

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

*Tribunus*



*Plebis*

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

*Volume VI, Number 9*

*December 2015*

## Select Board News

### And the Town Proceeds On ... A STEP FORWARD, A STEP BACK

*By Bill Price*

#### **STRAP Grant OK**

As most of the Town knows, Sandisfield was awarded a significant STRAP grant to repair the Rt. 57 bridge across the Farmington River.

#### **\$997,000.**

The grant, from the Small Town Road Assistance Program, run by Mass DOT, is expected to cover just about all of the repair costs.

Now, it's waiting time. Select Board Chairman Alice Boyd said, "We're waiting on the contract from the state before going forward. Grants carry 'special conditions' that may impact how we proceed, so we wait."

The Town is also waiting for the Phase One report from bridge engineers. Preliminary engineering reports said that total replacement of the bridge should not be necessary, though significant repairs were needed. Stringers had

*Cont'd p.10*



*The packed hearing room at the state capitol included Representative Smitty Pignatelli, standing, second from right, back row. (See story page 9.)*

*Photo: Setsuko Winchester*

## Around Town Hall

*By Alice Boyd, Select Board Chairman*

### **RUN IT LIKE A BUSINESS?**

It's a frequent campaign theme and a frequently recited criticism of town government: "Why aren't we running this town like a business."

As someone who runs her own business I can tell you that while you can apply certain business principles to running a town, you can't apply them all.

As a business owner I hire the people I want and pay an above-market salary. I can give big raises to hard workers, bonuses to all, and I can re-assign duties or add to job descriptions. As the owner I can also decide if I want to pour profits into equipment, raise prices, or turn down work. I make the decisions, buy what I need, put personal savings into the business, work weekends, balance the books, and I'm motivated by a bottom line.

Rewind to town hall. We hire by committee, must advertise and post jobs, and we publish everyone's earnings. No merit pay; a 2% annual salary increase for the high achiever as well as the least productive. And the boss rotates with each election cycle!

If we want to invest in technology, Town Meeting must decide. If we want to move money from one line item to another, Town Meeting decides. Pay an old bill? Sure, but this time we need a 90% vote to write the check.

Replacing the roof on the Town Hall Annex was a two-year project. Funds had to be voted by Town Meeting. Jeff Gray prepared specifications and I wrote an RFP loaded with the required legal language. Three ads were placed, one of them on a government website. I applied to the State for the "prevailing wage," a list of minimum hourly wages

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# TRANSFER STATION FEES GO UP

## Services to Go Up, Too

By Tom Christopher


Changes are coming to the Sandisfield transfer station.

In recent years this facility has been short of cash: although the town government budgeted \$60,000 for its operation during the last fiscal year (June 30, 2014-July 1, 2015), the actual cost was approximately \$66,000.

The straitened circumstances have curtailed services. Bulk waste collection, for example, was limited to a period of just one month this year. Sale of recyclables such as cardboard brings in an income that Selectman John Skrip describes as “negligible.”

Money raised by the sale of dump stickers is in the negative numbers – during the most recent year, the program actually lost \$667. The loss experienced by the sticker program is a reflection of the price charged residents for the use of the transfer station. Sandisfield this year charged just \$25 (each purchaser is issued two stickers). The Select Board pointed out that the fee of \$25 was well below the price charged by neighboring towns such as Otis, where a sticker costs \$50, or Monterey where it costs \$60.

The response by the Select Board was to increase the cost of next year’s stickers to \$50.

The plan is to use money raised by the higher fees to improve services. Among the enhancements under discussion are increasing the period of bulk collection, perhaps adding a second month later in the year to serve homeowners closing their residences for the winter, increasing the period when tires are accepted, and enabling the collection of medical waste such as medicines and sharps such as syringes. 

# Update on the American Legion Pavilion

By Maria Domato, Commander, Post #456

The Legion is closed for the winter as our building, the Hamilton Field Pavilion, is unheated.

We made some progress on rehabilitating the pavilion this year, thanks to the volunteer labor of a few of our members. We managed to enclose the bathrooms and section off a room for meetings. We have a nice 10-burner, 2-oven propane range. We have purchased vanities, new windows, and paneling for the bathrooms, and an on-demand water heater, all of which still need to be installed.


But we have a lot to go.

In trying to repair leaks in the roof, I discovered that we just need a new one. The fire pit needs a lot of repair. We need a platform for the propane tank. We need kitchen shelves. All the large cooking pots and dishes that were in a closet in the hallway are now in the kitchen. We need a new barn door for the kitchen, a

new shed, more landscaping, and our new sign put up. Our new sign was painted by a volunteer, Maggie Carroll. Great job, Maggie!

So we will struggle as long as we can. If you feel the Legion and the Pavilion can be of value to the community, your donation of cash, materials, or labor would be happily welcomed.

I grew up in Sandisfield, and I didn't care for it then. But now that I have been to “the big cities” I really love it here. I love being the commander of the legion and will work on the pavilion as long as I am able. My goal is to see a beautiful and functioning building and grounds that can be enjoyed by everyone.

If you desire to do so, you may respond by mail to: American Legion Building Fund, PO Box 88, Sandisfield, MA 01255. Or by email: americanlegionpost456@gmail.com. Or call me at 941-624-2459 (Nov-April) and 413-258-4578 (May-Oct). 




# Hansel & Gretel Coming to Town

A lively production of the world famous fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm, “Hansel & Gretel,” will be performed at the Sandisfield Arts Center on two afternoons at 2 p.m., Saturday, December 12 and Sunday, December 13.

The performances will feature seven children from Sandisfield and neighboring towns and three members of the Sandisfield Players as Father, Stepmother, and Witch. They will include music and dance, with a more elaborate stage setting on the small stage than used in the past. Susie Crofut, set designer, said, “We have done our best to extract all the color and fun possible from this ancient fairy tale.”

*The play rehearsal. From left, Chloe Whyte, Bradley Danyluk, Gabe Lassar, and director Ben Luxon.*

*Photo: Jean Atwater-Williams*

Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$5 for children and those 5 and under are free. They can be purchased by contacting The Sandisfield Arts Center at [www.sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://www.sandisfieldartscenter.org). 



## Support Your Local Post Office

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



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## *Our Thanks to All of You*

The Times is grateful to donors who have responded so far to our 2015 appeal. If you haven't yet but plan to, don't forget to send your tax-deductible donation before the end of the year.

As founding editor Simon Winchester wrote in his appeal letter last month, "... the outside world is noticing us." He quoted the journal of Harvard's Nieman Foundation that The Times "is a robust local report in a place that lacked anything like it." Simon added, "We want to keep it that way. And with your continuing help, we will be proud and happy to do so."

Here is a note that accompanied a donation from David and Arlene Hiller who have a home in Sandisfield:

*In response to your email today, please find a donation to help continue your fine publication. We look forward to each online edition, and we forward it to others. Excellent newspaper!*

Thanks, David and Arlene, and all our other donors.

Next month, remember, is our annual combined January/February issue, available about January 15. Don't miss it, because it will include a report by Tom Christopher about the electricity aggregation plan the Select Board has joined for the Town. You'll want to learn more about the plan from Tom's report.

To all of our readers we extend our hopes for a wonderful holiday season and an excellent 2016.

– Bill Price  
West New Boston



## A Broadband Progress Report

*By Jean Atwater-Williams*

We may not be able to see it, but progress is being made.

