

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



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Volume VII, Number 3

June 2016

Pipeline Standoff

JUDGE KICKS THE CAN ...

By Ron Bernard

Despite Kinder Morgan's official abandonment last month of its colossal new gas pipeline across northern Massachusetts, KM's relatively small Sandisfield loop expansion proposal is, improbably, still far from resolved.

Two years ago few imagined that this expansion could be stopped or even delayed. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission virtually always approves interstate gas pipelines, and the Sandisfield expansion, in an existing right-of-way, seemed as cut-and-dried as could be. Certainly more gas would pass, starting in November 2016. Rubber-stamp, everyone thought.

But, over the past two years, state-wide opposition to both pipeline projects grew to include U.S. and state representatives, the Massachusetts Attorney General, environmental activists, local residents and neighbors, townships, land conservation groups, anti-fossil fuelers, and Native American organizations. Among others. So, on April 15 when Berkshire Superior

Court Judge John Agostini promised a speedy decision about the state Attorney General's motion to prevent KM's subsidiary, Tennessee Gas, from cutting trees before all permits had been issued, opponents were guardedly optimistic.

Judge Agostini confirmed the Sandisfield case was complicated because Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution requires a legislative waiver which had not been forthcoming. He warned that if the case had to climb the legal ladder there could be a challenge to long-settled law and the system itself, with unintended consequences for the nation. He referred to the 1938 US Natural Gas Act and the Supremacy clause of the US Constitution which allows companies and others to seize private land – and even public property like protected Otis State Forest – if necessary.

The Massachusetts Attorney General argued that a 1991 ruling by the US Supreme Court allowed for an exception, and that the Sandisfield case met those principles.

Both sides anxiously awaited the judge's decision which finally came on May 9.

No one should have been surprised when Judge Agostini ruled in favor of the company. As matters stood, he said, the Gas Act and FERC's authority preempted even Article 97. He could not disregard such established law and practice.

Instead, he decided to split the baby and recommended a delay to July 29, the end of the 2016 legislative session, in order to

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Town Meeting 2016

THE RETURN OF BUSINESS-AS-USUAL

By Ron Bernard



Fifty-six stalwart voters, mostly the usual civic-minded suspects, did their duty on a beautiful May 14 morning to attend the at-least-254th annual town meeting.

Town leaders have apparently decided to change the venue to Fire Station #2 rather than the comfortable Old Town Hall where meetings had been conducted since the 1840s. Recently the Town Meeting has hosted crowds several times the size of this year's event as residents weighed in on major issues like "No-Pipeline, No-Way" or to vote big money toward high-speed internet service or a costly new dump truck.

This year the theme seemed to be "steady-as-she-goes."

Somehow these meetings always seem to end up with the same number of warrants, about 75, ranging from a minuscule \$1 to almost \$1.5 million. All but four warrants passed unanimously and even those four passed, though with abstentions. This may say something about the confidence that informed residents have in the way the administration is running things.

A few warrants triggered questions and debate.

Article 3 set the tone, asking if voters would approve \$39,700 for a proposed (experienced) part-time Town Administrator, some benefits included. It is anticipated that the Town will

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Town Meeting 2016

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share this individual's services (and benefits cost) with another town.


Article 7, to approve a 41% raise (\$9,260) for the Board's Administrative Assistant together with a new title as "Executive Secretary," raised eyebrows. Position-holder Dolores Harasyko stated that she had been promoted by the Select Board following the resignation of the former Town Administrator. Board Chairman, Alice Boyd explained that a new job description was in process that would include significant new responsibilities. Article 7 passed, with a number of abstentions. It is unclear if the new title and increased remuneration will remain when and if a new Town Administrator is installed.

Article 12 was educational. It requested a significant new amount – \$15,000 – to establish a "Treasurer's Tax Lien Expense." "What is that?" someone asked. Selectman Jeff Gray said that delinquent property taxes "are going up drastically." With Town Treasurer Teresa DellaGiustina not at the meeting, questions

about the level and trend of the problem and what was being done about it were left hanging.

Article 13 sought an installment of \$3,500 to pay for an audit of Sandisfield's books. Many were surprised to learn that Sandisfield has not been audited since at least 2007, despite state guidelines that audits should be done "every three or four years," according to Town Clerk Harasyko.

Alice Boyd added, "This is important because the lack of a recent audit precludes us from bonding." Selectman Gray said that an audit is scheduled for August. It is unclear why there have been no audits in such a long time.

Projected school expenses stated in **Article 28** are \$1.43 million, representing 45% of the total Sandisfield expenditures (\$3.144 million). The sum includes an increase of \$56 thousand for FY2017 due to higher salaries and more for employee health insurance. The budget was under pressure as well because of state-mandated "special-ed" costs. Select Board member John Skrip, representative to the regional school committee, offered some encouragement that costs may be tempered by upcoming negotiations. 

Reminder

SHARPS AND MEDICAL WASTE


By John Skrip, Selectman

The Select Board has set June 18, Saturday, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., as the drop-off date and time for medical and sharps waste disposal.

Sharps (used needles) and expired medications are difficult to dispose of properly. Our agreement with Med Waste will allow for the annual disposal of these items at Fire House #2.

Residents should dispose of sharps (must be in a small plastic sealed container) and outdated medicine including liquids (properly sealed) in the disposal containers that will be available at Firehouse #2. The disposal containers will then be picked up by Med Waste.

This one-day pick-up should allow sufficient time for proper disposal of sharps and medical waste, but if for some reason you will be unable to dispose of your items on that date please call John Skrip at 413-258-4788 to make other arrangements.

The Select Board thanks the Sandisfield Fire/Ambulance service for funding this program and for the COA members for bringing this need to our attention. 

An Energy Search


By John Skrip, Selectman

The Sandisfield Energy Committee has requested a letter of interest from regional energy commercial companies.

The committee has three short-term goals:

- Find companies that may be interested in leasing and locating an alternative energy farm in Sandisfield.
- Determine if there is a financial advantage in this company providing electricity to the town buildings such as the two town halls and the highway department.
- Decide if there is a financial advantage in this company providing electricity to town residents.

This is an exploratory committee and all information will be presented to town residents at Select Board meetings and through The Sandisfield Times.

The Energy Committee members are David Hubbard, Peter Levine, and Mike Lutynski. John Skrip is the liaison between the committee and the Select Board. 

Election Results

Sandisfield's elections for town government were held on May 16, 2016. In all, 268 voters came out, of a total of 571 registered voters in town (47%).

Jean Atwater-Williams was elected Moderator with 199 votes; 67 ballots were left blank and with 2 write-ins ("all other").

Alice Boyd was re-elected Selectman with 190 votes; Bethany Perry received 77, and all others 1.

Lisa Leavenworth was elected Tax Collector with 216 votes, 51 blank, all others 1.

Ralph Morrison was elected Auditor with 189 votes, 77 blank, all others 2.

Bethany Perry was elected to the Board of Assessors with 204 votes, 62 blank, and all others 2.

John Skrip was elected to the School Committee with 194 votes, 60 blank, and all others 14.

Kim Spring was elected to the Board of Health with 237 votes, 31 blank.

Robert O'Brien, Jr. was elected to the Planning Board with 193 votes, 72 blank, and all others 3.

Kathie Burrows was elected Library Trustee with 207 votes, 60 blank, all others 1.

