" to always lend a hand for the greater good or to help their friends and neighbors.

However, many remarked on the lack of physical locations for this feeling of community to be shared and cultivated. One town resident remarked that Sandisfield is a "far-flung town with no center and little opportunity to discover ones neighbors," while another stated plainly a feeling that "life in Sandisfield can be isolating."

Despite these sentiments, several substitutes and stand-ins were presented by interviewees in the absence of a community "center," including the post office, the transfer station, the Sandisfield Arts Center, the American Legion Hall, and even this publication. Those interviewed remarked that these places were where community was created.

Nevertheless, some interviewed expressed the desire for an official town or community center to be developed, a focal point for town activities, and a social hub for building community.

Currently, the Sandisfield Planning Board subcommittee is working to create a draft of the Master Plan, which should be compiled by December. Once a draft is complete, the committee will seek public comment and will work to refine this document before eventually seeking official adoption by the Planning Board. 



Master Plan Steering Committee

The next scheduled meeting of the steering committee is November 18 at 7 p.m. at Old Town Hall. The public is invited to attend and participate. No meeting will be held November 25 due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

Members of the Steering Committee include, from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission: Tom Matuszko and Eammon Coughlin. From the Sandisfield Planning Board and the Strategic Planning Committee: Gary Bottum, Anina Carr, David Hubbard, Kathy Jacobs, Sandy Parisky, John Skrip, and Andy Snyder.

Late-Breaking Town News

By Bill Price

The resignation of Highway Superintendent Stephan Harasyko and the appointment of Bobby O'Brien as Acting Superintendent aroused contentious debate at the October 26 Select Board meeting.

The Board announced that Steve had resigned for personal reasons. Earlier, Steve issued a statement that he has been working on roads and highways for many years and needs a rest. He had been superintendent five and a half years and saw the Town through Hurricane Irene in 2011 and the road reconstruction following it. In a statement, Select Board Chairman Alice Boyd said, "Steve is a terrific guy and the board wishes him the best."


Alice said it was her decision to hire a temporary superintendent. Bobby O'Brien of P&R Construction of Sandisfield will fill the position temporarily. A new job description for Highway Superintendent will be prepared and posted, and a committee will screen and recommend a new hire.

In other town news, Highway employee Scott Worcester recently resigned from the department, citing health reasons.

An Electricity Aggregation plan, which may reduce electrical costs for Town residents, will go into effect January 1. Residents may choose to participate or not. A report will be in the December issue of this paper.

Chairman Alice Boyd will be out of office for the last two weeks of November following knee replacement surgery. During her absence Jeff Gray will serve as Board Chairman. Alice, who with Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko has been handling Town Administrator duties, will return to those administrative responsibilities after only a week as those tasks can be accomplished from home. Two candidates for part-time Town Administrator have been interviewed, with more to come.

At the October 26 Board meeting, newly hired librarian Theresa Spahnholz was introduced. After presenting her background and plans for the library, Terry said she was willing to help anyone and everyone and was happy with her new role. She got a round of applause.

The meeting, which began on a rough note, ended with general appreciation that the Board has to conduct its business, even if everyone doesn't agree with its decisions. 

Vicki's Bear

Last spring a black bear enjoyed the bird feeders at five homes along River Road in West New Boston, from the Badrach's to the Bakunis's.

Patty Hamilton said the animal's head was "the biggest head of any bear I ever saw." Once he walked onto the Bakunis's upper level porch, searching for a little something more.

Ultimately Vicki caught him with her camera.



Sandisfield Debut of "Bob and the Trees"

By Ron Bernard


A nearly full house packed the Arts Center in late October for the first Sandisfield showing of "Bob and the Trees," a film directed and produced by Diego Ongaro, co-written by Diego and his wife, Courtney Maum, and starring farmer-lumberman Bob Tarasuk, playing himself.

All three are residents of Sandisfield, and the film was shot here in town during the winter of 2014 and many local residents appear in the film.

"Bob and the Trees" is a harrowing narrative of logging during a particularly tough winter. Before the showing, Stanley Koloski, a Sandisfield native now of Valatie, New York, said, "My father was a logger here in the 1940s. I remember that and it is why I came tonight."

The event was a benefit for the Arts Center's theatrical company, the Sandisfield Players. Speaking on their behalf, Jean Atwater-Williams said that "Bob" has introduced the town to an international audience and that the Players will continue to do that when they perform "Our Town" in Cornwall, England next June.

Bob introduced the film, saying simply, "This is a story of a farmer, trees, and food." In fact, it is the story of one really tough man's perseverance in the face of mishaps and misfortunes and even grief in the dead of winter. On this night, a riveted audience understood why this poignant film has been acclaimed and many gained a more intimate knowledge of the dangers and difficulties of logging.

"Bob" has been honored at several U.S. and European film festivals, most recently winning a cinematography award at the Woodstock (New York) Film Fest. 

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Xiew from the Arts Center

NEXT SEASON EVEN BETTER

By Marcella Smith, President

As the Arts Center closes 2015 with our year-end appeal, we are thinking about programs for the coming season by reflecting on what we were able to accomplish last year with a budget under \$37,000.

