

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume VII, Number 8

November 2016

No Pipeline Decisions Until January

By Hilde Weisert

As Times readers learned last month, a legal appeal contesting the 401 Water Quality Certificate granted by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has stalled the pipeline project planned to cross northeastern Sandisfield.

Locked in gridlock are the Citizens v. Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company (TGP). With recent rulings by two courts, the gridlock will continue until at least January.

The "Citizens" are local residents and members of the Pipe Line Awareness Network for the Northeast and the Berkshire Environmental Action Team. The basis of their appeal is that the state 401 Water Quality Certificate failed to comply with state regulations for water pollution control, affecting Spectacle Pond, the Clam River, and Spectacle Pond Brook, as well as Worthington Brook in Agawam. The concern is that our wetlands will not be adequately protected from the damage of pipeline construction.

The issue now is, who has the right to make that decision?

MassDEP agrees that it should be them, and the DEP presiding officer agreed to hear the appeal in January. TGP tried to block that hearing with a lawsuit in Federal District Court claiming DEP does not have decision-making power. Citizens brought a higher body, the US Circuit Court of Appeals, into the picture, asking them to rule on

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A Decade From Now

OUR TOWN IN 2027

By Tom Christopher



From left: Tom Matuszko and Eammon Coughlin of the BRPC, Willie Morales, Sandisfield Town Administrator, and Alice Boyd, Select Board Chair.

What do you want our town to look like 10 years from now? That was the topic of discussion at the Sandisfield Firehouse #2 on Friday evening, October 14.

With the public invited, more than sixty people came bearing the makings of a sumptuous potluck dinner.

After everyone had dined well, Selectmen Alice Boyd and John Skrip and the chairman of the town's Planning Board and the Master Plan Steering Committee, Gary Bottum, introduced Thomas Matuszko. Assistant director of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Matuszko is working with the committees to develop and implement the Master Plan.

He led the evening's discussion, presenting an overview of the newly minted Master Plan and some actions needed to begin to realize it.

First, he outlined six areas that had been identified by town government in consultation with residents:

- Making Sandisfield a destination for tourists and second-home owners
- Reducing the costs of town services and government
- Providing support for local businesses
- Providing support for the elderly
- The creation of a town center
- Getting more benefit for the community from the state lands within the town borders.

To further these goals, Matuszko proposed the formation of several new committees made up of individuals from the town:

- An event coordination committee to actively promote town assets and events regionally
- An agriculture committee to promote and cultivate Sandisfield's agricultural assets
- A committee to work with local business in providing development workshops and training and developing opportunities for tourism, agriculture, and forestry-based businesses

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A Decade from Now

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- A housing committee that would seek to help the town supply housing to meet the needs of all ages and incomes.

Progress has already been made toward several goals of the Master Plan. For example, a grant has already been secured to study and establish a wayfinding system and improve local signage, keys not only to enhancing access to Sandisfield businesses but also to establishing a recognizable town identity or brand.

One of the town's greatest assets to attract tourists and second-home owners is our long history and our architectural heritage of historic buildings. In this regard, the Historical Commission has installed signs at each of our villages and cemeteries. Over the next several years, the Commission will work on having sections of town and certain properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition, John Skrip and David Hubbard have met with personnel from the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation to discuss the creation of a town beach at Spectacle Pond.


The response of the public to the Master Plan presentation was notably enthusiastic. Recruiting volunteers is one of the sore points of small town governance, but some 29 people, roughly half of those attending, signed up to make themselves available at the end of the evening.



Tom Matuszko of the BRPC using oversize charts to outline the Master Plan.

Anyone interested in helping out who hasn't yet signed up can send a note to Alice Boyd at Town Hall or call her at 413- 258-4792. Copies of the Master Plan itself can be viewed at Town Hall or the Library. It is also available online at www.berkshireplanning.org, go to Current Projects and find Sandisfield Master Plan.

Kathy Jacobs of the former Strategic Planning Committee expressed thanks to Lynn and Steve Rubenstein and to Dawn Jacobs and many others who helped organize the evening and ensure the potluck supper worked smoothly and efficiently.