Ballot Questions #1 and #2 both passed with 170 "yes" votes, 95 "no" and 3 blank. 

Town of Sandisfield Highway Department

The Town of Sandisfield is accepting applications for the position of Equipment Operator/Laborer.

The applicant must be able to lift a minimum of 50 pounds, have construction and mechanical knowledge. The applicant must be willing to do labor work, drive truck, and plow snow. Must be able to follow written and verbal instructions and have knowledge of various types of construction equipment. A CDL Class B license, Hydraulic Class 2A, and a 4G Mowing License are required within 90 days of hire date.

Please submit resume and three references to Town Hall Annex, 66 Sandisfield Rd., PO Box 90, Sandisfield, MA 01255. Phone 413-258-4711 or email to sandisfieldtownclerk@verizon.net.

Review of resumes will begin June 6, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. and continue until position is filled. The Town of Sandisfield is an EEO/AA employer.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The Election

The voters reelected Alice Boyd, who after filling a vacant seat for a year now has a three-year term. Possibly the most qualified and experienced Select Board member we've had in the office in many years, Alice is able to devote a lot of time and energy to the job.

Our thanks to the Council on Aging for their Meet the Candidates forum, chaired by Barbara Cormier. About two dozen voters attended.

The Times asked Susan Galik of COA to report on the forum, and Susan wrote a thorough article but because the forum took place shortly before the election it was too late for our May issue and too early for June. Next year Barbara has said we will time things better so the news can be reported.

Susan wrote, "Each year at these forums I have learned something interesting and/or informative about the Town and how it's run." She pointed out that several rumors were quashed

at the forum, writing that "I will end with my father's (Fred Slater's) favorite saying. 'If rumors and gossip were airplanes, this Town would be an airport.'" Timing between COA and The Times will be better next year.

A Historic Offering

A couple dozen of our neighbors and friends are travelling to England at the end of June to perform "Our Town" at an important performance venue in what used to be our Old Country. Players, mostly amateurs from small towns in New England, will produce the quintessential American play about our country's values and ethics, in effect returning to the land where many of us began to inform our English cousins what we became. Ticket sales for the seven performances over there are nearly sold out. This is, in fact, an historic event, and Sandisfield should be proud of it.

Bill Price
West New Boston

IN D MAJOR

I need a strong June
That smithereens this winter past.
I need a strong, old-fashioned chord
That celebrates our trees and tongues
Instead of hate and hurt and sass.

I need a careful and a thoughtful month
With everyone aboard.
In a world that's fresh from rain,
That's clean again.
I need a Hallelujah Chorus of a chord.

Val Coleman
Town Hill Road



TOWN NEWS

By Bill Price

Select Board Chairman

Alice Boyd was reelected chairman of the Select Board at the May 23 meeting. With member John Skrip's absence at this meeting and that he would be absent again the following week, member Jeff Gray suggested that the vote be delayed until John could attend. After back and forth discussions, including the legality of the board operating without a chairman for two weeks, and after more than a dozen residents in the audience held up signs proclaiming "We Support Alice for Chair of BOS," Jeff acknowledged that he would be voting for Alice anyway so they may as well do it now. They did.

Bridge Update

Phase One (study work) on the Rt. 57 bridge near the Town Library will be complete by June 23. The Select Board will receive options from the engineers at that point and determine how the town will file with the state.

Select Board Chairman Alice Boyd said, "Because we didn't receive the signed STRAP contract back from the State until April 23, we could not start earlier. We're definitely behind schedule, but moving forward as quickly as possible."

The Movie at the Silverbrook

A construction crew has been working inside the former Silverbrook Café where Karen Allen of Great Barrington will direct a film of Carson McCuller's short story, "A Tree, A Rock, A Cloud." The place is being returned to the look of the late 1940s, and filming will include a row of vintage automobiles parked outside. The 12-year-old actor from Housatonic who will play the young boy in the film has been learning to ride a 1947 bicycle.

During shooting the week of June 13-20, traffic on Rt. 57 may need to be stopped occasionally. Signs will alert drivers. The film staff said, "We'll try not to inconvenience people too terribly."

Town Treasurer

Select Board Chair Alice Boyd and Treasurer Teresa DellaGiustina have been reorganizing the town's financial department, to be effective July 1. Teresa, who holds a full-time job outside of Sandisfield, will step down as Treasurer but will stay on with the town as an assistant to provide backup and continuity. Alice said, "Teresa has been invaluable moving the reorganization forward."


Two newly created positions of Town Accountant and Town Treasurer will be part-time and are currently posted at Town Hall Annex. Teresa has met with former Department of Revenue Representative Dennis Mountain who has

expressed interest in pursuing the accountant position, and Alice and Teresa met with Terry Spohnholz, a former municipal auditor and currently Town Librarian, who may be interested in the Town Treasurer's position.

Broadband Struggle Continues

The Board is working with MBI to sort out the delays and complications of the town ever receiving broadband internet service. Some towns are considered "going it alone," while others are still opting for a unified solution. A hopeful note was sounded because it was pointed out that when New York Times correspondent Paul Krugman recently purchased a home in Monterey he didn't know he would not have adequate internet access there. It was suggested that Krugman might write a column about his inadvertent return to the 20th century and our wirelessness might get some attention in The Big Town.

Spectacle Pond Park?

Supported by the Select Board, the town's Planning Board has been meeting with the Department of Conservation & Recreation to consider the feasibility of converting the several Spectacle Pond cabins into summer rentals. A grant would be sought to pay for the rehabilitation and income would accrue to the town. The DCR and Planning Board are also considering building a town beach at the pond and linking most of the town's hiking trails. 

The Players in Rehearsal

FIRE COMPANY PERFORMS A DIFFERENT KIND OF RESCUE

By Flora Parisky



Taking a small-town production in New England to a famous outdoor stage overlooking the Cornwall coast in England is a wonderful opportunity.

But realities have to be met in order to bring the Sandisfield Players onto that much larger stage for a one-week, seven performance run of "Our Town."

The cast includes 25 cast and crew including a fiddler, all from Sandisfield and neighboring communities. Their performances in England will be June 27-July 1.

One of the big challenges facing Ben Luxon, the world-famous baritone turned director here in the Berkshires, was to lead this local group from performing on the 15x33 foot stage at the Sandisfield Arts Center to commanding the grand 25x60 foot stage at the Minack Theatre in Cornwall. The outdoor stage is about twice the size of what the cast is used to.

And the audience? That will be much bigger too. The sold-out audiences at the Arts Center, packed in on the play's two-day initial run in 2013, were about 100 people. The capacity of the Minack is 700.

To help the cast get used to the larger space, Ben originally thought the chairs in the Arts Center could be moved out of the audience space and the floor taped to simulate the stage. A scouting trip to the Minack in March made it evident that

a much bigger rehearsal space would be needed. And it would have to be available for six weekends of rehearsals.

A local tennis court was considered but outdoor rehearsals in April and May were unthinkable and even June rehearsals might have to be cancelled because of the unpredictable weather.

Finally, someone or some gang of people thought of Sandisfield's No 2 Fire House.

Fire Chief Ralph Morrison immediately agreed to let the Players use the space. So every Saturday and Sunday the three fire engines are moved out and the Sandisfield Players move in.