WiredWest continues to meet weekly with the MBI on behalf of its member towns, advocating for an efficiently designed regional network that allows towns to share resources, reduce costs, and maximize potential revenue, all while serving the citizens of the region with affordable, state of the art fiber-optic internet.


The MBI has had five qualified companies respond to their RFQ for pole surveys (each of the thousands of telephone poles need to be surveyed to be certain there will be space and strength enough to string the fiber optic cables) and the RFP (Request for Proposal) for the design engineering will be released soon. Once these firms are selected, the detailed planning of the network will begin.

Meanwhile, WiredWest has drafted a comprehensive operating agreement that will spell out the rights and responsibilities of the towns and the cooperative. Workshops were held in early November to solicit input from the towns and review by a number of towns' counsel. Luckily for Sandisfield, our town attorneys, Kopelman and Paige, have agreed to review the agreement pro bono for all the towns they represent, including ours.

WiredWest engaged CTC Technology & Energy, a leading national consulting group with expertise in municipal fiber projects, to provide an independent review of the WiredWest business plan and financial model, which CTC determined is solid and financially sustainable. CTC also made recommendations that WiredWest will incorporate into its business plan.

The Operating Agreement, the revised business plan and financial model, as well as CTC's report should be finalized soon and made available to town select boards and finance committees. It is hoped that the first towns to sign the operating agreement will do so at the WiredWest Board of Directors meeting on January 9 in Cummington.

A reminder campaign is underway in WiredWest towns. Lawn signs will reappear and postcards are arriving at homes that have not yet signed up. Although Sandisfield has achieved its 40% goal, it is important for everyone who wants internet to sign up. A high "take rate" will be one of the factors in determining the order of the build out.

The wheels of progress are turning. Let's help make sure Sandisfield is at the forefront. 



### *Christmas Awakening, 1933*

It's hard to explain  
How the sun disappeared  
Without saying goodbye.  
How the children were quiet,  
And the rivers were dry.

It was December  
And agony cold.  
Life was despairing  
Just one marigold.

But Christmas came anyway,  
Bellowing carols  
And bending its knee  
To beautiful snowfalls,  
Gifts, ribbons, and trees.

When I was a boy  
The graven gave way  
To the kiss and the song  
Of a sweet Christmas Day.

*Val Coleman  
Town Hill Road*

# The New Boston Store Is History

By Ron Bernard

The New Boston Store building is no more. The end came on November 16-17 when a demolition crew's excavator laid the crushed remains into a dumpster.


Early on the morning of October 2, 2013, a runaway asphalt truck careened into the store. According to the driver it was a desperate, split-second maneuver to avoid striking construction workers on the new bridge. Remarkably, there were no injuries or fire. The truck remained grotesquely wedged into the structure for weeks until the building could be safely stabilized, although in a somewhat truncated form.

There it remained, in limbo, for almost two years as lawyers and insurance companies bickered while owners Peter and Susan Murray were homeless and uncertain. Pete died in December 2013, leaving his wife, the former Susan Campetti, to cope with a protracted ordeal.

A general store had operated at this site continuously since at least 1790, initially under the proprietorship of the Browns who are credited with founding the town in 1751. In 1845, Joseph Norton of Otis became the proprietor and replaced the earlier structure with a new building. Prior to 1880, the new store was expanded when another building

about the same size, possibly the former Episcopal church, was attached to it. That structure was what was lost. (See the Store's obituary on page 17.)

The Campetti family has owned and operated the store and occupied the upstairs residence since 1940. Mindful of its historical significance and legacy to the town and the family, Sue Campetti Murray was determined to save what she could and rehabilitate it for a new residence. This fall a salvage company carefully dismantled the store "stick-by-stick," leaving the framework standing.

Crew chief Demetri Menari told the Times, "We tried our best to save as much as possible but the building inspector finally determined that what remained was too unstable for renovation." He said that the family will keep the salvaged posts and beams and other materials as mementos. Sue Murray plans to erect a new home on the site using the same footprint as the store. 

*Top, attempting to save the historic building, mid-September.  
Photo: Bill Price*

*Middle, but by mid-November it could not be saved.  
Photo: Brigitte Ruthman.*

*Bottom, and is now gone.  
Photo: Ron Bernard*



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# New Life for the Old New Boston Schoolhouse

## FIRE DEPARTMENT HOPES TO RAISE \$50,000

By Ron Bernard

One cherished little place in Sandisfield is about to have a new life.

A small wooden building half hidden behind Fire Station #1 on South Main Street, once the former American Legion headquarters and long before that the East New Boston schoolhouse, now owned by the Sandisfield Fire Department, may become a spacious multi-purpose room available for social and community functions and, if the need arises, a gathering place during emergencies.

Officially known as the East New Boston schoolhouse, built about 1840, the building educated generations of children until 1950 when it was closed along with four other surviving schoolhouses. American Legion Post #456 took over the building. The Post's roots trace to 1946 when then New Boston Store proprietor Steve Campetti organized a veterans association. About the same time he was instrumental in establishing the town's fire department. In 1949, the Legionnaires erected a one-bay garage a few feet away and perpendicular to the former schoolhouse. That humble building was transformed in 1983 and enlarged as a handsome brick firehouse. It was attached to the schoolhouse to form today's familiar profile.

In 2014, the property was acquired from the Legion by the Sandisfield Fire Department. The Post is using the proceeds of the sale toward the rehabilitation of its pavilion nearby. (See an update from Post Commander Maria Domato on page 2).

Last month, Fire Chief Ralph Morrison and firemen, EMT squad members, and other volunteers cleared out the interior to prepare for the building's renovation. In a letter to supporters, Ralph said, "We will continue the tradition of the American Legion by making the hall available to residents and organizations to hold functions."

During the Legion's 65-year occupancy the original schoolhouse of only about 800 sq. ft. was altered and expanded to meet the organization's needs. In 1973, a large section was added along the rear.

Self-help is a tradition with this building, as Ralph's crew discovered. Hidden beneath the old sheet rock on the clapboard-sheathing were written the names of individuals who worked on the addition. The names include Buster Hamilton, long-time Post Commander and his wife Fanny and the




*Proposed new community center while still the American Legion headquarters, 2010.*

names of his son, Richard, and Richard's wife, Pat. Richard, Pat, and former Fire Chief Fred Slater may be the only individuals on the list still alive. The inscription also notes that the lumber was donated by Buster, who about the same time guided the construction of the Legion's pavilion.



*Names from 1973 volunteer builders.*

ambitious, Ralph answered, "I am confident that the town will support this as they did our main firehouse in 1990. We raised about \$200,000 then thanks to significant leading donations by several very generous residents and smaller but vital contributions from so many residents, both full-time and seasonal."

The fund-raising campaign got underway in mid-November with an appeal mailed to property owners. Ralph said, "We wanted to get out there at this time because, among other reasons, the donations are tax deductible." Donations may be made to The Sandisfield Volunteer Fire Department, Inc., PO Box 22, Sandisfield, MA 01255. For more information contact Chief Morrison at 413 258-4742. 

*Photos: Ron Bernard*

The building had never been insulated and its use was seasonally limited. Beyond that, the building needs "just about everything," said Ralph, including wiring, electrical, plumbing, windows, and a handicap-accessible bathroom. At least the furnace is in good condition.

Chief Morrison is counting on local tradesmen including individuals associated with the fire department to donate expertise while others will handle carpentry. Essentially this is construction of a small new house, and all the materials have to be purchased.