The number of exhibits in the gallery increased to eight, offering visitors greater variety in style with artistic expression in many forms. There was Shakespeare both silly and serious and good old-fashioned burlesque, thanks to Gypsy Layne Cabaret and Co. The Sandisfield Players

Going to College, Locally

By Mary Anne Grammer



Informative lectures at the Arts Center are catching on. On three bright and sunny Saturday mornings in October, Suzanne O'Connell presented a series of lectures on Climate Change. Suzanne,


who lives on Sears Road in South Sandisfield, is a professor of Earth & Environmental Sciences at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn. She presented anything but a staid college lecture. She knows how to engage an audience. Yes, physics were involved, but Suzanne did not concentrate on the whys and wherefores, but basically related why CO₂ is a greenhouse gas and the need to understand the relationship between atmospheric CO₂ and climate history. She presented an overall picture of the climate and CO₂ changes over the past many million years and how those changes have been measured.

In the third and final presentation, she discussed


are working their way toward performing "Our Town" at the world famous Minack Theatre in Cornwall, England next June. Cathy Barrow taught us how to make preserves in less than an hour, Val Coleman regaled us with tales of his misadventures in the civil rights movement, the performance of Andy Wrba and the Rotten Apples brought down the house, and we could do no less than invite them back for 2016.

We printed the 2015 program in four-color, expanded our advertising, created a marketing committee, and were featured in an article in the Berkshire Eagle. We're bringing back movies to the Arts Center with a showing of "Bob and the Trees" last month and "Tin" on November 7, with more to come in 2016.

So, if you haven't been to the Arts Center for a while, maybe it's time to stop by and see why the Berkshire Eagle said we are "the hub of live performance in South County."

We approach the challenge of reopening the building next season by being grateful for the many volunteers who make all of this possible with their amazing energy, community spirit, and generosity. 

the fact that atmospheric CO₂ levels are increasing faster than at any other time in geologic history. Her conclusions, that human beings are in serious trouble here on our one small Earth, made her audience sit up and pay attention and led to an interesting discussion after the presentation.

Yes, you can go back to college. At the Arts Center, you don't have to take notes and exams, just pay attention and learn. Thank you, Suzanne. 

Support Your Local Post Office

Buy Christmas stamps and mail cards and packages right here in Sandisfield.



Solar Panel Theft

By Bogart Muller

There is a little green metal box on the highway between Tuckers and Villa Mia that is used by the federal government to trend the daily, monthly, and even yearly count of cars driving past it on Rt 8, going north or south. I look at it every day as I pull out of my driveway and I always notice the gleamy reflection of the aluminum-framed solar panel bolted at a 45 degree angle on its roof. The panel has been there for at least a decade and offsets the power usage this green box requires. Early one morning in September, I saw no such reflection on my way to work. The panel was gone.


At first, I wanted to believe the D.O.T. was repairing or replacing it. Reality sunk in when I took my taxpayer's liberty of scoping it out up close. Yes, the wires were severed and the brackets bent from a forcible removal. The solar panel, stolen by person or persons unknown.

I called the D.O.T. in Lenox and told them what I saw. Two days later a new panel was installed, laying flat this time to deter thieves. Two days after that, the flat panel was gone too.

The counter stayed without solar power until October when I saw a yellow van and its crazy light show installing yet another solar panel to the green box (the count is up to three).

Naturally, I made my nosy way down there and introduced myself as the homeowner living next to the crime scene. I suggested someone had an appetite for these panels and perhaps the next one could be booby trapped as I really don't like burglars.

Jim, a really nice man with the D.O.T., smiled coyly and said, "You mustn't worry about anyone stealing these anymore. They are federal property and over \$1,800 apiece. They can not be used with some homeowner's off-the-grid system because they require special batteries and regulators not found on the civilian market. One of two things will happen if the thief attempts to tie one into their system. They will fry the panel or fry their system. Also, the panels are traceable by satellite."

So, the joke's on you, panel thief!! 

Two Critical Pipeline Hearings This Month

(cont'd from p.1)

since then. According to the Acadia Center, Connecticut does not in fact need more natural gas deliveries because "Connecticut ranks 6th among all states for its energy efficiency efforts." Massachusetts scored even higher.

Now, this month, you can make a difference. Two critical points in the application process are scheduled in November. Your voice at either or both of these junctures can affect the ultimate decisions.

First, Oppose H3690, November 10

An eastern Massachusetts legislator, Rep. Garrett Bradley, has introduced Bill H3690 to waive the Massachusetts constitution Article 97 protection of Spectacle Pond and Otis State Forest. When the land was placed in conservation (and taken off the tax rolls), Governor Patrick said, "The state's purchase of this spectacular property ensures its lasting protection and is an example of our prudent investment in the Commonwealth's rare and irreplaceable natural resources."

Bill H3690 would scrap the "lasting" constitutional protection and the "prudent investment" (including the permanent loss of tax revenues to Sandisfield) so that Kinder Morgan can draw a million gallons of water from Spectacle Pond for hydrostatic testing of its new pipes (then dump the possibly contaminated water back into our aquifer) and cut and blast through near-by old-growth forest to lay another line to serve Connecticut customers.

Local legislators, Sen. Ben Downing and Rep. Smitty Pignatelli, are staunchly opposed and urge residents to come to the hearing in Boston and voice their opinion.

You Can Be There

Attend the November 10, 11 a.m. Public Hearing at Gardner Auditorium of the State House in Boston. A strong show of support for Ben and Smitty and our state constitution can defeat this bill. To let other relevant legislators and officials know your opposition to the bill, go to sandisfieldtaxpayers.org and click "How" for contact information.



GET ON THE BUS!

Show your support and join us on
Tuesday, Nov 10
at the State House!

YOUR PRESENCE MATTERS!