On May 7, the floor of the firehouse was taped to replicate the stage and the full cast assembled to rehearse the wedding scene. The "church choir" was squeezed into a corner next to a water pumper; benches were walked onto the "stage" for the

wedding guests and players began figuring out locations of entrances and exits.

The choir sang softly while the parents of the "bride and groom" nudged the young couple forward. "I just want to be a fella," the groom told his mother at the end of the aisle. The bride beseeched her father, "Can't I just stay and take care of you?" Bucked up by their parents, the marriage was performed and a celebratory square dance filled the firehouse floor.

The following weekend was the first run-through of the funeral with "the dead" sitting on folding chairs in the cemetery and Emily returning to visit Grover's Corners to remember her 12th birthday.

I think Thornton Wilder, the author of "Our Town," would approve of this performance of his Pulitzer Prize-winning play and especially the rehearsals at the Sandisfield Fire Station #2.

To see the play performed on a smaller stage, come to one of the two performances at the Arts Center: Saturday, June 18 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20 (students, \$10) and may be purchased in advance online at sandisfield-artscenter.org or at the door. The play is likely to sell out, so buy in advance if you can. To see the play at the Minack Theatre in Cornwall, you'll need an airline ticket. 



The Sandisfield Players in rehearsal
Photos: Tina Sotis

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AROUND TOWN HALL

By Alice Boyd, Select Board Chairman

What I Learned in My First Year as a Selectman

Last month I ran as an incumbent for the Select Board following a one-year term. I'm very grateful to Sandisfield voters who placed their confidence in me, and I am committed to putting my time and energy into helping our town move forward. I learned a great deal during my first year and thought I'd share some of this with you.

In May of last year I thought I knew what would be required of a Sandisfield Selectman. Through my own business I work with towns every day, and I felt that I had a good idea of how things work.

Boy, was I wrong!

Within hours of being sworn in I received a call about a dead body. Within a week I was meeting with an employee about charging an expensive personal item to the town. By the second week I understood that I would need to commit much more time than I had anticipated. Fortunately, I have the flexibility to do so.

As Selectmen we receive calls from residents all the time. People have concerns and deserve a willing ear and an appropriate response. We have big issues impacting our town; the pipeline, Broadband/WiredWest, deteriorating roads, increasing costs, and more. Most of our residents want to live their lives with little interference, cost-effective services, and a reliable town government.

And it's our job to make this happen.

Selectmen receive a small salary for serving our town, a few thousand dollars that just about covers my travel to meetings that I attend on your behalf in Boston and various towns throughout the Commonwealth. A typical week generally includes four daytime meetings and two evening

meetings, all necessary to do the job well. There will be a dozen hours of work before and after meetings and did I mention the twenty or thirty phone calls? By the way, I'm glad to be able to do this work for you.

What I've Learned

Take the high road. Even when you're on the receiving end of a 5:00 a.m. screaming call. If an issue has someone that upset, it is important to them.

Change is hard. No one likes to feel like they've lost control over their world, so tread gently, listen, then do what you believe is in the best interest of the town. You may not be very popular but sticking with it will bring results.

Keep a daily log. No matter how good your memory is, the day will come when your log will be invaluable. Anything that is important needs to be in writing. Documentation will stand the test of time.

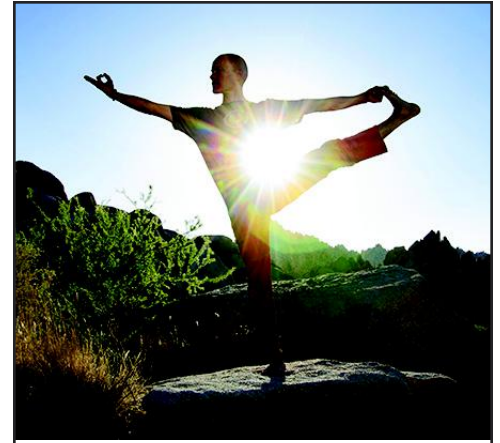
Do your homework. Going to a meeting unprepared is not an option. It often takes hours to read the material and make the calls. This is part of the job.

Vent to one person you trust. We all need to vent or kick something around. But it can come back to bite you. Talk to the mirror or a close friend who lives thousands of miles away.

Remember why you ran. For me, it's about service to the community and keeping taxes down. People can get angry with you, they can say nasty things and you'll wonder why you ever ran for office. It really helps to believe in what you're doing.

My goal as Selectman has been to keep taxes down while using my skills to address different problems that we face. And most important, I want to make our town a better place to live; a place that we're all proud to call home.

We've got some work to do that can't be done quickly, but I believe we're making progress. My sincere thanks for your support. 🍷



Yoga in the Gardens

Beginning Saturday, July 9th

LOOKING GLASS GARDENS will host Yoga classes instructed by **Kim Kost** (200-hour Certified Teacher). Kim has trained at **Yoga To The People** and she continues training at the **Dharma Yoga Center in New York**.

Classes will be held from 10 am to 11 am for all levels and will be held bi-weekly. \$15.00 per person.

Children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or have a signed waiver.

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SHARING SCARCE RESOURCES, POOLING KNOWLEDGE

By *Hannah Van Sickle Barrett*


Liana Toscanini, formerly of Sandisfield and now a resident of neighboring Hartsville, has a new project at her fingertips, undoubtedly born of her reputation as our local go-to person for advice and assistance initiating new ventures.

The Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires (NPC), which Liana launched in April, promises to be a vital resource for the community by offering creative and practical solutions tailored to the needs of the nonprofit sector. The mission of the NPC is, "to facilitate growth for charitable organizations through shared resources, affordable products and services, and creative collaborations."

Liana has played pivotal roles in bringing Sandisfield-based projects to fruition in her more than 20 years in the Berkshires, earning her the Unsung Heroine of 2006 award by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women. She was instrumental in the restoration of the Sandisfield

Arts Center; she doggedly raised funds for Yanner Park as a member of its board of directors; she chaired the Sandisfield Cultural Council for three years; and she was one of the founders of The Sandisfield Times. She also was a member of the town's anniversary committee and co-chaired the history book project committee.

In her newest venture, Liana's buzz-word is "implementation."

Initially, this will include the creation of an intern pool, a series of unique workshops, and an Annual Giving Guide featuring comprehensive profiles of Berkshire nonprofits designed to engage members of the community. Visit the NPC website at npcberkshires.org or stop by Liana's office at 40 Railroad Street in Great Barrington. She has a killer espresso machine and a wealth of knowledge, and she is willing to share both. 



Liana Toscanini
Photo: *Richard Migot*



Springtime Feathered Friends. A Bluebird (right) and a Goldfinch share a perch one fine day in May.

Photo: Jean Atwater-Williams

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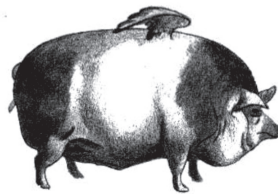
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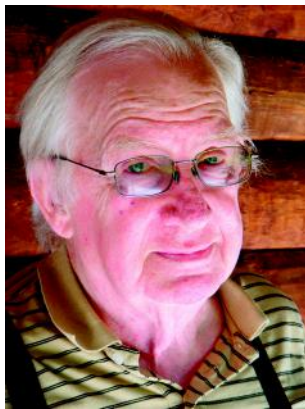
SArC's Person of the Years

FOUNDING MEMBER HONORED

By Bill Cohn

At the Sandisfield Arts Center's Spring Dinner and Benefit Auction on May 21, Val Coleman was honored as Most Valuable Player of the Years. The award was presented by Val's friend, Bill Cohn.