Ralph estimates that the total project will run about \$50,000. Work will progress through the winter and spring, aiming for an opening in May 2016. Asked if that timeframe seemed

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By Elizur Yale Smith

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# Sandisfield Historical Society



By John Kuzmech

Reflecting on another good year, we would like to thank our friends again. It takes courage and nerve to stand in front of others and talk about your life or make a presentation and take questions. Our monthly meetings over the last year included a mixture of long-term residents relating stories about their years in Sandisfield and historians reporting on interesting aspects of local history. We're grateful to them all.

In June, the always friendly Billy Riiska was interviewed by his daughter, Bethany Riiska Perry. Billy described his rural upbringing here in a bygone time and his revival of his family's homestead and the creation of a working orchard and farm.

In July, the lively historian Bob Grigg of the Colebrook Historical Society discussed transportation and early highways and byways in town.

Also in July, the Society partnered with Teresa Della-Giustina of the Recreation Committee


to sponsor the well-attended First Annual Pet Parade at our Summer Fair.

At our August meeting, author and historian Dr. Charles Russell spoke about his research of the travels of an imaginary Norwegian immigrant – "Wilhelm" – to New England in the early days of this country. Dr. Russell presented an entertaining and well-planned lecture and slide show.

Rosemary Allan did a stellar job presenting her oral history of her long life in Sandisfield and her experiences as a WAC at the end of World War II. All who attended her presentation enjoyed it. A great grandmother of four, Rosemary has lived 60 of her 90 years on Tannery Road.

The Society will wind down the year with two final events.

The Annual Town-Wide Holiday Fair is Saturday, December 5, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., at Firehouse #2 on Rt. 57. We appreciate the new "Gingerbread Man" sign advertising this event that stands at the firehouse. It was painted by Susan Van Sickle, who was told to put her art degree to good use by her jovial friends at our November wine and cheese party.

Our final 2015 meeting will be held Saturday, December 12, at 11 a.m. at the Meeting House, corner of Route 183 and South Sandisfield Road. We will have a potluck meal and exchange a \$10-\$20 grab-bag gift. 

# You Can Win!

## ON DECEMBER 5 AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOLIDAY FAIR

By Laura Rogers-Castro

The Sandisfield Scholarship Committee will host a Penny Auction and Tag Sale during the Historical Society's Holiday Fair.


December 5, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Fire Station #2 on Route 57.

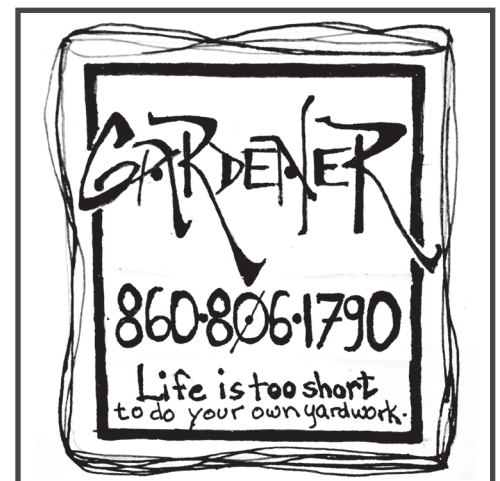
This year's tag sale will be even bigger and better than last year! Many thanks to Lynn Pyenson, of Otis and Elaine O'Brien for their generous donations of items for this year's event.

The Penny Auction has been a feature of the Fair for many years. Participants purchase a set of 100 numbers for \$1.00. Each number is then be placed in a cup next to any item at the auction that the participant would like to win. This year's items include household treasures, children's toys, glassware, decorative pieces, gift

certificates, and much more. And you do not need to be present at 2:00 p.m. when the winning numbers are called.

Show your support for the Sandisfield Scholarship Fund and Historical Society by stopping in for this year's Holiday Fair the first Saturday in December.

And, if you would like, you can contribute to the Sandisfield Scholarship Fund by mailing a check to PO Box 672, Sandisfield, MA, 01255. 



# Christmas Services in Sandisfield

AT THE LITTLE BROWN CHURCH IN THE VALE

By Karlene Blass

Christmas Service at the New Boston Congregational Church will be held Sunday, December 13, at 10 a.m.

Sandisfield is not like other small Berkshire towns. We don't have a town center, a general store, a baseball diamond, an active school house, or even a big white colonial church.

What we do have is the most precious small church building, standing here for over 100 years, dedicated in 1879, and still operating.


The building has such an interesting style of architecture – the most beautiful chestnut woodwork, ceiling designed to resemble the hull of a ship, real church bell (with rope for ringing), unique pocket doors opening to a small pastor's office.

I attended services in November, and the building looks just as it did when I went there for the first time 23 years ago and probably as it did 50 years ago and longer, minus the hand stenciling on the walls and the rice paper window designs.

The service was also enlivening. Pastor Toby Quirk is a good speaker, energetic and thoughtful with an uplifting message for everyone. The service is traditional in format but comfortable with the congregation interacting with the ministry. Although there are two organs and a piano in the church, we sang along to two guitars, which added to the easy, casual feel. The

gathering is a diverse group of men and women sharing a moment in this special little church in our special small town.

If you've never been inside the New Boston Congregational Church, come visit for the annual Christmas Service, or next spring for an hour on a Sunday morning. If you have kids, they might enjoy the unusual building and singing along to a guitar. If you need a break from the hustle-bustle of the larger world, a service at the little church is as refreshing as a morning walk on any of our delightful country roads.

Due to the coming winter, the Christmas Service on Sunday, December 13 is the last service that will be held in the church until March. 

## A Visit to Korea

The pastor of the New Boston Congregational Church, Toby Quirk, recently returned from serving as keynote speaker at the annual conference of "Men of the Morning Calm" in South Korea. The group consists of military personnel stationed at Yongsan Air Base. The border between North and South Korea is one of the most heavily guarded borders in the world.



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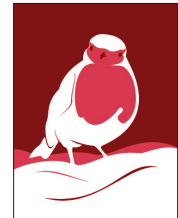
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## Veteran's Day, 2015

*Some two-dozen residents and veterans braved a rainy 41-degree day on November 11 at the New Boston Cemetery to pay homage to our fallen heroes and to all who have served their country. The Reverend Don Peet delivered a stirring message about the importance of remembering our veterans and their sacrifices. A luncheon with military veteran residents at the New Boston Rehabilitation Facility followed. The ceremony was organized by Kathie Burrows, member of the Cemetery Committee and the Historical Commission. Thanks to Kathie and to Maria Domato and the American Legion Post #456 for these events. This event was the first held in Sandisfield; the hope is that it will become a tradition.*

*Photo: Ron Bernard*

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## The Librarian's Corner

By Terry Spohnholz

As I write this, the temperature has dipped into the low thirties indicative of winter fast approaching. And the holidays are descending upon us. So what's on your list?

At the Sandisfield library there is, of course, the New Book List.

Looking for a little murder and mayhem?

- Shadow Play, by Iris Johansen
- The Theory of Death, by Faye Kellerman
- Murder House, by James Patterson
- The Pharaoh's Secret, by Clive Cussler

Or perhaps some new takes on history featuring witches and pirates?

- The Witches, Salem 1692, by Stacy Schiff
- Thomas Jefferson and the Tripoli Pirates, by Brian Kilmeade

Or maybe just beautiful photography and thoughts on the big city life ?

- Humans of New York, by B. Stanton

Or and old but favorite author?

- Avenue of Mysteries, by John Irving.

The coffee is on, the heat as well, so wander in the stacks and peruse a world of stories, fact or fiction, mystery and murder, philosophy and poetry.