Go NOW to
www.SandisfieldTaxpayers.org
to purchase your seat
(limited to 55 - first come, first served).

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If you're concerned about Kinder Morgan's mammoth NED (Northeast Direct) project, which would rip through much of the northern Berkshires and require even more takings of Article 97 land, ensuring that the first domino in Sandisfield does not fall is critical.

Second, Attend the ConCom Hearing, November 17

The Sandisfield Conservation Commission has met several times with Kinder Morgan representatives over the last several months. KM has made major changes to its original "Notice of Intent" - so many that they have prepared a new comprehensive document detailing a pipeyard to be installed on South Beech Plain Road instead of in Tyringham (with huge trucks lumbering in from Cold Spring Road), destroying a wetland and compensating by taking 30 acres of South Beech Plain Road private property off the tax rolls for "mitigation" through creation of a new wetland. (Research shows such mitigations fail more than half the time. And other taxes have to go up when taxable property is taken off the rolls.)

You Can Be There, Too

KinderMorgan/TGP has promised that the final plans will be available at the Town Hall Annex and filed with the Conservation Commission on or about November 3. Read the document and send comments to the commission's consultant, Emily Stockman, Stockman Associates, at emily@stockmanassociates.com or bring them to the ConCom meeting on the 17th at Old Town Hall (approximately 7:30 p.m.).

Kinder Morgan/TGP wants this to be the last ConCom hearing and is pushing the commission to make a decision. If there are still unanswered issues, let the ConCom know what they are and that if a rush to judgment is needed the decision should be "No." 

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Sandisfield Historical Society

By John Kuzmech



Our Annual Apple Fest was held the same day as many other fairs and carnivals in the area, so our event was small but fun and successful. One of the best-tasting events this year was the Council on Aging selling home-made apple pies. Members baked the pies at home, brought them to the Fest, and sold them to happy customers. Every pie was sold.



The COA pie sale was a big success. From left, Judy Deming, Shirley Spring, Ann Wald, and Susan Galik. The lady buying a pie is a customer.

Other attractions included a tag sale, Dutch oven cooking, cider making with an old fashioned apple press, a 50-50 raffle, hamburgers and hotdogs, and a bake sale with artwork. The apples used for the cider were donated by Riiska Orchards. They also donated cider and apples for sale. Our festival would have had little to do with apples without their generous donation.

In addition to the Riiska's, the Historical Society thanks Warren Blass, Steven German, and Zoe Nelson and others who donated stuff to the tag sale.

Many Historical Society members helped with the Apple Fest, including the Bakunis Family, Josephine and Barry Freedman, John and Kathie Burrows, the Kuzmech family, Norton Fletcher, and Marcia

Ignace. Thanks to all the attendees and everyone who made the day enjoyable!

The Society has three upcoming events:

- Our yearly Wine and Cheese Party, November 1 at the Historical Society from 2-4 p.m. All are welcome to this free event at the South Sandisfield Meeting House, Route 183.
- Our monthly meeting on November 14 at 11 a.m., also at the South Sandisfield Meeting House. This will be a planning meeting for interested Historical Society members.
- The Historical Society will host the Sandisfield Holiday Party and Fair on December 5 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Route 57 Firehouse. The tasty food sale will benefit the New Boston Congregational Church. Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus will be there for two hours from 11-1. All those grumpy individuals not in the mood for Mr. or Mrs. Santa can say "Harrumph" to a new guest – the Grinch!



John Kuzmech, Historical Society president, turns a heavy cider press with the help of two indentured children. Photos: Elizabeth Kuzmech

A new event will be our first annual Ugly Sweater Contest. Owner of the ugliest sweater will receive a gift certificate to two meals courtesy of the New Boston Inn. It will not be necessary to wear the ugly sweater to claim your prize at the Inn.

Potential artists and crafters, the Holiday Party table charge is only \$15 each. Please contact Marcia at 258-2898. 🍷

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Council on Aging



By Susan Galik

Wow. What an October.

On Friday the 9th, Anne Wald, Judy Deming, Shirley Spring and I spent the morning making apple pies at the Council on Aging kitchen. Meanwhile, Edna Leavenworth and Linda Riiska made pies at home. We delivered over two dozen pies at the Historical Society's Fall Apple Fest where the four Friday-morning bakers spent the day selling every single pie. Proceeds will be sent to the Alzheimer's Association. Thanks to all our bakers and to our buyers.

A half-dozen seniors went to see "The Second Exotic Marigold Hotel" at the Gilson Theatre in Winsted on Oct 19. They reported that they thoroughly enjoyed the movie and that the luncheon was well worth the cost.

A few of our members attended the Berkshire Rehab Raffle on the 9th. Judy Deming must have had a horseshoe in her pocket since she won several of the items and went home very happy. They enjoyed the company and the refreshments. Thank you, Rehab, for inviting us.

Coming in November:

Tues, November 17: Monument Mountain Regional High School has invited the seniors to a concert with lunch to follow. The concert begins at 11 a.m. Please RSVP to 528-3346 x167 or call Linda Riiska at 258-4816. The high school needs



The Librarian's Corner

By Terry Spohnholz

With the chills of November poking at the chinks in the clapboard and whistling a chilly tune, it's time to put a cup of hot chocolate on and curl up with a good read. So pop on down to the Library and gather up a few books. Visit someplace warm, delve into a good mystery, or lose yourself in a favorite author! Or get bold and tackle a biography or a bit of non-fiction! It'll keep the thought of winter's coming at bay!!!