We are here tonight to eat, drink and contribute our dollars to the Sandisfield Arts Center. Equally important as these gestures, we are here tonight to recognize, celebrate, and honor our Person of the Years, one of our most valuable players, Val Coleman.



Val Coleman

Photo: Bill Price

We are recognizing Val not because he has overseen the security and welfare of the Sandisfield Arts Center building, not because he turns the furnace on and off and occasionally orders oil to keep it running, and not because he often unlocks and locks the front door, but because he – Val – symbolizes the significant sense of community we all associate with our belonging to and participating in the life of the Sandisfield Arts Center.

From his early upbringing in rural Illinois way back in the Twentieth Century where

his historian father, who wrote extensively on Abraham Lincoln, imbued in Val those ingredients of Lincoln's life that contributed to Lincoln saving America during the Civil War, Val has always recognized the importance of community.

As we all know, Val's professional life very often revolved around community, especially during those years he devoted to working with the housing authority in New York City, just to give one example.

But perhaps an even better example was Val's participation, with many others – black and white – in the Civil Right movement of the 1960s – laying the groundwork for the creation of an expanded American community that, over time, has allowed those formerly excluded from participation to enter and engage.

Here in Sandisfield, over the past many years, Val has devoted his community energies, in large part, to the Sandisfield Arts Center and, through his efforts – along with many others – has bequeathed to the town a unique community focus that heretofore did not exist.

Like the good historian his father was, Val recognized and celebrated the communities that inhabited this building before the current Arts Center was created – first the Baptists, then the Jews.

Val's spirited defense of retaining the now-retired pews was part of his sense that the preservation of those vestiges of those older communities needed to be kept in place as a reminder of the importance of the continuity of community that we all value and enjoy this evening.

As always, our best wishes to Val Coleman, our MVP of the Years. 

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Sandisfield Historical Society



Come to the Fair

By John Kuzmecz, President


Mark your calendars: July 2, Historical Society Fair, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., with Pet Parade at 11:30.

Our next meeting is June 11 at 11 a.m. We can discuss how to avoid a possible group dissolution at the end of this year, and the addition of a bylaw to manage our assets if we must. We will also be planning our July 2 Fair and the second annual Pet Parade.

Our Summer Fair usually includes colonial re-enactors, hot dogs and hamburgers, vendors, and a tag sale. This year, the Fair has a large number of additional tag sale items so we anticipate filling a third of the back field with sale items.

We will save room for the Pet Parade. Last year we had an array of wild and tame animals. Selectman Jeff Gray and the Recreation Committee ran the Pet Parade and handed out prizes, and they will repeat their efforts again on July 2 at 11:30.

Once again, our next meeting is June 11. After the meeting we will have a potluck meal. Our meeting is at the Meeting House on the corner of Rt. 183/Sandy Brook Turnpike and South Sandisfield Road.

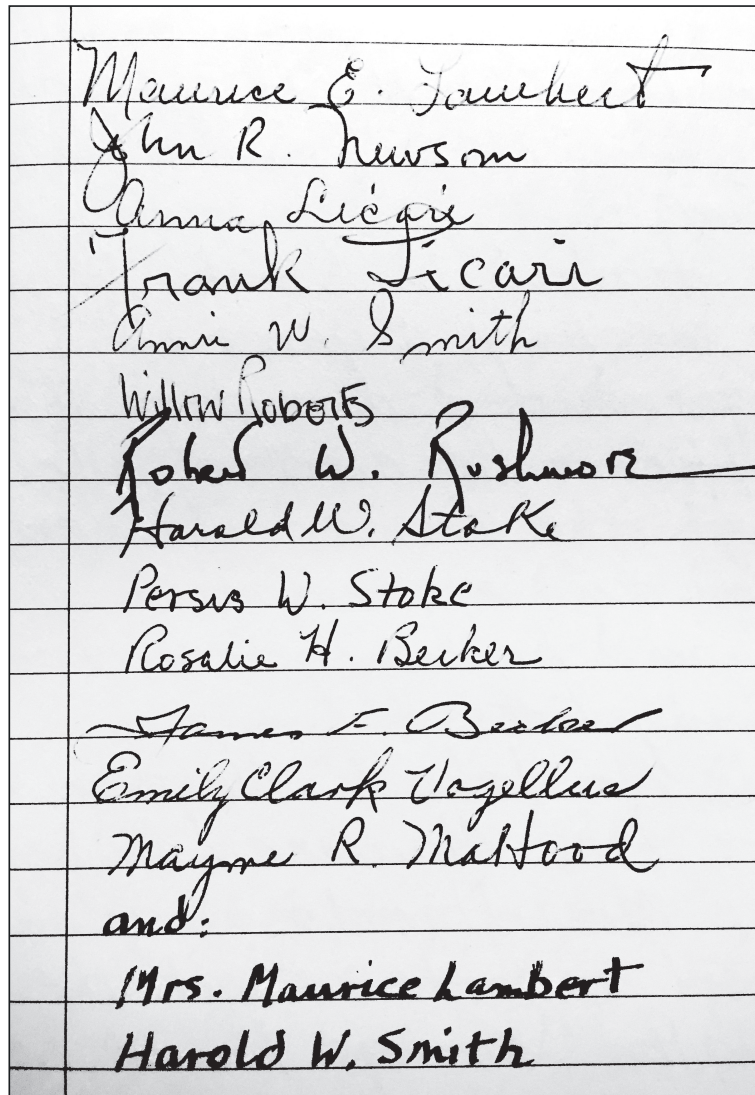
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The signatures of the 15 town residents who met at Town Hall in 1967 to consider the organization of a Sandisfield Historical Society. We now need members and leaders to carry us forward. Please come to our meeting June 11 at 11 am to help the institution survive.

Pipeline Standoff

Cont'd from p.1

give the legislature time to act. If the state house approved a waiver, the game would be over.

If not – and the company files an appeal to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court – things will get complicated and even more protracted.

The stakes are high for all concerned.

The AG's office expressed disappointment that Tennessee Gas was granted an injunction but it was pleased about the delay.

A statement from Tennessee Gas said, in effect, "We told you so." The company is reviewing the decision and its options. Major stakeholders, including the Audubon Society and another large conservation trust, intend to consult attorneys.

Sandisfield Select Board Chairman Alice Boyd told the Times, "This ordeal is placing great stress on our very small town. People trying to sell properties in the Beech Plain section in the vicinity of the pipeline are in a serious predicament. Our small staff is over burdened by all this, and we are accumulating huge bills for legal advice and environmental consulting that should be covered by Kinder Morgan."

Meanwhile, Sandisfield's champion, State Representative Smitty Pignatelli, held his ground, reflecting strong public sentiment in his Berkshires district against the project.

Regarding the lack of legislative action on an Article 97 waiver, Smitty said, "We can pull it out of study at any time and take a position on it. Kinder Morgan has not even been forthright with the requested information that we asked for at the November hearing. So let's stand up, take a vote, and let the chips fall where they may in a higher court from there."

Surely there will be important news to report in this space next month. Or not. 🍀

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Local Student Wins Writing Award

By Val Coleman

Sandisfield's Katrina Campetti turned a harrowing nightmare into a prize-winning story.