Yours truly is working with the Massachusetts Library System to have the Sandisfield Library become part of the E-Book Collection. Hopefully by early spring those who love their Kindles and Nooks will be able to access thousands of titles with a click of their library cards. Oh the glory of technology! This librarian, though, still likes the feel of a solid book in her hands, something about turning pages and colorful bookmarks to mark my progress!

We are pleased to announce that this winter the library will continue to be open on Wednesday nights although the hours have been changed to 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

We continue to have an ongoing book sale, donations from Sandisfield residents. So adopt a book or two. Reasonably priced, \$1.00 for hard covers and 50 cents for paperback (3 for a \$1).

When the Sandisfield Women's Book Group meets in December the discussion will be about *Until I Say Goodbye: My Year of Living with Joy* by Susan Spencer-Wendel. Contact the library or Anita Carr for details.

Oops, I smell hot chocolate laced with whipped cream and a book calling my name, so I leave you with the following quote:

*Whenever you read a good book,  
 somewhere in the world a door  
 opens to allow in more light.*

– Vera Nazarian



## Celebrations at Berkshire Rehab

By Cindy Faggioni, Admissions Director

Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center, located on Sandisfield Road across from the New Boston Inn, recently held two celebrations for residents and guests.

The Annual October Harvest Festival, organized by employees, featured department-sponsored tables laden with hand-made crafts and autumn-baked goods. The food was enjoyed by everyone, including residents, invited guests, and staff members. Gift-basket raffle items were offered, along with a tag sale and live music. The money raised will allow the facility to provide holiday gifts for each of the Center's residents.

Veteran's Day was celebrated in November with many guests throughout the day. In the morning, a servicemen's prayer was offered during coffee time and later a Drum Circle was held by Jami Ray and Brian Green. American Legion, Post #456, joined the residents for a luncheon. Becket Cub Scouts Pack 26 visited, offering handmade cards and a poetry reading in honor of those who served our country. Peter Poirier played guitar during the latter event. The generous donation of a flag cake baked by Christina Campetti from MJ Tuckers Restaurant was a special treat.

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Some of the Sandisfield and other Berkshire County residents who made the trip pose in front of the statehouse. Photo: Setsuko Winchester

# Pipeline Foes Go to Boston

THE STATE LEGISLATURE HEARS TESTIMONY, MOSTLY CON

By Bill Price

After a Quixotic journey to preserve state-conserved forest land, individuals from Sandisfield, Otis, and other Berkshire County townships may actually have skewered the large windmill that is Kinder Morgan.

Over fifty residents and supporters gathered early one November morning in Lee to board a bus to the state capitol in Boston in order to testify and witness before a hearing of the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight. The committee was considering a bill to remove about a half-mile of conservation land in Sandisfield from protection of Article 97 of the state constitution.

Most of the speakers at the hearing referred to their concern that the taking of this small portion for a pipeline expansion would set a precedent that Kinder Morgan would be able to persuade the state to remove many other sections of Article 97 land across the northern part of the state for its new, much larger pipeline proposal.

The testimonies offered pertinent, persuasive, and sometime poignant reasons for the committee to oppose or at least table the proposal.

Both State Senator Ben Downing and Representative William "Smitty" Pignatelli opposed the bill, which had been introduced by a representative from eastern Massachusetts.

Smitty thanked the committee's legislators for their recent visit to Sandisfield where they saw for themselves where the third pipeline would encroach on conserved land. He said he was "disappointed this bill had been filed" and strongly urged the committee to reject the proposal outright.

One of the committee members said that Sandisfield was "a beautiful community," adding that "It was worth the 3-hour ride out to see it."

A delegation from Kinder Morgan presented the energy giant's side of the Article 97 taking and said


they had plans in place to protect old-growth forest, stone walls, and Sandisfield's country roads. They received no applause for their efforts.

Sandisfield Select Board Chairman Alice Boyd argued against the Article 97 taking. She said she was aware of the contradiction of arguing against the pipeline proposal while negotiating with Kinder Morgan for mitigating payments to the town if the pipeline is approved. She said she felt obliged to protect the town in either event. However, she reported at the hearing that an agreed-upon payment offer to the town of over \$1 million had just been withdrawn by the company. Later Alice and the company said that negotiations are continuing. The company announced that "some of the legal language" was yet to be worked out.

Individuals from Sandisfield who testified included Jean Atwater-Williams, Susan Baxter, Alice Boyd, Thelma Esteves, David Hubbard, Kathy Ives Wilcox, and Gloria Spector.

Thelma related how she had been introduced to the unspoiled Spectacle Pond in 1985 by Willard Roosevelt, then a Sandisfield resident. "Willard," she said, "was a grandson of President Theodore Roosevelt, whose administration is renowned for two things: conservation and trust-busting." She said that the committee had an opportunity to continue both traditions by refusing to take this land out of its conserved designation and to strike a blow for trust-busting by opposing energy giant Kinder Morgan's expansion proposal.

Jean Atwater-Williams closed her testimony by posing a question to the committee: "What will be your legacy to the future?"

The next step in the Article 97 process is for the committee, after further review, to issue a statement either in support or opposition of the proposal or request that it be studied further, which would effectively kill the bill for this session of the legislature. 

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december



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directed by Ben Luxon

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children 5 and under free

Join the cast after party for ginger cookies and cider!



Wishing you and yours

Happy Holidays from all of us at the Arts Center



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

## Around Town Hall

(Cont'd from p.1)

we must pay to every possible category of worker. This added 20% to the price of the roofing job and certifications required by the state eliminate most of our local contractors. Our low bidder was from Boston and there were numerous problems with the job. Welcome to the world of municipal government.

In my business I have chosen to hire an accountant and I have an excellent bookkeeper. I make financial decisions with the advice of professionals with years of experience. Here in Sandisfield we elect our Treasurer and Tax Collector. We have good people but, in theory, we could elect someone with no experience at all, and this happens at times. Does it make sense to trust your money to your willing neighbor or would it be better to hire experienced professionals? To me the answer is obvious but we pay these people an absurdly low wage.

I personally agree with the Open Meeting Law and know that this law evolved due to corrup-

tion, insider deals, and some nasty business. And I'm in favor of Mass General Laws around levy caps, bonding, audit requirements, stabilization accounts, and the use of free cash. It's your money and we want to protect it.

But can you imagine running a business and not being able to access your money? Our "free cash" is currently frozen and must be certified annually. Grants are on a "cost reimbursement" basis so we must pay in order to get reimbursed. So million dollar projects like the New Hartford Road reconstruction and rebuilding the Rte. 57 Bridge must be carefully paced and planned so that cash is available to pay contractors. And reimbursement from the state can take months. Don't get me wrong, we're absolutely thrilled to get these grants, they keep our taxes down, but it takes time, fiscal planning, and a truckload of paperwork.


And finally to my point: while we can't expect our town to run like a profit-making business we can recognize the traits that make a good business.

Hard work, an attention to detail, and people

who care. Here in Sandisfield we're incredibly fortunate to have good employees and willing volunteers. Our staff understands the law, they protect your money, and they follow mountains of regulations. At times they work in difficult conditions to keep us safe and they often work on equipment that is outdated and unreliable.

In my own business I treat my employees with respect and I expect that our customers do the same. We're not all going to agree on what should be done, but we can all agree to move forward together, respect our differences, and appreciate the efforts made to comply with the law.