The coffee is not on (yet) (nor is the hot chocolate) but we are working on that! But sometimes there is a delicious pile of cookies or brownies on the table here at the Library.

to know how many of us will attend by November 10. COA members will be going and can probably offer rides.

Wednesday, November 18, is our blood pressure clinic at COA, Town Hall Annex basement. 11 a.m. This clinic, usually held on the 4th Wednesday of the month, has been moved due to Thanksgiving.

Monday, November 23, we are offering a flower arrangement class. Starting time is 2 p.m. and the cost is \$5. All materials will be available. We already have a dozen signed up.

Line Dancing will continue through November 19. The classes are held on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. at Old Town Hall. Cost is \$2. These classes are a bit more high impact than the spring classes were.

Qi Gong classes are continuing. Every Monday at 11 a.m. This is an excellent class for anyone who is mobility impaired. The cost is \$2.


No meeting on Wednesday, November 25, due to Thanksgiving the next day.

In December:

We will hold a Christmas basket drawing on Saturday, December 5, at about 2 p.m. at the Historical Society Christmas Bazaar at Firehouse #2.

We will not meet on the 9th, 23rd, or 30th. December blood pressure clinic will be on the 16th.


Are you interested in learning to paint? If you are, please call Linda Riiska at 258-4816. We are looking into daytime art classes.

Remember ... we are here at the Town Hall Annex almost every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. We have a potluck at noon. Come on and join us. 

New books have arrived – by such favorite authors as Patterson, Evanovitch, and Sue Grafton! So brush the leaves off and check them out before someone else does!

The library would like to thank Christopher Bollen, a Sandisfield resident, for stopping by and generously donating a copy of his second novel, "The Orient." I am told it is an electrifying thriller. I have to finish the pile of books on my own shelves first before I delve into Chris's book.

Thanks to donations from readers we have several hardcover and paperback books available for purchase. Reasonably priced at \$1 for hardcover and 50 cents for paperback. So adopt a few loved books.

The Sandisfield Women's Book Group will meet in November. The book to be discussed is Sue Miller's "The Senator's Wife." Please contact the Library or Anita Carr for time and meeting place. 

Quote of the month: A book is a dream that you hold in your hand. – Neil Gaiman

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november

In the Gallery

Nov 7 - 29

Swartz Family Art Show

Opening Reception:

Sat, Nov 7 2-4 PM
FREE

Sat, Nov 7 8 PM

The film "Tin" - story of an 1895 mining scam. Sandisfield's Ben Luxon plays a featured role. \$10

Sat, Nov 14 10 AM

Organics in the Landscape:
Rich Lessor and Michael Mugridge from Nature Works Land Care. \$10

Sat, Nov 14 7 PM

Forever Young...?
Cabaret with Linda Mironti \$20

Sat, Nov 21 4 PM

The Development of Jewish Art
Music with Paul Green \$10

Sat, Nov 28 4 PM

Simon Winchester discusses his new book, "The Pacific" (A book signing will follow) \$25



Memor

MY BOOKS, A PICTURE OF MY HEART

By Val Coleman

Washington DC ... during the war. I was twelve and had just discovered "Mutiny on the Bounty." My father, a historian who worked with Samuel Eliot Morison at the Office of War Information, told me that the log of the HMS Bounty was in the Library of Congress. It was there because an American vessel was the first to land on Pitcairn Island after Fletcher Christian and the other mutineers had settled there. My dad took me to the archives room and the old battered log was carefully opened for me. In that magic building, surrounded by Thomas Jefferson's library, I fell in love with books ... forever.

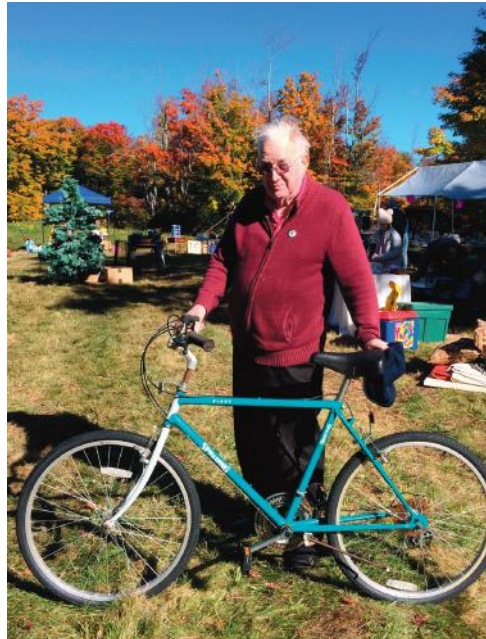
Seventy-three years later, here in Sandisfield with close to 1,400 books crammed into my log cabin, I sorted through my life, studying the titles as I boxed my books for distribution to libraries and friends and to sell about a hundred at the Country Treasures sale,

First of all, I uncovered my "Complete Sherlock Holmes" with the clopita! clopita! of hansom cabs on Baker Street, the aching violin, and the terrifying climb up the Reichenbach Falls. Then I found Mike Harrington's "The Other America" which opened my adolescent eyes to the darkness of American poverty. And then sex! Wonderful sex! With the untamed prose of Thomas Wolfe's "Look Homeward, Angel."

And poetry! Shelves of poetry! T.S. Eliot versus Percy Shelley, Ginsberg vs. Keats, Jeffers vs.

Pound. The sanity of Wordsworth, the madness of Coleridge, and the sweet and powerful verse of Emily Dickinson.