In her dream, she was caught in a tunnel deep beneath a lunatic asylum. The dream became the basis for her story, "What Lurks In Dark Halls," which recently won second place in The Boston Globe Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards, a prestigious competition sponsored by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Some 2,500 high school students submitted short stories in the contest. Katrina was presented with a silver key as the runner-up in the science fiction/fantasy category.

In a recent interview, she described her "passion for writing" and her love of "ghost stories" and "spooky adventures." As a student at the Monument Mountain Regional High School,

the talented Ms. Campetti has been nominated as one of the top ten writers in the Berkshire Women's Writer's Club.

Her fascination with the "scary" and "uncomfortable" has led her into the field of Mortuary Science where she seeks an Associate Degree in Applied Sciences. She said she will continue writing "ghost stories for kids."

Katrina, 18, and her sister Lovina, 14, are the daughters of Robin and Richard Campetti. "I love Sandisfield," the talented young writer said. "The people in our town are strong." 🍀



"What Lurks in Dark Halls"

An Excerpt From the Beginning

By Katrina Campetti

The dark is unsettling, a heavy feeling pressing down on my shoulders making me want to crumple in fear. I squeeze my eyes shut; there's no difference between them being open or closed. I feel swallowed up by the darkness, sitting in the belly of a beast. I awoke in this place with cold cement ground underneath me and a loud thumping in the distance, like the heartbeat of the building. My head is buzzing and I can't make sense of where I am. I've been wandering around this long hall aimlessly, trying to find a way out, a light, or at least some sign that I'm still alive.

This place echos like nowhere I've ever been. Each step I take ...

Young Writers Honored

Nine talented young authors from Monument Mountain Regional High School presented their original work at the Berkshire Festival of Women Writers.

This was the fourth year of the program, which was held this year at the West Stockbridge Historical Society in March.

The presentations were in poetry, short fiction, creative nonfiction, and hybrid work. The young authors, selected by the MMRHS English

Left to right, Katrina Campetti, Lucy Burnett, Meryl Phair, Benita Lopez, Daniella DeFelice, Sophie Cohen, Haley Couch, Janey Beardsley, and Isabelle Morley.

faculty, were nominated by their teachers based on exceptional writing they had produced during the school year. In some cases, the students had already received acclaim for their writing, but others were being recognized for the first time. Five of the students are alumni of Farmington Regional Elementary School. 🍀



SANDISFIELD'S MEMORIAL DAY PARADE SUNDAY, MAY 29, 2016

Thanks, Everyone

Parade organizers Fire Chief Ralph Morrison and Maria Domato, American Legion Commander, Post 456, thank the volunteer firemen from Otis and Tolland who brought their trucks and equipment for our parade, the Lee High School Marching Band, and all the drivers of beautiful cars and trucks, old and new, and everyone who helped create a float, our local police department that provided traffic control, the highway crew that mowed along the parade route, all the individuals who contributed to the success of our parade, including the hard-working kitchen staff who prepared hot dogs and cold sodas at parade's end.

(Photos: Tom Jacobs)

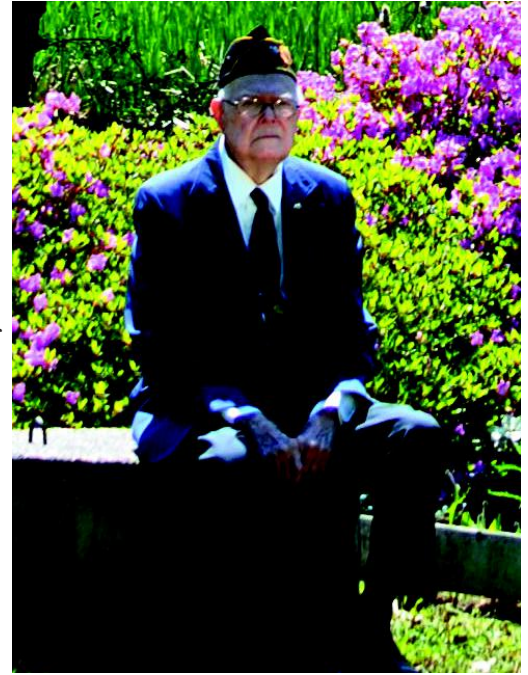




Tribute to Norton

After many years of dedicated service to the American Legion Post 456, Norton Fletcher is resigning as post chaplain. Norton is recognized by many for his dedication to the town of Sandisfield and to many local organizations. We look forward to Norton enjoying many more years as a valued member of Post 456. Thank you for your service, Nort.

Maria Domato
Post Commander





Graduation Day


Samantha Swartz, daughter of Diane and Fred Swartz of Norfolk Road, graduated in May from Worcester Polytechnic Institute with high distinction, earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in Computer Science and Robotic Engineering. Samantha will move to San Francisco in July to work for Google in Mountain View, California.

OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



In April, Northwestern Connecticut Community College in Winsted featured **Setsuko Winchester** speaking about her "Freedom from Fear" project concerning Japanese internment camps in the United States during World War II. Seth Kershner, Public Services Librarian for NCCC, invited Setsuko after reading about her project in The Sandisfield Times. To learn about Setsuko's project, visit her website www.freedomfromfearproject.com.



The **Berkshire Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center** celebrated National Nursing Home Week with a different theme each weekday following May 8. Sunday, Mother's Day, was a special treat for all their employees. The following days' themes were Italian, Irish, French, Mexican, with Friday seeing an all-American cookout. Family and friends of residents and members of the community attended. 

View from the Arts Center


By Marcella Smith, President

Over 60 people filled the auditorium of the Sandisfield Arts Center for the 4th Annual Spring Dinner and Benefit Auction Saturday evening, May 21.

For many in the community the Spring Dinner marks the official opening of the Arts Center season and is a time to connect with friends and meet new ones.

A silent auction earlier in the evening continued with a live auction over dessert. Auctioneers Linda Mironti and Mary Anne Grammer exhorted the guests to take advantage of the low prices offered on Persian rugs, dressage lessons, a cooking class, a case of wine, your family history, a fall planting of 100 bulbs, and fitness classes.

A highlight of the evening was Bill Cohn's appreciation of Val Coleman and his 25-year service to the Arts Center as editor, poetry provider, historian, and building caretaker (he says he is retiring, but we don't believe him).

Communities thrive with the collaborative efforts of its members, and this delightful, fun-filled evening was exactly what can happen when good people join forces for a good cause. 



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Moreover...

By Simon Winchester

Little Free Libraries

OUR LIBRARIAN IS ON BOARD

Maybe you've seen them already – miniature hobbit-house-like structures set down on a pedestal beside the road, a shiny glass door at the front, a tidily inviting shelf of books within. Often there is a simple six-word slogan adorning the pediment: *Take a Book. Leave a Book.*

These sweet little buildings are just what they seem to be. Libraries. Little ones. Free ones.

I saw my first a few weeks ago, opposite a coffee shop on the main street of Millerton, NY. I now see on a map that there are such structures nearer to home as well – one standing on a friendly front lawn in Lenox, another in Russell, and a cluster across the frontier in Litchfield County, close to Norfolk.

Why can't we have a number of these little free libraries, four or five at least, right here in spread-out Sandisfield? If there is enthusiasm for such a project, shown by letters or calls to our newspaper, then I will personally kick-start the scheme by creating the first one and stocking it with books. Then we can see if what I think is a brilliant idea will take hold.