Creating a plan is one thing; translating it into action is another. Sandisfield has accomplished the former and, after this event, seems poised to achieve the latter. 

All photos on pages 1 and 2: Tom Jacobs

World War II Veterans Honored

By Tom Christopher

American Legion Post 456 ended its season of meetings on October 15 with a celebration at its pavilion on Route 8 of local World War II veterans.

Typically, the last meeting of the season focuses on outreach, promoting to the public the ideals of the organization: justice, freedom, democracy, and loyalty. This year, says Post Commander Maria Domato, the membership decided to use the event to honor Sandisfield's four surviving members of the armed services during World War II.



Veterans of the Second World War:
Bud Tacy, Army; Norton Fletcher, Navy; Rosemary Allan, Women's Army Corps; and Walter Linkovich, Army.

The honorees were:


Rosemary Allan, who served as a corporal in the Women's Army Corps in Iowa and Cape Cod from 1945-1946;

Norton Fletcher, who served as a cook in the U.S. Navy in New London, Connecticut and Portsmouth, New Hampshire from 1943-1946;

Walter Linkovich, who served from 1945-1946 as a private in the U.S. Army in Massachusetts' Fort Devens and Kentucky's Fort Knox;

And **William "Bud" Tacy**, who served as a sergeant in the U.S. Army Signal Corps in England, Germany, and the Philippines from 1943-1945.

"A veteran," explained Post Commander Domato, "whether active duty, discharged, retired, or reserve is someone who at one point in his life wrote a blank check to the United States of America for an amount 'up to' and including his life."

Some 35 people – Post members as well as friends and relatives of the honorees – attended the celebration. Four separate cakes were baked so that each honoree might have his or her favorite. The weather cooperated with a sparkling fall afternoon. 

New Sign at Hamilton Grove

The old sign had done excellent service for nearly 50 years, but it seemed tired and a fresh coat of paint might not have brightened it up enough for coming decades.


With the American Legion headquarters building (behind Fire Station #1 on Rt. 8 in New Boston) sold to the Sandisfield Fire Department in 2015, it seemed appropriate that a new sign designate the Hamilton Grove pavilion as the new Legion headquarters.

The new sign, installed in October, continues to acknowledge the man who created and built the pavilion in the early 1970s.

Buster Hamilton, the Commander of American



Legion, Post 456, from 1967 until his death in 1998, was a local woodcutter and builder. Buster led the effort to build a community hall where social events could be held throughout the year.

Working with his son, Richard, and friend Richard Ives, Buster cut the timber for the building from his own wood lot, sawed the lumber in his own mill, and, with the two Richards and other friends, erected the building. They cleared land, planted trees around the small pond on the property, and created Hamilton Grove. All of the lumber and all of the labor was donated. 

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



As a relief from graying November skies and an exhausting election season, The Times offers this photo of the Clam River Reservoir far up on Hammertown Road. As of mid-October, despite the drought, the reservoir was still full of water. If you have internet access, you can go to www.SandisfieldTimes.org to see the hillside above the reservoir in color. It's not bad in black and white, but it's better in color.

Bill Price
West New Boston

A Momentous November

Most poets aren't political.
They deal in birds and fishes,
They squander sunsets, rhyme the mountains,
And ignore their country's wishes.

But there comes a time of reckoning
When the world is on the table,
And you wake up Tuesday morning
And must do the best that you are able.

So a vote for her or him ... whichever ...
Will keep us all afloat.

It's more important than a poem,
Our precious right to vote.

Val Coleman
New Boston



TOWN NEWS

By Bill Price

Broadband Just Over the Far Hill, Coming This Way ...

At the Select Board meeting October 24, the board approved a Request for Proposals (RFP) for broadband services. The RFP, issued October 31, is due in early December. Board Chair Alice Boyd said, "We're asking for high-speed internet, phone, and television services. We have bidders interested in coming on board, and with any luck we'll be on our way in December."

Finally, Some Good Help ...

For the first time, Sandisfield has hired someone to help the Town Clerk with the 10,000 things she has to do every day. Pauline Bakunis, the new Assistant Town Clerk, began work in early October. She graduated from Monument Mountain High School in 2015. The daughter of Ray and Vicki Bakunis of River Road, Pauline's family roots extend back to the early 1760s with the Springs, original Sandisfield pioneers.

Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko said she was very glad to have the help, and she was doubly "glad to have someone from a new generation working at Town Hall, learning where things are, how town business gets done."

... But Help Now Needed at the Board of Health

Margaret O'Clair, who served the BOH for more years than she can recall, resigned as planned following her 70th birthday. "Nobody believed I'd do it," she said, "but I did." Kim Spring also retired, but is staying on for at least awhile.

Due to increasingly complex state health regulations, both Margaret and Kim recommend that at least one of the three-member Board be a trained consultant or health agent. The Select Board is planning to reorganize the Board so that our elected volunteers are not placed in situations where they lack technical skills or support.


Snow Plow Contractors

Should snow and ice overwhelm the road crew this winter, Road Superintendent Bobby O'Brien has a list of willing contractors who have offered to be available on an "as needed" basis.

Fire Department/EMS

Fire Chief Ralph Morrison is still seeking good men and women to serve their community. Younger volunteers are needed, but older ones are welcome, too. Ralph said, "There are jobs suited for everyone." Training offered, and in most cases modest stipends to volunteers. To volunteer for the Fire Department or as an EMT, call Chief Morrison at 258-4742.

November Select Board Schedule:

The Board will meet the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Monday at 7:00 at Town Hall Annex. 

Going Live in Downtown Sandisfield

TOWN WEBSITE UP AND RUNNING

By Bill Price



The new town website is online and available now for anyone with an internet connection. If you're without a connection, you can trip on down to the library where librarian Terry Spohnholz will set you up.

The town website name has changed to www.sandisfieldma.gov. The domain name was changed from www.sandisfield.info in order to be consistent with domain names of other Berkshire towns.

Currently, either web address will get you to the new site where you'll find half a dozen alternating photos of Sandisfield provided to the

website by local photographer Peter Baiamonte. The photos make our town as attractive and welcoming as it has ever been. If the Times could afford it, we would print them in color.

The website is the result of the combined efforts of Alice Boyd, Select Board chairman, and Dawn Lemon, the town's recently hired accountant. Working under the guidance of Virtual Towns and Schools (VTS), Alice and Dawn adapted the former website and migrated some of its information into the new format.

A web designing firm based near Boston, VTS provides customized sites for cities and towns

and municipal organizations. Project Manager Luke O'Hanley visited Sandisfield to learn about the town and understand the web needs at Town Hall.

Any website is useful only to the extent it is maintained and constantly updated. Dawn Lemon said, "VTS trained us as a group, including town employees, then conducted one-on-one training with department heads so they could learn how to edit the sections devoted to their departments."

Department and committee heads will be responsible for keeping their sections up-to-date and useful.

The small team is still adding pages and loading content.


But already, on the first page of the site, you can "drill down" to learn About Sandisfield, Report a Concern, or go to Online Permits.

Under "About Sandisfield," you'll find pathways to Community Organizations, including The Sandisfield Times, the Arts Center, and an as-yet unused blog for "Sandisfield Life."

Other "About Sandisfield" links include Pipeline Information, Town Bylaws, Schools, Town History, and Visit Sandisfield, which outlines the few businesses in town.

Soon you will be able to buy dump stickers online and next year pay real estate taxes and apply for building permits through the site.

You can already fill out an interactive burn permit online (though you need a printer and have to mail the request). In the future, you may be able to actually fill out even a burn permit and submit it online.

Welcome to, almost, 2017. The web team says, "More to come." 

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AROUND TOWN HALL

By Alice Boyd, Chairman, Select Board

Setting Our Tax Rate

We all want our roads plowed, our kids in good schools, and town services that we can depend on. To accomplish this we rely on taxes.

It is important for every taxpayer to understand how our tax rate is set and how much control we have over whether that rate increases, stays level, or goes down.

The process begins with Sandisfield voters approving the town budget every year at our Annual Town Meeting. This past May your Select Board presented a lower town budget than the previous year with the thought that we could lower your taxes.

Instead, in mid-October we learned that our tax rate will go up 29 cents, to \$13.29 per \$1,000. Last year's rate was \$13.00 per \$1,000.