And then ... a peculiar, disturbing pile of war books. Boxes and boxes of them in the home of an ostensible pacifist. Every war, from Alexander to Iraq. John Tolland's "The Rising Sun" ... the Second World War in the Pacific ... and a dozen more books on a single battle ... Midway. A half-dozen volumes on the Great War two about the terrible despoiling battle of the Somme River. An encyclopedia of the Civil War, a tome about Waterloo, three graphic studies of every battle from Hannibal to Korea. The entire "West



Val at the Country Treasures sale.
Photo: Patricia Hubbard

Point Atlas of American Wars!" And there, in the back room, covered with dust, is William Shirer's "Rise and Fall of the Third Reich."

I have collected a mind-numbing group of books about the Holocaust ... Kershaw, Kemperer, et.al. But on with my truckload. I have a hundred

plays! Now, understand, I am a failed playwright and there they sit ... a full shelf mocking me ... Shakespeare, Ibsen, Brecht, O'Neill, Max Anderson, Tennessee Williams, Miller and Moliere ... woe is me!

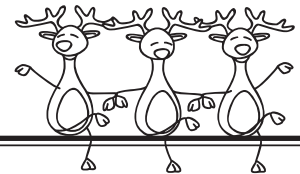
Lying about are the odd ducks, usually strange damp paperbacks ... "Gangsters, Swindlers, Killers & Thieves" or "Curable and Incurable Neurotics" and "Amusing Ourselves To Death."

And the life-changers, Edmund Wilson's "To the Finland Station" and his superb "The Shores of Light." Dare I mention a brief affair with Karl Marx's "Das Capital?" Karl is here, too.

And as I thumbed my way through the bookcases ... I discovered peculiar. For example, in my dotage (recently) I've been fascinated with cryptology, codes, secret writing, and I found a lot of titles on the subject ... "The Codebreakers," "The Code Book," and "Seizing The Engine."

So there it is. From the log of the Bounty to a magical, near-poetic study of the cosmos ... "The Birth of Time."

The books are, in a strange way, a cardiogram ... a picture of my heart. 



Sandisfield Historical Society Christmas Fair

Join in the Fun & Excitement

Sat. December 5
10 am - 2 pm

Vendor Set-up Time: 8 AM

Fire Station #2, Route 57

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Sandisfield Players' Country Treasures Yard Sale A Success!

After weeks of planning, the collecting and gathering of many donations from the community, and enormous efforts by an almost-enormous committee, the results were worth it.

Hundreds of visitors stopped by the former town green at historic Sandisfield Center over the spectacular and festive Columbus Day weekend. They browsed through a wide collection of everyday items as well as local antiques, heaps of books, linen, pottery, and crafts. Plus good food.

Everybody had fun – even the workers – and enough treasures were found that the sales goal of \$5,000 was achieved.

The Sandisfield Arts Center's company of amateur actors raised money to help cover travel expenses for their trip next June to Cornwall, England, where they will perform the great American play, "Our Town," at the venerable Minack Theater.

Thanks to all – our tireless organizers, the many generous donors, Riiska's Farm Stand, and especially all the hard-bargaining visitors. 🍷



Photos: Steve Kopiec



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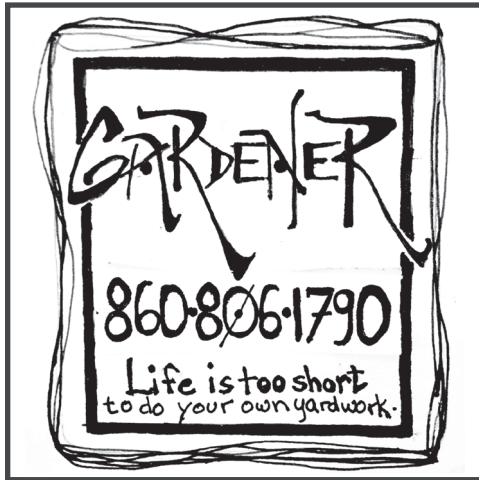
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New Boston Picnic

A couple hauling bicycles behind their amazingly beautiful motorcycle said they were happy to find a place in the shade for lunch. They'd just come through Tolland and were on an early October trip across the U.S. Their home is in Three Hills, Alberta, Canada.

Photo: Bill Price



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A Long Life Right Here: Rosemary Allan

By Bill Price

Rosemary Allan has lived on Tannery Road for 61 years. That's a long time in one place and in the beginning of it she lived in the only house back behind the New Boston Store.

One night in early spring when her daughters were small a terrific roar came up the steep slope from the Farmington River canyon. The roar got louder. Rosemary said, "I grabbed the kids and went out the door." The roar was winter ice breaking up in the Farmington. "That was frightening," she said.

Rosemary, 91, told some of her life's anecdotes at the Sandisfield Historical Society in September. She said, not complaining, that she'd lived "a quiet life and not much happened to me. But I've seen a lot of changes in this town." She sends thanks to all who attended the meeting, adding, "I really appreciated it."

Life on Tannery was always iffy. She remembered the one-way road squeezed between the New Boston Store and the river as "nothing but tire tracks for a long time. No guardrails." Once a car failed to make the narrow corner by the side



Rosemary Allan with her daughters, Donna Funk, left, and Debbie Standard.

of the store. "It didn't go over," she said, "but it was balanced with the front of the car in the air."