The Little Free Library movement is seven years old, started in rural Wisconsin by a teacher's son who inherited his mother's passion for books. The movement has become an unanticipated runaway success. There are now more than 5,000 such libraries in this country alone – many more than the 1,600 of the rather more formal versions that the saintly Andrew Carnegie financed at the start of the last century. Almost two million volumes have been donated and borrowed in the last five years.

The mission of both of these laudable bibliophilic ventures turns out to be much the same – whether executed in marble and granite, with pillars and porticos and priced in millions, or whether more simply realized midget confections of white pine and asphalt shingling and costing a couple hundred bucks. "Let There Be Light" proclaimed Andrew Carnegie, with good Scots economy. "Promote literacy and the love of reading by building free book exchanges worldwide" is the rather more wordy message sent down from Wisconsin.

Our town librarian, the energetic and widely traveled Terry Spohnholz, is keen for us to join the movement. Anything, she says, to promote reading.

This proposal in no way replaces our Town Library. Think of the LFLs as supplements to the real library, supplements that indeed never close. And since they require no staff, cost next to nothing. The only cost is the box on its pedestal and the willingness of an occasional book-loving volunteer to make sporadic visits to make sure nothing has gone amiss.

There is actually one unofficial library that is both little and free in Sandisfield already.

Alexandra Tinari, an editor who lives on West Street, has placed a glass-fronted display refrigerator outside her house, its four shelves stocked with fifty-odd cleverly-selected volumes, including a recent Francine Prose novel,

Andy Warhol's diaries, biographies of Marcel Proust and Greta Garbo, and a nice copy of Thomas Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd*. A spring-time stop by the road here guarantees serendipity.

To make this scheme work, those who borrow must bring a book to fill the gap – and preferably a good, worthwhile book, a hardback if possible, and not a 1976 Guide to Umbria or a dog-chewed copy of an old Dean Koontz thriller. That is the sole social demand ever made on the would-be reader – that she (if a lady) gives as good as she gets, and by doing so keeps the selection inside the Little Free Library as alluring for those who follow her to it as she found it in the first place.

Of course, being a bit short on old glass-fronted refrigerators, we'll have make our own little libraries. The LFL people in Wisconsin – a non-profit group – sell them, in a vast range of styles and at modest cost. They will send a catalogue on request.


But we have our own corps of carpenters out in the woods here, eager to make and show off their creative skills. If they pitch in we'll have boxes aplenty of our own, Sandisfield-made and every one unique.

All that is then needed is to decide where to place the first one or two? I'd suggest one on what I'll call Morrison's

Piece, the riverside park by the Route 8 bridge in New Boston. Another perhaps at the top of the hill where New Hartford and Sandisfield Roads join. A third on the Sandy Brook Turnpike at South Sandisfield Road.

Why don't you offer recommendations?

We'll plant our first just where you suggest, later this summer. I'll stock it with what I promise will be a tempting range of books, a starter-kit, a literary sourdough mix, with volumes for all ages and as many tastes as I can imagine – and we'll all take it from there.

And thus, at a stroke, the Little Free Library movement will have come to Sandisfield, beginning a lifetime of roadside serendipity for all of us. 



How cool is this?

Sandisfield's home-grown little free library/refrigerator, created and stocked by Alexandra Tinari on West Street.



historia (Greek) - "inquiry, knowledge acquired by investigation." The discovery, collection, organization, and presentation of information about past events.

Hattie Merrill, Sandisfield School Teacher

By Ron Bernard

A collector of ephemera (historical written memorabilia) contacted me recently to offer for sale a true copy of the last will and testament of Samuel Merrill (1775-1853).

With a family of several children in tow, Merrill arrived in Sandisfield in 1805 from West Hartford. He settled on Town Hill Road (current residence of Hal Holt). One of the most prominent citizens of his day, Merrill served as Justice of the Peace. He was elected three times Sandisfield's representative to the General Court (state legislature). His sons and grandsons were similarly influential in community affairs and the development of the town through the entire 19th century. Grandson James H. Merrill (1830-1903) operated the Montville Store for many years and was Sandisfield's longest-serving postmaster. His residence/store was the subject of a Times article in March.

My collector friend mentioned that, along with the Merrill will, he had a large amount of Merrill family memorabilia, including photos, portraits, and inter-family correspondence dating from the 1870s into the 20th century. He bought the collection from the estate of James Merrill's granddaughter, Gwendolen Smith Dunbar, daughter of Harriet Merrill Smith. Gwen died in Maryland in 1985, apparently without a relative to assume these family keepsakes.

I bought the papers, and I suppose, until a Sandisfield Merrill direct descendant turns up, I have become their caretaker, a role I accept.

Over their four generations in Sandisfield the Merrills were one of the most prominent families in town history. This includes both men and women in an era when most ladies were expected to "keep house." Together with what was known about them from town records and newspaper mentions, this trove of new material, especially dozens of photographs, will keep me busy for quite a while.

Fine old Merrill houses survive all over town. Expect a future article about Samuel, Orville and James Merrill.

Today, we will introduce James' youngest child,



Circa 1907 postcard image of the Montville School next to the Baptist church, now the home of the Sandisfield Arts Center.

Harriet Abbie "Hattie" Merrill, who was a Sandisfield school teacher.

Of the five children born in Montville to James and Louisa Reed Merrill between 1857 and 1869, Hattie was the youngest. She attended grammar school (then called common school) at the two-story Montville schoolhouse which stood next to the Baptist meeting house (now the Sandisfield Arts Center) until it was demolished in 1961.

Like her older sisters, Louise and Ella, Hattie enjoyed learning. It's not hard to imagine that she was teacher's pet for her instructor, Charles Claflin. He was the first person she asked to sign her autograph book on February 24, 1883. Certainly Hattie's upbringing and social status, and her aptitude and bearing, suited her well for a vocation as a teacher in her hometown in the 1890s.



Hattie Merrill, c.1887, about age 18.

With beautiful penmanship Hattie chose the following for the inside cover page in her book:

*My album is a garden spot
Where all my friends may sow
Where thorns and thistle flourish not
But flowers above may grow
With smiles for sunshine, tears for showers
I'll water, watch and guard the flowers.*

On the following pages of her autograph book, between Claflin's 1883 signature and 1888, dozens of warm wishes and kind thoughts were inscribed to Hattie from friends, family, and associates, providing an intimate glimpse of Victorian-era social sentimentality.

After the Civil War, school teaching opened as an occupation, one of the few available to single women. But by 1900 the number of women in the profession was greater than the number of men. Teachers might earn certificates at a high school (normal school) or take correspondence courses. In rural areas girls as young as 16 with some high school could be hired as teachers.

James Merrill, who was educated at the Westfield Normal School, probably sent Hattie there or perhaps to a finishing school. By 1900 there were about 330 normal schools in the country, both public and private. Programs lasting a year or more prepared students for teaching. Many normal schools were transformed into today's colleges and universities.

Back home we can see Hattie in two rare, marvelous images of a Montville school class from the mid-1890s. The two photos are on the opposite page, one above the other. In the earlier photo,



A later school photo, class of 1901, New Boston East School. Hattie is second from left, back row.

taken in front of the school, Hattie is standing, top row. The same class, mostly, is seen in the photo just below, two or three years later, taken in front of the meeting house. Hattie is standing in second row, third from left. Note that in this photo the boys are well dressed. Did the always impeccably dressed Hattie arrange for that?