So please, go to Town Hall, to the Highway Department, or to a Fire Department meeting and say thank you. Pat the Finance Committee on the back for doing their job and trying to protect your money. Attend a Conservation Commission meeting while they go through the intricacies of dealing with the pipeline or attend a Planning Board Meeting to take get a glimpse at the new plan that will guide our future.

We're not all going to agree but we all want the same thing. A town that functions well, serves our residents and prepares for the future. 

## Select Board News

(Cont'd from p.1)

rotted from below and caused much of the disintegration of the bridge surface.

Meanwhile, the Town is preparing an RFP for engineering services with the technical assistance of resident Jerry Herman, a recently retired architect who lives on Sandisfield Road. George Wheeler has also volunteered to look at the project. A part-time resident who teaches at Columbia University with a specialty of preservation of historic structures, George recently attended a workshop that included truss bridge rehabilitation.

"The Town," said Alice, "is fortunate to have skilled full- and part-time residents willing to volunteer to help get this bridge back in shape."

### Kinder Morgan and the Town

At the end of October, the Select Board believed that agreement had been reached with energy giant Kinder Morgan to pay the Town a mitigation fee of \$1,085,000 if construction of the pipeline across the Beech Plain section was approved and proceeded.

However, the agreement had not been signed and by mid-November Kinder Morgan said, "Well, maybe not ...." Chairman Boyd had to relate at the Article 97 hearing in Boston that the offer of mitigation had been withdrawn unexpectedly.

Subsequently KM was quoted in other newspapers that "language discrepancies" needed to be ironed out. Alice said that negotiations will resume soon and she expects the agreement will be finalized in a few weeks.

See "Pipeline Foes Go To Boston" on page 9 for more information on this back-and-forth process.

### Road Superintendent

Superintendent applications were to be reviewed at the Select Board Working Session on November 30. An Advisory Committee will make recommendations to the board and interview candidates. The committee includes the Town's selectmen and Barbara Cormier, Sonja Gray (a Mass DOT engineer), Tom Jacobs, Ralph Morrison, Bogart Muller, and Bill Riiska. Meetings will be posted as Select Board Work Sessions and open to the public (although the public will not participate in the interviews).


### Town Administrator

The position of part-time Town Administrator was re-advertised with resumes due November 20. "This is a critical position," said Alice. "We've received some good resumes." Early interviews will be held in executive sessions, with final candidates to be interviewed in public Select Board sessions.

### Other Board News

Master Plan proposals from the Planning Board should be available for the public early next year.

A \$3,692 Forest Stewardship Grant was awarded to the Town to consult with a forester in order to develop a revised plan for the use of Yanner Park.

Town budgets: Selectmen agreed to reduce their annual salaries to \$4,000 each. \$1,500 from the salary cut will be added to the Select Board expense account. All non-union Town employees will receive a 2 percent salary increase for FY2017. Finance Committee and Strategic Planning Committee will reduce their budgets by 10 percent. The Town Clerk's budget for FY2017 has to increase due to State and Presidential elections next year. 



# Trending Here: Young Couples Moving In

## LATEST NEW OWNERS FOR HISTORIC NEW BOSTON HOUSE

By Ron Bernard

After years – actually decades – of stagnant population growth and, lately, declining property values, Sandisfield seems poised for a resurgence of new residents including young couples acquiring venerable old houses and retirees and others who are converting to full-time residence.

Earlier this year *The Times* reported the sale of an historic property on Fox Road to a young professional couple. That purchase followed transfers in 2014 of two antique houses in Montville, both one-time general stores, to new full-time residents from out of town. One more historic house in that neighborhood may soon close. It does feel like a most-welcome trend.

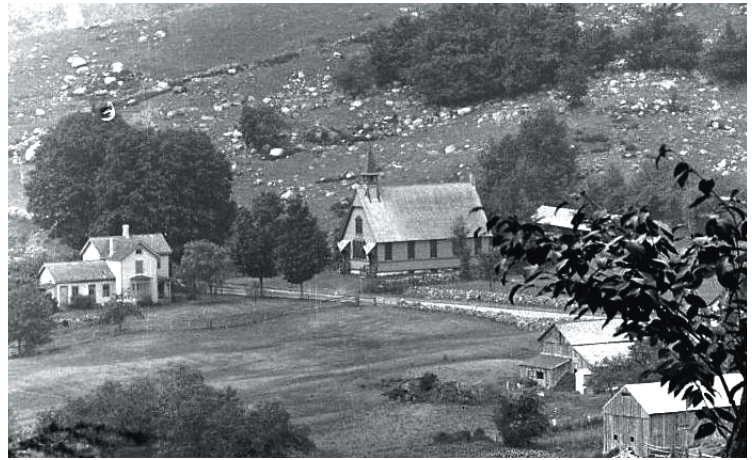


*Anna Konopatskaya and Aaron Dennis in front of their new home.*

In October, the Ransom Gladding House in New Boston, the former part-time residence of the late Marion Bernstein, got a new family. Aaron Dennis and his fiancée, Anna Konopatskaya, are remodeling the interior and updating the systems in their recently purchased Italianate-style home from the 1870s.

A native of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, Aaron is an IT manager at Simon's Rock College in Great Barrington. Anna is from St. Petersburg, Russia, and looks forward to becoming an American citizen in the near future.

Both have international academic and professional backgrounds. They met in Guangzhou, China, where Anna was studying Mandarin Chinese and Aaron was working at the Department of Anthropology at Sun Yassin University. Aaron specialized in analyzing potential environmental and social impacts on indigenous people because of changes caused by new roads and construction of new communities. Previously Aaron worked in Indonesia and Russia. He earned an advanced degree in Asian Studies in Sweden and is fluent in German and Swedish. Anna graduated from the prestigious St. Petersburg Polytechnic Institute with a degree in international relations specializing in economic development in China. She is



*Birds-eye view of the Gladding house across from the New Boston Congregational Church, c. 1906. Photo: Sandisfield Then and Now*

fluent in Russian, English, and Mandarin Chinese. “Is that all?” we asked. “Well, my French is passable,” she said.

***How did this cosmopolitan couple find their way to this corner of the Berkshires?***

Aaron said, “A professor friend who taught at Simon’s Rock invited us up from New York one weekend. We discovered this beautiful area and a less complicated and more affordable life style. We are getting married this month, and this is a great place to settle down.” Why Sandisfield in particular? “We fell in love with the house, and it works with our budget.”

Aaron and Anna have a challenge ahead of them. All the systems need to be updated and a concrete floor poured for the basement. They plan to remodel the interior for modern living while retaining the Victorian-era atmosphere. Anna’s additional background in interior design will be useful.

When high speed fiber-optic broadband finally comes to town, they’ll be ready. “We are going to wire the whole place with high-grade cables. We signed up for Wired West on our first day here. It can’t come soon enough,” Aaron said.

## This New Old House

Aaron and Anna’s new old house was built in 1876/7 by the Gladding brothers, Ransom and Lewis, carpenters from Burlington, Conn., who came to town in the 1860s. Ransom partnered with his boyhood friend, Lucien Hotchkiss of Montville, to manufacture cane chairs in The Old Red Shop at Roosterville. A bit later, his brother Lewis found employment in the same mill building as a mechanic and carpenter for the O. D. Case school furniture company.