After a time a summer cabin was built behind her place, then a second. "Now they're homes," she said. "Courtney and Diego live in the one closest to me. On the other side of me is Pick's place."

Of Tannery Road today, rebuilt and reinforced with smooth asphalt and sturdy guardrails during construction of the new bridge at New Boston, Rosemary said, "I never thought I'd see the road like this."

Rosemary first came to Sandisfield in the late 1930s to visit her cousin, Dot Griffin. She fell in love with the town. Dot was Alice O'Brien's

niece and Rosemary, a teenager, moved in with Alice's family at the O'Brien home across the Silverbrook from the tavern. Alice was great-grandmother to Bobby O'Brien, Sandisfield's newly hired interim road superintendent.

After graduation from Searles High School in Great Barrington in 1942 during World War II, Rosemary's first job was at a defense plant at Hamilton Standard Propeller in Hartford.

She enlisted with the Women's Army Corps in 1945, hoping for an overseas assignment. Instead, she was stationed at Camp Edwards, Mass. One night, walking back to camp with friends after the movies, an army bus stopped to give Rosemary and her friends a ride. Rosemary said, "The bus was full of German prisoners being driven to prison camp. The driver could have gotten in a lot of trouble, but we didn't report him."

Rosemary was in the service only eight months because, when she married Charles Allan, a navy man, she had to resign since married women were not allowed to serve in the WACs.

She remembers every Sandisfield old-timer. "Bill O'Brien," she said. "God, he was a sweetheart. He'd tell fantastic stories, we'd laugh, and then we'd find out they were true. Bill asked me once if I wanted to go to New York, see the Statue of Liberty. He hauled chickens to the city and I rode down with him, the back of the truck full of crates of chickens. I felt so sorry for those chickens."

Rosemary worked at the New Boston Nursing Home for 37 years. Started in a house north of New Boston on Route 8, the nursing home ultimately didn't meet fire codes so the current nursing home was built on Rt. 57 near the New Boston Inn. She was good friends there with "Nort," Norton Fletcher of South Beech Plain Road who at the time worked as the chef, and Mary Margraf, who like Rosemary was a CNN. Rosemary had hoped to work until she was 80, but a broken foot when she was 76 led to retirement. She said, "I'd still be working if I could. You get so attached to the people."

She met Rich Mercure there, and she and Rich have been companions for 44 years. "44 good years," Rich added. Rich retired from the state highway department in Otis. The couple recently attended a Friday barbecue lunch at the nursing home, now a rehabilitation center for military veterans. Rosemary said, "Walking in the door was like going home."



Rosemary in the WACs, 1945.

For much of her childhood Rosemary was at her grandparent's place in East Lee. She remembers, "They had ponies and horses. I used to love to ride bareback. Now," she says, "I'm going to get acquainted with Sherman." She is referring to the new horse corralled at Pick's place next door on Tannery Road.

"Pick?" Rosemary remembers Mike and Ralph Morrison as kids. They are currently police and fire chiefs in Sandisfield. "Mike was called 'Pick,'" she said. "I still call him that," she added with a smile. "I think of them as my kids." 🍷

Rosemary's oldest daughter, Debbie Standard, lives in South Lee, and her youngest, Donna Funk, in Sandisfield. She has two grandchildren, Richard Standard, a mechanical engineer, and Heather Brunell, a doctor of physical therapy. And four great grandchildren: her eldest granddaughter, Loren Standard, 19, is attending culinary school in Vermont; Ryan Standard is in high school; Ethan Brunell is a superb soccer player in his first year of high school, and Mirabell Brunell, at 11 years old, is described by Rosemary as "quite a dancer."





COMING TO DINNER FROM WEST GRANBY

The Sandisfield Times has reached my desk, here in West Granby, Conn. In Volume VI, Number 2, on page 2, is an announcement regarding the Harvest Dinner, October 24, 2015, at Firehouse #2. My wife and I would like to attend the dinner. However, no telephone number was given for confirmation. I did call the number for the New Boston Congregational Church and got what I believe is a radio station link. Perhaps no pre-registration is required. However, if you could assist me with clarification on the matter, I would be most grateful.

All the best,

Paul Willis

Note: The editor advised the Willis' tickets were available at the door and to "go on the early side."

REMARKABLE DINNER

As recommended, we arrived at the stroke of 5 p.m. at Firehouse #2. The Harvest Dinner was wonderful. Even though the building is large, the smell of the traditional roasted turkey surrounded us as we walked in, exciting the taste buds. Plenty of food all around and the many good desserts made for a difficult choice. The New Boston Congregational Church sponsors did a remarkable job. Thanks to all who made it possible. See you next year.

Paul and Cathie Willis

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Before the Numbers, An Adventure

By Bill Price

In mid-October a young Sandisfield graduate began a career in Boston as a corporate tax professional with EY, one of the world's leading accounting firms. EY was formerly Ernst & Young.

Ryan Salame, of Rood Hill Road, is a Sandisfield graduate because he began pre-school in the last year the Town had its own school, in what is now the Town Hall Annex.



Ryan at the Pacific Ocean.

Following his successful beginning, Ryan attended Farmington Regional from kindergarten through high school and last May graduated from UMass-Amherst with degrees in accounting and economics. He is

working toward a CPA and looking forward to a long life with numbers and statistics.

But first, he wanted an adventure.