By 1898, Hattie was teaching at the New Boston East School. Today the former school house is part of Fire Station No. 1, currently under renovation as an emergency/community center. All remaining neighborhood Sandisfield schools like this one were closed by 1949/50. Hattie taught at New Boston East for at least three years up to 1901.

Hattie's day might have begun before dawn and she probably made the five-mile trip to New Boston by buggy. Think of what that would have been like on bitterly cold, snowy days.

She worked hard to make as many as 12 or 15 students spread over as many as eight grades follow rules and study lessons. She might have banished a boy caught dipping a girl's braid in an inkwell or some other indiscretion to a cold corner of the classroom. Although teachers then sometimes disciplined misbehaving students by slapping a hard ruler across their hands, the many family images I have of Hattie suggest a sweeter person who might not have done that.


Country schoolteachers like Hattie had many responsibilities in addition to teaching. She would have relied on students to carry drinking and washing water to the school and to pass out and collect slates. Older children would be expected to haul fire wood and empty the ashes from the stove, sweep the floor, and even to help younger ones with their lessons.

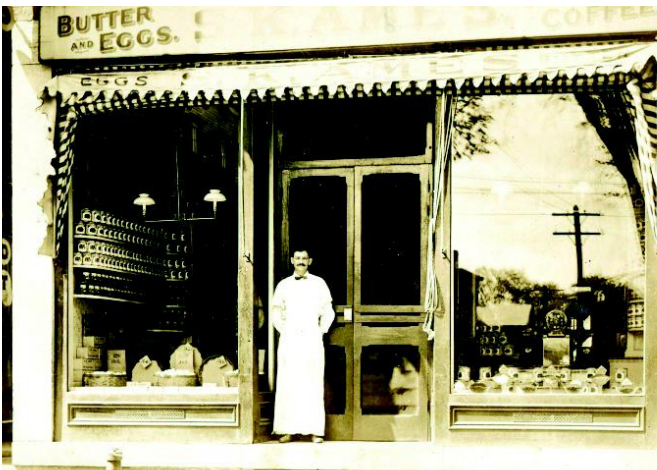


Two Montville School classes, top probably 1895, below 1897. Hattie, in her late 20s, is standing at rear in both photos.

Hattie left teaching – probably with some regret – and Sandisfield in 1901 after her July marriage to Clinton DeWitt Smith of Barkhamsted (Riverton), Conn., at the Montville Baptist Church.

Hattie and Clinton moved to Westfield, Mass., where Clinton took a job with the S. K. Ames dairy products store, a fixture there for decades. In 1948, after he retired as store manager, the Smiths

moved to Hancock, Maryland, to reside with their daughter Gwendolen Smith and her husband, Charles Dunbar a college professor of horticulture. Gwendolen followed in her mother's footsteps with a career in teaching. Clinton Smith died in 1949, age 76; Hattie the following year at age 81. They are buried in the Pleasant Valley/Riverton, Conn. cemetery. 



Clinton Smith at the Ames Store, Westfield, Mass., c.1912
Photo: Bruce Cortis

Photos: Gwendolen Smith Estate/Ronald Bernard collection

Hattie Merrill, Teacher, New Boston East School – Salary for school years 1898-99; 1900-01

No. of Months	\$ / month	Total Pay
2 ¼	\$ 22	\$ 49.50
2 ¾	\$ 22	\$ 60.50
2 ½	\$ 22	\$ 55.00
7 ½		\$ 167.00

No. of Months	\$ / month	Total Pay
2 ¼	\$ 21	\$ 57.75
2 ¾	\$ 21	\$ 57.75
2 ½	\$ 21	\$ 52.50
8		\$ 168.00

Source: Sandisfield Annual Town Reports

Value in 2015 = \$4,890



Representative Smitty Pignatelli reads the Proclamation. To his left, Select Board Chairman Alice Boyd.

Photo: Peter Baiamonte

Proclamation Opens SArC season


By Barbara Penn

While planning “Poetry Opens the Doors,” the first event in the 2016 Sandisfield Arts Center season, we realized we were literally opening the doors after the Center had been closed all winter.

To make the occasion special, we decided to hold a little ceremony, complete with a proclamation. The first person who came to mind to give the proclamation was State Representative Smitty Pignatelli. The Arts Center is a “gem in the woods” and Smitty has done so much to help protect those woods and the unique character of our town. We were delighted when he accepted our invitation. It also gave us a chance to thank him for being a strong advocate for Sandisfield.

Smitty’s Proclamation said: “Let it be known far and wide that in this small town in the southeastern corner of Berkshire County there stands on this ground a Center for the Arts proudly continuing a tradition begun in 1995 to celebrate the creative spirit and the love and inspiration of the irreplaceable natural world that surrounds us here.”

World-renowned bagpiper Nancy Tunnicliffe “piped us into spring and into the poetry reading” – literally up the stairs and into the main hall where six local poets read their work: Val Coleman, Charles Fidler, Zack Finch, Hannah Frieds, Emily Pulfer-Terino, and Hilde Weisert.

The day was overcast and cool. Most of the readers referred to a “spring that was coming” and flowers that “would soon bloom.” Hilde said, “Poetry is an act of the imagination. We are imagining it’s spring.” 

Council on Aging

By Susan Galik


Welcome back Snow Birds!!! And hello to our summer visitors.

We meet every Wednesday at noon at the Town Hall Annex basement. Enjoy lunch and play a few games of Bingo. Please join us. Bring some food to share and a few quarters to play.


Board meetings on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m., the first and third weeks of the month.

June 11, we will hold a painting class at the Arts Center from 1 p.m.-3 p.m. Remember, this will be held at the Arts Center. Cost to be determined. For more information, call Linda Riiska at 258-4816.

A tentative date of June 29 has been set for our annual picnic at York Lake. It’s tentative so far, because last year we were rained out three times before we finally gave in and had our Picnic indoors. If it’s a nice day on June 29, join us at about 11 a.m. Burgers and dogs will be cooking and ready by noon. The rest is supplied by our guests.

I apologize for not getting last month’s announcements in The Times. I was very ill, and am keeping this one short as well. But I’m better and on the mend. 





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The Librarian's Corner

By Terry Spohnholz

"The only thing that you absolutely have to know is the location of the library."

— Albert Einstein

Our library is located at 23 Sandisfield Road (aka Route 57 – the low road between Monterey and Agawam) – pretty red building, basketball court, playground, babbling river, right before you make the screeching halt or not to cross the one-lane bridge.

Inside there is this absolutely amazing world – famous people (the Kennedy's, Clintons, Bushes along with Crazy Horse and Mark Twain), detectives solving mysteries, spies plotting disaster and mayhem, as well as a Pulitzer Prize winner or two. There are lovers, liars, and a loquacious llama or two lurking in the library shelves, longing to leap into your arms and out the door. Yes, stories like

to be heard, so they tend to want to travel, by word of mouth, ink spot on a page, or digital code. But to be told is their purpose.

And clamoring to be heard on the library's wooden shelves are old favorites as well as new tales to entice you with stories to while away a pleasant hour or two in another place and time.