Together the brothers built the 2½-story Gladding house opposite the graceful Little Brown Church (1879) at the beginning of Sandisfield Road. The house is historically notable in several respects. It is among a handful of new homes erected in the economic depression era of the 1870s. The house was built in a fashionable late-19th century Italianate-style. Only two or three Italianates were built here; two survive. Well-proportioned, this is an ample home with interesting features particularly a roman arch attic window with a Victorian bay window below. Several subordinate additions were made during the 20th century.

The house is unusually sturdy owing in part to its foundation which consists of granite slabs 12 feet long by 2 feet thick. In 1961, the owners wrote that “these were drawn from a quarry south of New Boston and brought by oxen and sled” to the home site. 🏠

# Council on Aging



By Susan Galik

Our next meeting is December 2. No meeting the 9th. We're back on the 16th. Gone on the 23rd. Back on December 30, during which we'll hold our blood pressure clinic.

On December 5, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., you'll find us at the Christmas Bazaar at Firehouse #2. Along with our basket drawing, we will be selling breads. Banana bread, pumpkin bread. Others have not said what they are making. Some will be full-sized loafs and some will mini loafs. All, of course, will be delicious. See you there.

We have an exciting new clinic to add to our roster - Foot Care. December 15, starting at 9 a.m., and ending at 1 p.m. You'll need an appointment. The 9 a.m. appointment is already taken. Your feet will be inspected and your toenails trimmed. The cost is \$35 per person, but actual cost for any Sandisfield senior (60 or older) will be \$25. \$10 will be subsidized

by the Sandisfield COA. Call Linda Riiska at 258-4816 for an appointment. First come first served.

Line Dancing is winding down and Qi Gong is over now. We will try to hold these classes again in the spring. Please let Linda know at 258-4816 if you are interested.

The Town is about ready to implement a tax work-off program. Please call Linda for further details. This program requires filling out forms and going to Tolland for a training session. The training session hours will be paid and taken off your upcoming property tax bill.


The library will try to be open once a month on Wednesday afternoon to accommodate those who only wish to make one trip around town in a week. So, for at least once a month, you can come to the COA, have lunch, play bingo, go to the library, throw out your garbage, and then go home and relax. Please let Terry the Librarian know if this is something that would make life easier for you.

For those who are looking for medical equipment, we have a list of places to contact to get free, refurbished items. In January we will list the few items we have here at the Town Hall

Annex that are available for loan. Please call or visit us for more information.

We also have access to Mass Options. This is a resource of all Massachusetts agencies that offer services to the elderly and disabled. You can get copies of the list from COA.

Thank you to Berkshire Rehab for having the veterans in for a wonderful roast beef dinner. As the day was rather cold and wet, the warm building, warm food, and warm hospitality were appreciated. Thank you also to Monument Mountain Regional High School. The annual Christmas concert was held on a special Tuesday for the seniors in the community. A small contingent from Sandisfield went and enjoyed the concert and lovely lunch. These two organizations have been holding events like this for years and always make the seniors feel welcome.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and Holiday wishes to you and yours. 

## Dear Sandisfield Residents

### "THANK YOU" FROM THE ELIZABETH FREEMAN CENTER

On behalf of Elizabeth Freeman Center and all those we serve, I want to thank you for donating used cell phones to the Elizabeth Freeman Center throughout the years, and for your most recent donations on November 2. The phones are a big help - we send donated used cellphones to Verizon's HopeLine program and in return receive refurbished phones which we give to clients in danger who need an emergency safe phone.

Your support helps us provide safety, help, and healing every hour of every day to survivors of domestic and sexual violence from all over Berkshire County. We serve over 3,000 such survivors every year.

Each day I am awed by the courage of every family that makes it to us, awed by those doing the work as staff or volunteers (often because of their own experiences), thankful to those who bravely speak out, and thankful for people like you. Thank you again and warmest wishes,

Janis Broderick  
Executive Director

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# Hiking Along The Knox Trail

Photo: Jim Moore

A group of eager hikers made their way about two miles along the historic Knox Trail in Sandisfield in mid-October. This trail section was the last to be surveyed by Tom Ragusa of the Mass DCR and the Otis Historical Commission, and this was the first time he led hikers along this segment. Here the trail leads from the dam at Upper Spectacle Pond to the Farmington River at Rt. 8.

In the photographs is the “Cleft & Twain” rock, a prominent waypoint near the site of Henry Spring’s Continental Tavern that helped guide 18th century travelers. The outcropping appears on old maps and was an important clue in Tom’s 30-year quest to survey the original trail. Tom has identified four waypoints like the Cleft & Twain rock that served as trail markers, two in Sandisfield and two in Otis. 

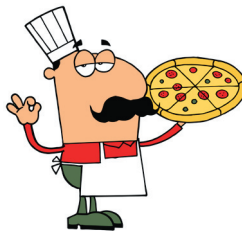


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# The Good/Same Old Days

Compiled by Bill Price

The Sandisfield Times began covering local news five years ago. Before that, *The Sandisfield Newsletter* reported locally for two decades from 1987 to 2007.

And before the *Newsletter*, there was *The Record*.

*The Record* was a lively presence in Town from 1981-1985. Published every other week, the paper at first consisted of news from Sandisfield, Tolland, and Otis, later expanding to include Monterey and New Marlborough. *The Record* depended on advertising for its expenses. The publisher/editor of *The Record* was Phil Blampied, then of Sandisfield and now of Maine.

When a few local residents began the work of founding *The Sandisfield Times*, one resident, Liana Toscanini, got in touch with Phil and asked

him for his experiences publishing a paper here. In reply, Phil sent her a few copies of his newspaper. Liana passed them to me when I became editor in 2012. She said, "You'll like these."

Reading those few now antique issues of *The Record*, I'm reminded that things haven't changed all that much: then, the town didn't have enough money; school expenses were too high; roads needed repair and cost too much; there was an odor of gas lingering over the pipeline; some of the names in the news then are still making news in Sandisfield.

Following are summaries and excerpts from some of the "same/good old days."



February 1982. Sandisfield students took their lunch boxes and a lot of enthusiasm as they left school on the way to a week's vacation. The school is now Town Hall Annex. (Photo by Don Victor)

Serving Monterey, Sandisfield, Otis and Tolland, Mass.

## THE RECORD

20 cents

Volume 1, No. 19

November 28, 1981

### Issue of May 30, 1981

- Sandisfield "has started to go after taxpayers who are behind in their real estate payments." "With tax revenues crimped under Proposition 2½, the town can hardly afford to let anyone duck paying their share."
- The Hit'N Miss restaurant, which stood where Villa Mia is now, received a beer and wine license after a nine-month effort.
- Using a radar unit borrowed from the Monterey police, the Sandisfield police nabbed five speeders on Rt. 8 on Sunday evening, May 17.
- At Town Meeting, voters rejected a request for \$9,000 to buy a new police cruiser despite Chief Stephen McCuin's contention that the old cruiser was in bad shape and further repairs was "throwing good money after bad." He said, "Even the dashboard is held together by Crazy Glue."

- A dramatic drug bust: Massachusetts and Connecticut state police and the federal Drug Enforcement Agency converged on the parking lot of the Silver Brook Grille about 11:25 p.m. on May 20 to arrest three alleged marijuana sellers. Police Chief McCuin said, "7 or 8 cars appeared out of nowhere and people running around like you wouldn't believe." Some neighboring residents thought a fight was going on, and one told *The Record*, "I almost called the police."
- The State ordered the Town to "clean up the hillside and brook below the town's trash compactor." State said the town had to do something about the "white trash," such as refrigerators and stoves behind the compactor. "The rear slope of this site is an open dump in gross violation of the sanitary landfill regulations." Wanted the town to set up a box for trash disposal, clean up, grade and seed the back slope of Montville Hill down to the Buck

River, to discontinue use of the dump for waste wood disposal, and set aside an area for salvageable trash. The town formerly had an open box for trash too large for the compactor, but it cost \$175 plus dumping fees so the town discontinued the box and carting service. The Town's response was that "it simply has no money to pay for the work."