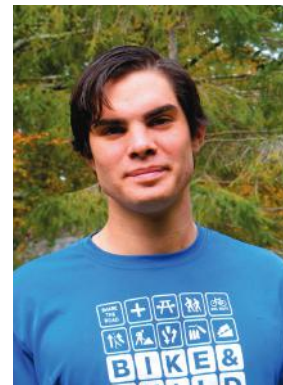
He found one last summer with Bike & Build, a nonprofit organization that organizes young adults in service-oriented cycling trips to raise money and awareness for affordable housing.

Ryan signed up for a cross-country bicycle ride starting in New Haven, Conn., at the end of May and ending at Half Moon Bay in California in mid-August. During the course of the ride, the 31 participants stopped to work at Habitat for Humanity or other work sites building affordable homes in fifteen communities across the country. Ryan said, "All but five nights we slept in churches along the way, and the congregations provided our meals." From sponsors, the group raised \$170,000 for affordable housing causes.

Ryan said, "I had little experience biking, but I got a lot of that this summer."

He also didn't know a lot about the magnitude of the affordable housing crisis in the U.S.

"Providing someone with a home," he said, "is an incredible contribution to a community and someone's life. Taking part in the Bike & Build trip, I gained the experience of a lifetime while helping people begin to get a life experience they truly deserve." 🏠



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A Visit to Joshua

By *Brigitte Ruthman*

Cindy Griswold Smith came to town last month to visit the grave of one of her distant ancestors and to acknowledge his rewarding but difficult life here. She and her mother Elaine had travelled



Cindy Smith, kneeling, with her mother at the grave of her ancestor, Joshua Smith. Photo: Brigitte Ruthman

all the way from California but for the last couple miles needed help finding where Joshua Smith was buried out in the Sandisfield State Forest.

Since my place borders the forest and was once part of Joshua's farmstead – and is named Joshua's Farm – they found me. I may be the current property owner, but I consider it's still really his farm. I'm just tending it for a spell.

A victim of the contagious and dreaded smallpox, Joshua was not buried in a town cemetery but alone on his own land, now part of the state forest. I took Cindy and her mother to the gravesite.

Joshua must have been a remarkable man. A

minuteman in the militia, he survived the Revolutionary War only to succumb to smallpox on November 18, 1793 – 222 years ago this month. After the Revolution, he thrived in this remote place, erecting farm buildings, clearing trees, tending crops. Several of his children went on to higher education. Cindy's grandfather, who might have been Joshua's great grandson, was an engineer and jack-of-all-trades who could build just about anything. Her side of the family made it to Ohio, and in her father's time to California.

But New England, as it usually wants to do, draws back the curtain on something uniquely stark and magical about a young country eager to be independent, but just as eager to learn Latin and Greek.

I never believed in ghosts before knowing Joshua, a friendly, playful but sometimes pesky spirit who prompts no fear. I saw him once out of the corner of my eye while hunting with a black powder firearm – a rifle Joshua would have understood. I told Cindy what I had seen, and she replied matter of factly that I had just described her grandfather.

Joshua's descendants – who now number in the hundreds – continue to find this place. As Cindy and Elaine and I stood over the pair of sadly deteriorating stones that mark his grave in the woods, we gave thanks for this American hero, veteran, farmer, and family man who cared about this land. In some ways, all of us can say we're descended from Joshua. 🍷



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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

Sandisfield Historical Society WINE & CHEESE Party on Sunday, November 1, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at the South Sandisfield Meeting House, Route 183. All are welcome to this free event.

Clam River Hike on Thursday, November 5, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Come hike the Clam River Loop with the Berkshire Natural Resources Council. The loop features views of both the Clam and Buck Rivers along with beautiful cathedral pines. Bring water and wear sturdy shoes. Meet at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex, Route 57. Visit www.bnrc.net for more information.

Gallery Opening Reception on Saturday, November 7, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. The Gallery will feature a "Swartz Family Art Show." The exhibit is on display November 7-29 and open during performances and each Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

The film, "Tin," on November 7, 8 p.m. at Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. Based on an 1895 mining scam in England, "Tin" was filmed with a "green screen" effect. A leading role is played by Ben Luxon of Sandisfield. \$10.

New Boston Congregational Church services on Sunday, November 8, 10 a.m. Route 57 near the New Boston Inn.

Special Town Meeting, Monday, November 9, 6:30 p.m., Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road. Four particular articles from Free Cash totaling \$35,388.91. See Town Bulletin boards for details.

Sandisfield Historical Society on Saturday, November 14, at 11:00 a.m. at the South Sandisfield Meeting House, Route 183. This is a planning meeting for interested Historical Society members.

Organics in the Landscape: Healthy Plants = Healthy People on Saturday, November 14, at 10:00 a.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. Rich Lassar and Michael Mugridge from Nature Works Land Care will provide a talk about using organics to grow healthy food and ornamentals in your landscape. \$10.

Forever Young...? Cabaret with Linda Mironti on Saturday, November 14 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. In song and stories, Linda Mironti explores the notion that age has nothing to do with staying young... or does it? \$20.

Paul Green: The Development of Jewish Art Music on Saturday, November 21, at 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. Features Classical, Jazz, and Klezmer clarinetist Paul Green. \$10.

Flower Arranging Class on Monday, November 23 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex, Route 57. \$5, sponsored by the Council on Aging. Make a beautiful Thanksgiving arrangement.

Simon Winchester will read from and discuss his new book, *Pacific*, on Saturday, November 28 at 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. Kirkus Review said of *Pacific* that the author's "passionate research - on sea and land - undergirds this superb analysis of a world wonder that we seem hellbent on damaging."