An increase in taxes is very frustrating, especially after we worked so hard to cut the budget. How did this happen?

First, a short primer on the process of setting the tax rate.

The dollar amount the town must raise through taxation is the annual town budget (as approved at the Annual Town Meeting) less income from state aid and "other" income.

The Assessor's office submits information on the value of homes and commercial property which is validated by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), Division of Local Services. The town's accounting office examines the figures and balances from the previous year's accounts, which is provided to the DOR. This information is then entered into a

state computer program to arrive at the tax rate.

How did we arrive at an increase in taxes after reducing expenses?

Due to the dynamic nature of our legal troubles with Kinder Morgan, the town has had to raise and appropriate more money than originally anticipated. The state is aware and asked that we submit a "letter in lieu of balance sheet" to justify expenses to DOR.

Some of the most impactful mitigating factors regarding the tax rate this fiscal year were our town's decrease in total valuation and lack of new growth. In terms of Sandisfield's valuation, Fiscal Year 2016 totaled \$216,332,965 as opposed to current Fiscal Year's valuation of \$216,104,988. The difference in valuation of \$227,977 less.

New growth has fallen steadily for some time and is the predominant reason for the town's push for a Master Plan. Amenities like broadband internet – which can stimulate economic development and commercial interests – have been identified in the Master Plan and are being pursued.


We are working hard to attenuate decreases in our town's new growth which has been trending downward for some time. For instance, growth in FY 2012 was \$46,663, FY 2013 \$39,038, FY 2014 \$25,774, FY 2015 \$22,143, FY 2016 \$16,246, and this year's new growth only \$11,088.

Where do we go from here?

Though the rise in taxes represents a serious burden to many households, it is important to understand that we are already in the midst of addressing the two factors mentioned above. Every day we are closer to having broadband services in our town. A Request for Proposals was issued at the end of October. We are just about finance ready with respect to funding the broadband project. At Town Hall department heads and committees will work with the Finance Committee and Select Board to

establish the best allocation of our resources.

What we really need is new construction, new commerce, and new residents to increase our tax base. Our needs require time and changes at the margins to incrementally improve our manner of operating.

Despite rises to our tax rate, we are doing everything possible to keep the town accessible to all. We have introduced tight fiscal controls and personnel procedures that will make our town sound and sustainable in the long run. 


OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Ellen Croibier and Peter Levine were married at noon at the Arts Center on Saturday, October 8, before a large gathering of family and friends. Justice of the Peace John Skrip did the honors. The happy couple extend their gratitude to all the neighbors and friends who contributed in so many ways to the success of the event, which took place on a wonderful fall afternoon.



The Berkshire Natural Resource Council, which recently opened the Clam River Trail behind Town Hall Annex, has announced plans for a county-wide town-to-trail system called the Berkshire High Road.

As reported in *The Eagle* and on The Berkshire Edge website, the idea would be that the BNRC would link existing hiking trails with trails still to be built, obtaining easements between already conserved land, until, as BNRC President Ted Ames said, a person would have a chance "to walk from Williamstown to Sandisfield with options to stop at every interesting and refreshing place along the way."

Our bet is that this is the first time Sandisfield has ever been mentioned in the same sentence as Williamstown. 




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Jewish Life in New England

SPEAKER TO OUTLINE THE LOCAL HISTORY OF JEWS

By Ron Bernard

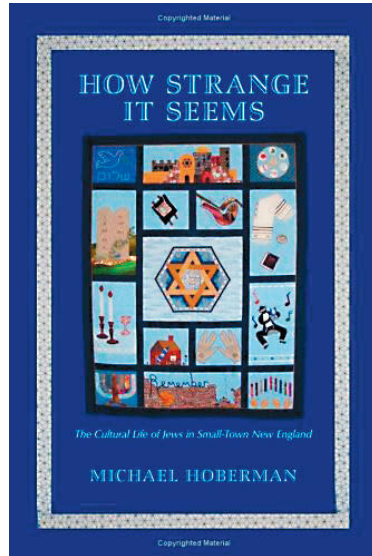
A local group that is assembling and recording Sandisfield's Jewish history has invited a nationally known historian and author, Michael Hoberman, to speak at the Arts Center this month on the history of Jews in small-town New England. The event will be held Saturday, November 12, at 11 a.m.