- The Sandisfield Arts Committee scheduled a performance by the Mountain Laurel Band at the Town Hall, "just off Rt. 57 behind the Silver Brook Grille."
- The New Boston Church held a card party. Door prize was a quart of maple syrup donated by the Pease brothers. Refreshments were donated by Betty Wilber, Miffie Furlani, and Elizabeth Spring.
- Turkey hunting season reopened after many years of no hunting, as wild turkeys were beginning reappear in the woods, thanks to state stocking efforts.

**Issue of February 20, 1982**

- A gas odor provoked a pipeline search. "Town officials in Sandisfield and Tolland worried that they might have had another gas line emergency on their hands when a resident reported a strong smell of gas along the pipeline route. Several dirt bike riders were using the pipeline route when they noticed the gas smell." The Tenneco gas company told town officials "not to worry: the smell was coming from gas that had been trapped in ice and snow along the pipeline." Melting ice was freeing the fumes.
- The Sandisfield School "is looking for volunteers with knowledge of computers to help the school decide if it would make sense to acquire a small computer."
- New Boston Inn foreclosure. "After losing their liquor license for non-payment of property taxes in Sandisfield, the owners of the New Boston Inn lost the Inn itself as the Woronoco Bank of Westfield foreclosed on the property." The Inn was bought at the foreclosure auction for "just over \$40,000."
- Town Clerk Flora Rhodes contributed a column titled "Sandisfield Siftings." In it, she reported:
- *Buster Hamilton gave his fellow legionnaires notice that he would not accept the office of Commander of Post 456 again, an office he had held, with the exception of two years, since 1961. "Hamilton Field was named in Buster's honor in recognition of his many years of service and tireless contributions to the organization."*
- *Folks were saddened to learn of the February 5 death of Lillian Palmer in Tempe, Arizona. Several generations of the Palmer family, which arrived in town in 1935, delivered the mail over a period of nearly 40 years. Lillian also owned and operated the Silver Brook Grille for many years before selling the business in 1978."*

**Issue of September 3, 1983**

- Selectmen got a detailed legal lesson from town counsel on the fine points of discontinuing and abandoning roads. "The gist of it


is that there is no simple way for a town to get out of its responsibility to maintain its roads."

- Selectmen agreed to "the request of police chief Michael Morrison to name his brother Ralph assistant chief." Ralph was already the fire chief in Sandisfield.
- Traffic accidents plagued Rt. 8. In August a Canadian trucker was killed when his truck flipped over near the turn by the Hryckvich saw mill. Two days later a second truck rolled over near the gas pipeline and a few days after that a truck loaded with lime turned over at the corner by the saw mill. On August 20, a car and truck collided by the New Boston Store. Then a truck lost its trailer on Rt. 8 just north of the Otis town line. In response the state police increased radar surveillance and load-weight testing. On August 19, a state police radar unit working with Sandisfield police chief Michael Morrison ticketed a dozen vehicles between 10 and 11 p.m. Said Mike: "We could have ticketed every car that went by."
- Paul and Susan Van Sickle, with their children Amy, Hannah, and Andrew and a neighbor on Rood Road, Elise Friend, called on Gertrude Johnson in Southbridge.
- Esther Dame of Longview, Texas, left after a 10-day visit with her brother and sister-in-law, Ed and Edna Riiska.
- Sandisfield will have to redo its tax classification hearing because the assessor's failed to include personal property when they submitted figures to the state.

**Issue of May 11, 1985**

- In order to trim back the overall town budget to make room for a 15.6% increase in the school budget, Selectmen cut back on the snow and ice budget, the stabilization fund, and the reserve fund. This move kept the town on the edge of allowable increased under Proposition 2½. The school budget was \$420,000, 3/5th of the town budget of \$687,000.
- The Planning Board sought voter approval of a \$5,000 master plan study to be conducted by Berkshire County Regional Planning Commission. The study

would catalogue current land use, map soil types, and analyze current land use and population growth and suggest what parts of town should be encouraged to grow and which shouldn't. The study would provide the town with suggested by-laws to carry out its recommendations.

- A Town Selectman wanted the names of students who were frequently absent from Monument Mountain High School and Searles Middle School. In his opinion, the Town could withhold tuition payments for those students. "I don't think we have to pay if they don't go to school." The Town's business agent replied that "if they're registered, you have to pay." The truancy was acknowledged by the school superintendent, who said, "There's a portion of the population here for whom it's hard to enforce attendance because you don't get any cooperation." 

**Remember These Places?**

The Record was supported by local advertisers, many of which are still serving customers, although most are alive in memory only.

Advertisers included Marie's General Store on Rt. 57; the Knox Trail Inn; Butternut Day Camp; the Mahawai Theatre in Great Barrington; Giles Real Estate; Benchmark Realty; the New Boston General Store (which advertised a 12-pak of Bud cans or Miller bottles for \$8.50); Hit-N-Miss Homestyle Cooking, Rt. 8; Allen's with Joyce & Tuffy, Proprietors, Rt. 8 (Allen's is now TJ Tuckers).

Several businesses in Winsted advertised in The Record: dry cleaners, clothing stores, a nursery, a funeral parlor, a grocery, a bike shop. One advertiser still in business and still serving great food: ABC Pizza on Main Street.



## Bridge to Nowhere

The 1967 flood control reservoir called Colebrook River Lake that straddles the town line between Sandisfield and Colebrook remained at very low levels through October when this picture was taken. The former bridge across what used to be the Farmington River reappears in exceptionally dry years, along with the usually submerged old Route 8 which is used by many astonished sight-seers. The last time the bridge appeared was during late summer, 2012.

Photo: Jean Atwater-Williams

# Author, Author

By Bill Price

John Kelly and Simon Winchester, two Sandisfield authors, published major non-fiction books in October.

John Kelly's "Never Surrender: Winston Churchill and Britain's Decision to Fight Nazi Germany in the Fateful Summer of 1940" is a vivid account of the decisive six months when Winston Churchill – by his choice of words and the strength of his determined voice – set the tone for Britain and her U.S. ally at the beginning of World War II.


John's research of government papers, war cabinet reports, private diaries, and memoirs provided him with a book that one reviewer described as an "outstanding, gripping read by a popular historian." The reviewer added that the book "blends colorful biographies, pungent anecdotes, and a solid grasp of the great strategic issues."