The Immortal Irishman, Timothy Egan

Valiant Ambition, Nathaniel Philbrick

Cometh the Hour, Jeffrey Archer

The Last Mile, David Baldacci

15th Affair, James Patterson

Most Wanted, Lisa Scottoline

The Gangster, Clive Cussler

Nantucket Grand, Steven Axelrod

The Apartment, Danielle Steel

Aunt Dimity and the Buried Treasure,

Nancy Atherton

The Doll-Master and Other Tales of Terror,

Joyce Carol Oates

The Edge of the Empire, Bronwen Riley

Passes and More Passes

Don't forget we have passes to the Clark Museum, the Connecticut Science Center, and for free parking at over 50 facilities in the Massachusetts State Parks Systems.

Frolics in the Library. Rumor has it that there might be a butterfly garden blooming among the books. Check with Amy and Terry on June 18 and their band of young cohorts who might be in the know.



Save the Date

Ed the Wizard and his program "Reading Magic" will appear at the Sandisfield Free Public Library in Sandisfield MA on Saturday July 9 at 1:00 p.m. With the help of volunteers, using magic, comedy, and suspense, Ed the Wizard will weave together the importance of building and maintaining reading skills. Be prepared to have fun.

So get ready for summer. Do I hear summer reading programs that include Bingo cards? 🐾

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Editor's note: Letters this month have been excerpted and edited for length.

A GREAT COLONIAL EVENT

I hope "a thank you" can be sent to the many individuals and organizations which made the "Great Colonial Encampment" over the May 21-22 weekend at the Farmington River School so successful and spectacular.

The effort to produce such an event is enormous, and those responsible should clearly know that their efforts are appreciated. Supporters included the Otis and Sandisfield Cultural Councils, the American Veteran's Association, and the Farmington River School and PTA.

Think for a moment about the visitors who were able to reach back into time and touch the past. And our 5th graders, who stayed with the encampment overnight, what an experience they will remember for the rest of their lives.

Ye Olde Lebanon Towne Militia is an outstanding group of people offering their time, research, and passion so that we can all better understand our past, our history, and quite possibly see a glimmer of our future.

Mark Amado
Otis

ROADSIDE HEMLOCKS BUTCHERED

Gordon Chapman of Lower West Street wrote to the Select Board and The Times to express his dismay at how the hemlock trees bordering his property had been "butchered" by the Highway Department. He wrote that the row of trees "now looks like a war zone with shattered branches all along. WHY?"

"I no longer have screening between house and road. I feel that the value of my property has been diminished, and I cannot imagine how the town benefits from this destruction."

The response from the Select Board was an acknowledgement that about ten complaints had been received concerning overaggressive roadside tree trimming and the Highway Department was instructed to reconsider its trimming operations. Gordon wrote that Temporary Road Superintendent Bobby O'Brien

"was at the meeting and told me that once he saw the tree damage he trimmed the mutilated limbs so the area now looks less like a war zone."

Gordon added, "Meanwhile, instead of cutting down roadside growth and erecting little white fences next to bridges, how about filling the many potholes in West Street and Hubbard Road. These potholes have been there for two years, and I would prefer putting my tax dollars in a pothole rather than in either butchering trees or constructing fences. It seems to me that road maintenance should be a higher priority than fences (never before needed) and cutting trees. After all, potholes cost drivers wear and tear on their vehicles."

At the same meeting, Bobby O'Brien told Gordon that "once funding is available, the West Street potholes will be repaired."



The Grosbeaks arrived on Sunday, May 1, for their summer stay. A couple weeks later, this male Grosbeak was very comfortable at the feeder.

Photo: George Wheeler



Comings and Goings

PETER L. TATRO
1937-2016

Peter L. Tatro, 78, of Brick, New Jersey, formerly of Sandisfield, Jersey City, and Little Egg Harbor, died on May 11, 2016.

Peter, who worked as an elevator mechanic, was a member of IUEC, Union Local 1, New York, New York. He proudly served his country in the U.S. Army and was a member of the 11th Airborne Association.

The family still owns a home on Sandisfield Road in Montville, beside the Buck River. Many residents and friends of the family will remember the ongoing tag sale the family operated out of their garage.

Peter was predeceased by his parents Lawrence and Dorothy Tatro and his sister Patricia Winterberg. He is survived by his wife Susan Rodgers, his children Lawrence Tatro and his wife Kim, Jill Constantine and her husband John, Laura Marshall and her husband Lawrence, David Rodgers and his wife Jennifer, Jill Pellegrino and Michael Rodgers, his brother Joseph Tatro and his wife Diane, his sister Jeannie McIntyre and her husband Dave; and by his brother-in-law Robert Winterberg as well as his 14 grandchildren and 5 nieces and nephews.

A memorial donation may be made in Peter's memory to the St. Joseph School for the Blind at <http://schoolfortheblind.org>. For online condolences visit www.maxwelltobieFH.com.

Graveside services took place in the Sandisfield Center Cemetery on May 21.



NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro. Please send notices for Now Hear This! to calendar@sandisfieldtimes.org.

JUNE EVENTS

Seated Qi Gong Classes on Mondays and Fridays, from 11:00 to 12:00 at the Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road. Free.

Tai Chi on Thursdays, from 6:15 to 7:15 p.m. (beginners and advanced) at the Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road. \$45 for 6 class series. Drop-ins welcomed.

In the Gallery: Trevor Hunter Opening Reception on Saturday, June 4, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. Trevor's artwork includes acrylic, oil, and ink paintings on canvas.

James Argiro Quintet on Saturday, June 4, at 8:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. The Arts Center will be transformed into a jazz club with this special concert featuring famous George Shearing Quintet signature jazz arrangements and more. \$20.

Church Service on Sunday, June 5 at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Church, Route 57.

Sandisfield Historical Society Meeting on Saturday, June 11, at 11:00 a.m. with a potluck lunch to follow at the Meeting House at 115 Sandy Brook Turnpike (Route 183).

An Appreciation of Poetry with Val Coleman on Saturday, June 11, at 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. Val will take the audience for a lively tour through the history of poetry. \$10.

"Our Town" with the Sandisfield Players on Saturday, June 18, at 2:00 and 8:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. Directed by Ben Luxon with a cast of players from Sandisfield and neighboring towns. \$20 adults; \$10 students.

Inside Jacob's Pillow and the World of Dance with Anna-Marie Holmes on Saturday, June 19, at 2:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. \$20 adults; \$10 students.

Church Dinner on Saturday, June 25, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Fire Station #2 on Route 57. The dinner will feature ham and scalloped potatoes. Tickets (\$12, adults; \$5 children 12 and under) and takeouts are available at the door.

SAVE THE DATE:

Sandisfield Historical Society Summer Fair on Saturday, July 2, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at the Meeting House at 115 Sandy Brook Turnpike (Route 183). Vendors, picnic, Pet Parade sponsored by the Sandisfield Recreation Committee, food, and Silent Auction to benefit the Sandisfield Scholarship Fund.

JUNE EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

DeMars Images Sale Saturday, June 11 and Sunday, June 12 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Whiting Mills Open Studio on 100 Whiting Street, in Winsted. All print inventory will be 50% off. Many Sandisfield images.

From the Garden: Still Life Exhibit on view at Spencertown Academy, 790 Route 203, in Spencertown, New York, through June 19. Gallery hours are Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Several Susie Crofut works.

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.

Cemetery Committee, second Monday of each month, 6 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

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.; All Wednesdays: 2-5 p.m.; Thursday: 5-7 p.m.

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

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