SAVE THE DATE!

Sandisfield Holiday Party & Fair on Saturday, December 5, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Route 57 Firehouse. Call 258-4906 for more information.

EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Otis Master Plan Steering Committee Informational Meeting, Monday, November 9, 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Otis Town Hall. All are encouraged to attend.

Beekeepers Program on Tuesday, December 1, at 6:00 p.m. at the Monterey United Church, 449 Main Street, Monterey. Choosing the proper beekeeping equipment. Email berkshire-countybeekeepers@hotmail.com to register.

ONGOING EVENTS

Select Board, The Select Board meets at the Town Hall Annex on Mondays. Regular meetings are held at 7 p.m. and working sessions at 2:30 p.m. See posted agendas for meeting schedules.

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 Monday of the month, 7 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 Rd.

Sandisfield Public Library Hours: Monday/Tuesday: 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Wednesday: 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m., Thursday: 2 p.m.-5 p.m., Saturday: 9 a.m.-noon.

Historical Commission: First Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m., Rt. 57 Firehouse.

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AMERICAN LEGION Post 456: Maria Domato, Commander:
258-4578 (April-October) or rainbow2498@embarqmail.com

ANIMAL WARDEN/DOG OFFICER:
Kim Spring: 258-4450

ASSESSORS OFFICE: 258-4701
Office Hours: Tues, Wed, Thurs. 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Meets 2nd Tues: 5 p.m.

BOARD OF HEALTH: Margaret O'Clair: 258-4053
Meets 1st Mon: 6 p.m., Old Town Hall.

BUILDING INSPECTOR: Eric Munson Jr.: 258-4590

CONSERVATION COMMISSION: Meets 3rd Tues: 7 p.m.

CONSTABLES:
Nazario Sanchez: 258-4705 John Burrows: 258-4943

COUNCIL ON AGING: Linda Riiska: 258-4816
Wed: 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Senior Center/Town Hall Annex
Business Meeting 1st and 3rd Wed: 10 a.m.

FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOL:
North Main Street, Otis, 413 269-4466
Jo Ann D. Austin, Superintendent
Thomas Nadolny, Principal

FRRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEES meets 1st Mon: 7 p.m.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Kathy Jacobs: 258-4487
Meets 2nd Sat: 9:30 a.m., Library

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Emergency: 911
Ralph Morrison, Fire Chief: 258-4742

HISTORICAL COMMISSION: Ron Bernard: 269-0012 or
ronbernard@aol.com. Meets 1st Wed: 7 p.m. at Library
(April-Oct); at Firehouse (Nov-Mar)

HISTORICAL SOCIETY: John Kuzmech: 258-4906
Meets 2nd Sat (in season): 11 a.m., the Society's building on Rt. 183

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE:
John Skrip: 258-4788

LIBRARY: Librarian: Terry Spohnholz: 258-4966
sandisfieldlibrary@yahoo.com
Monday & Tuesday: 9-12:30 p.m.
Wednesday: 6:30-8:30 p.m. (April - October)
(Closed Wed: Nov-Mar)
Thursday: 2:00-5:00 p.m.
Saturday: 9-12:00 p.m.

PLANNING BOARD: Gary Bottom, Sr.: 258-4053
Meets 2nd Tues: 6 p.m., Old Town Hall

POLICE-LOCAL: Emergency: 911
Michael Morrison, Chief: 258-4742

POLICE-STATE: Lee Barracks: 413 243-0600

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RECREATION COMMITTEE: Robbin Campetti: 258-4096

ROAD SUPERINTENDENT: Interim Acting Superintendent
Bobby O'Brien, 258-4979

SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER: (May-December)
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SANDISFIELD TIMES: Bill Price, editor: 413 429-7179
Published monthly (Jan/Feb combined)
PO Box 584, Sandisfield or editor@sandisfieldtimes.org

SELECT BOARD: 258-4711
Meets Monday with working session at 2:30 p.m. or regular meeting,
7 p.m. Town Hall Annex. See posted agenda for time.

STATE OFFICIALS:
Benjamin B. Downing, State Senator: 413 442-4008
Email: Benjamin.Downing@state.ma.us
Smitty Pignatelli, State Representative.: 413 637-0631
Email: rep.smittypignatelli@hou.state.ma.us

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE: Kathy Jacobs: 258-4487
Meets 3rd Wed, 7 p.m., Firehouse #2, Sandisfield Road

TAX COLLECTOR: Edna Leavenworth: 258-4977
Mon-Wed: 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE/WIREDWEST:
Jean Atwater-Williams: 258-8000
technology@sandisfield.info

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR: To be announced.
Mon-Thurs or by appointment. 258-4711 or 413-429-8398
Email:sandisfieldtownadm@verizon.net

TOWN CLERK: Dolores Harasyko
PO Box 163 or sandisfieldtownclerk@verizon.net
Town Hall Annex: 258-4075
Mon-Thurs: 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Mon: 6 p.m.-7 p.m. by appt.

TOWN GARAGE: 258-4979

TOWN HALL ANNEX: Mon-Thurs: 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
Secretary: 258-4711; Fax: 258-4225

TOWN TREASURER: Teresa DellaGiustina: 258-4712
or sandisfieldtreasurer@verizon.net Mon/Wed: 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

TRANSFER STATION: Wed: 2 p.m.-5 p.m. Sat/Sun: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

VETERANS SERVICES: Laurie Hills
Great Barrington Town Hall: 528-1580

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