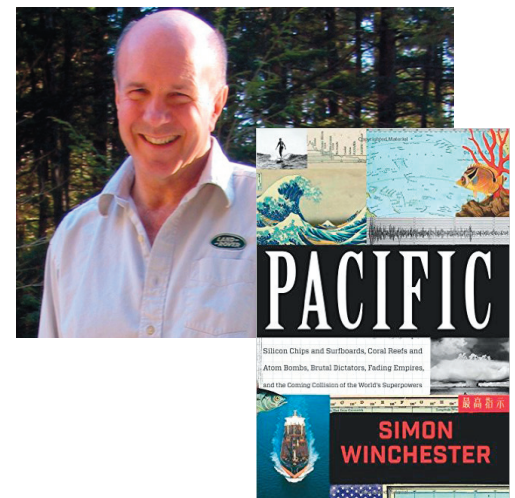
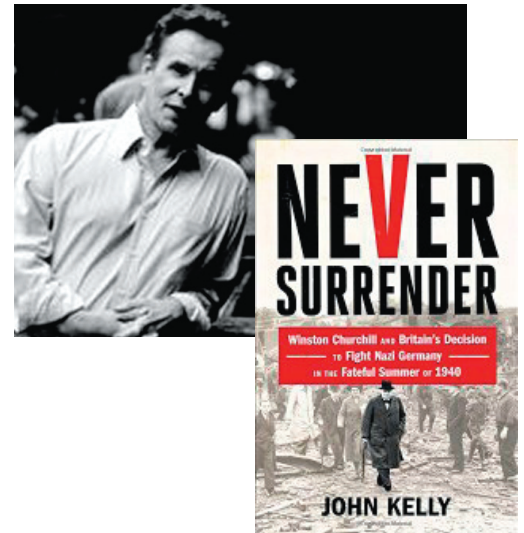
John, who with his wife, author Sheila Weller, has a home on North Beech Plain Road, said that as he tracked morale journals maintained by individuals from May to September, 1940, he could clearly see how the public mood was shifted from despair and dependency to hope

and a sense of eventual victory almost entirely due to Churchill's rhetoric. "He talked them into victory," John said.

Simon Winchester's new book, "Pacific: Silicon Chips and Surfboards, Coral Reefs and Atom Bombs, Brutal Dictators, Fading Empires, and the Coming Collision of the World's Superpowers," can be seen as a companion to his earlier book on the other ocean, "The Atlantic."

According to one reviewer, Simon's book, a kind of biography of the Pacific, is, a "superb analysis of a world wonder that we seem hellbent on damaging." A reviewer of "Pacific" wrote in the November 22 Sunday New York Times Book Review that Simon "has emerged as one of those increasingly rare geographic generalists, migrating from region to region, sharing with his readers an almost tactile sense of the earth, its history and its peoples."

Simon recently returned home to his wife, Setsuko, after seven weeks on the road, three of them in the United Kingdom and Canada and four in the U.S. on a 13-city book tour from Boston to San Diego, New York to Seattle. He and Setsuko live on Silverbrook Road. 





# ❖ Comings & Goings ❖

## THE NEW BOSTON STORE (c.1790-2015)



1892, New Boston

The New Boston Store, one of the oldest surviving members of Sandisfield, departed the scene unexpectedly on November 16, 2015. Her demise was the result of a serious road accident two years ago which shocked the community.

A progeny of the Daniel Brown family, considered the founders of Sandisfield, she was known to be at least 225 and possibly as much as 255 years old. A birth record was never found. Historians believe she may have been the oldest continuously operating store of her kind in this country and was the last of a long line of general stores in Sandisfield.

Although caretakers managed to stabilize her condition and were optimistic about recovery and a new future as a residence, ultimately specialists concluded there was no hope.

During her long life she witnessed the sweep of American history, including the birth and development of the Town, the Colonial era and the Revolution as well as all of the important events and innovations that have shaped the American nation and society.

In about 1850, she was provided a new home by Mr. Joseph Norton at the same location which was expanded several years later, due to improving local economic prospects. Subsequently she resided with the Town's leading families, including the Northways, Demings, and Stricklands. Since 1940 she was in the hands of the Campetti family.

She was known for her dependability, regardless of weather or emergencies such as floods and precarious ice jams on the nearby Farmington River. Even recurring traffic accidents at the location did not deter operations. She was very adaptable as times changed. For many years she distributed the daily mail and newspapers. All her life she provided life's essentials.

Most of all, the New Boston Store will be remembered for her warmth and hospitality as the center of village life across four centuries from the pioneer days into modern times. She was a treasure and will be missed.



1945, Courtesy of Richard Hand



1902



1920s



2010



2010, Proprietor Pete Murray



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# NOW HEAR THIS!

*Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.*

*Please send notices for Now Hear This! to [calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org).*

## DECEMBER EVENTS

**Sandisfield Holiday Fair** on Saturday, December 5, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Route 57 Fire Station #2. Penny Auction, HUGE tag sale, 50/50 Raffle, Crafts, Bake Sale, and Santa! Call 258-2898 for more information.

**Hansel & Gretel** on Saturday, December 12 at 2:00 p.m., and Sunday, December 13 at 2:00 p.m., at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. Featuring the Sandisfield Players and children from Sandisfield and neighboring towns, the production of the Brothers Grimm fairy tale will be staged with music and scenery and directed by Ben Luxon. Adults: \$15, children \$5. Children under 5 are free. Tickets can be purchased by contacting the Arts Center on their website: [www.sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://www.sandisfieldartscenter.org).

**In the Gallery: Children's Art Show** on Saturday, December 12 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. In conjunction with the theatrical production of Hansel and Gretel.

**Historical Society Year-End Meeting** Saturday, December 12, 11 a.m., at the Meeting House, Rt. 183 and South Sandisfield Road. Pot-luck lunch and \$10-20 grab-bag gift exchange.

**Christmas Service** on Sunday, December 13, at 10:00 a.m., at the New Boston Church on Route 57. All are welcome.

## EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

**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: [berkshirecountybeekeepers@hotmail.com](mailto:berkshirecountybeekeepers@hotmail.com) to register.

**Otis Historical Society Meeting** on Wednesday, December 2, at 1:00 p.m. at the Farmington River Diner on Route 8 in Otis. President Lynn Pyenson will provide light refreshments. The guest speaker will be Colebrook Historian Robert Grigg. All are welcome.

**Holiday Market Place** on December 5 and 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Berkshire Botanical Garden on 5 West Stockbridge Road, in Stockbridge. Visit the Market Place for wreaths and tabletop decorations. For more information, visit [www.berkshirebotanical.org](http://www.berkshirebotanical.org).

## 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, 6 p.m., Old Town Hall. Chair is Kim Spring, 413-717-7034.

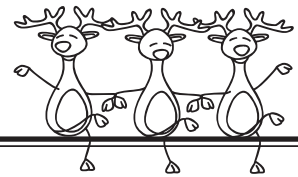
**Council on Aging**, every Wednesday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Senior Center, Town Hall Annex. Pot luck lunch at noon, bingo at 1 p.m. Free blood pressure screening every fourth Wednesday.

**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: 5 p.m.-7 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.



## 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

Santa and Mrs. Clause will be there. So will the Grinch! 11-1

HUGE Tag Sale, Crafts  
Bake Sale, 50/50 Raffle

Lunch Available

Fee of \$15 for a Spot



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*Those who responded to our  
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are acknowledged on page 18.*



*The Sandisfield Times* is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization staffed by volunteers from the Sandisfield community and funded by individual and business sponsors. Its mission is to connect the community through reliable, regular, and relevant information. The paper is published 11 times each year, with a joint January-February issue and monthly issues thereafter.

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Monterey include the Library, the Store, and the Roadside Cafe. Available also at the Southfield Store in New Marlborough. Back issues are available for purchase.

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*Editor: Bill Price*

*email: [w.billprice@gmail.com](mailto:w.billprice@gmail.com) or cell 413.429.7179*

*Advertising/Subscriptions: Ron Bernard*

*Graphic Design: Tina Sotis*

*Website: Jean Atwater-Williams*

*Now Hear This!: Laura Rogers-Castro*

*Founding Editor: Simon Winchester*

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