Dr. Hoberman, a professor of American literature at Fitchburg State University, is the author of books and scholarly articles on New England folklore and early Jewish American history.

The local group is preparing a book entitled *A Century of Jewish Life in Sandisfield*, scheduled for publication in early 2018. The principal author and researcher, Lorraine German, contributed chapters to the 250th anniversary history of the town, *Sandisfield Then and Now*, published in 2012.


Committee member Joanne Lazarowitz Olson, whose family arrived in Montville in the 1920s, contacted Professor Hoberman to invite him to speak here. "Dr. Hoberman," Joanne said, "is an expert about the history of Jews in this country. We are excited that a person of his reputation is coming to speak and to support our work. It certainly lends credibility to our project."

The talk will be based in large part on oral history research for Hoberman's 2008 book, *How Strange It Seems*. He will discuss the history of Jewish families who came to small towns throughout New England, especially western Massachusetts.



Many of these immigrants worked as traveling peddlers as well as in agriculture, a topic of particular interest because Sandisfield Jewish farmers were perhaps the most prominent of this ethnic group in Berkshire farming.

Hoberman has published articles in *Early American Studies*, *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, *American Jewish History*, among other scholarly journals. He was Fulbright Senior Scholar in American Studies at Utrecht University in the Netherlands in 2010 and was a recipient of the Sid and Ruth Lapidus Fellowship at the American Jewish Historical Society in 2014-15. His most recent book, *New Israel/ New England: Jews and Puritans in Early America*, explores the relationship between Jews and Puritans in the colonial and Revolutionary War period. He is currently working on a book entitled *A Hundred Acres of America: The Geography of Jewish American Literary History*.

For more information, about this event, which is free, or the history book project, contact Sandy Parisky at (860) 798-1091 or by email to Sandy@SanfordParisky.com or Joanne Olson at (718) 227-6427 or Joanneo@aol.com. 

A Generous Thank You

"An Absolute Life Saver"

By Bill Price

Following the successful journey of the Sandisfield Players last summer to the open-air/cliff theatre in Cornwall, England – where 26 members of the Players staged seven performances of the iconic American play, "Our Town," for audiences of some 2,000 people – Ben Luxon, director of the Players, wrote a "thank you" letter to the Sandisfield Fire Department.


The trip and the successful performances, Ben wrote, "would not have been possible without the generosity of the Fire Department."

"The stage in Cornwall was 65' x 30'. The Arts Center is 30' x 13'. As an amateur group we desperately needed to be able to rehearse in the 65' x 30' space. The Fire Station was our only hope.

"Every weekend throughout May and early June without a hitch the fire engines rolled out and the Players rolled in. By running lines diagonally across the station floor, we were able to "chalk out" the exact space we needed for practice.

"It was an absolute life saver for us. To show our gratitude for this act of generosity and neighborly good will it is our pleasure to present the Sandisfield Fire Department with a check for \$1,000.

"Who knows, maybe sometime in the future one will hear Shakespeare's immortal words bouncing off the walls of the Fire Station! Stay tuned!"

The letter was signed "With all best wishes from Ben Luxon and members of the Sandisfield Players." 

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Fairy Tales

On a bright fall afternoon at the Arts Center, the Sandisfield Players brought to life half a dozen fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm and Roald Dahl, with settings inspired by the paintings of Robin Crofut-Brittingham. Following an opening of the paintings in an art exhibit downstairs, the tales were told in an intimate space set up before the stage. Here Mary Anne Grammer presents "The Twelve Brothers" to Logan Pease and Bleecker, Waverly, and Crosby Coyne, and an unidentified child who joined in from the audience.



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Pressing — and Sharing — With Friends

Cider: A Long-Time Sandisfield Treat

By Tom Christopher

Photos: Suzanne O'Connell and Tom Christopher

Walter Linkovich still lives in the house on Route 57 in which he was born 90 years ago.

In one respect, at least, things have changed: when he was a boy there would have been four barrels of cider fermenting in the basement at this time of year. Hard cider was a family staple and, in that matter, his family was no different than most of the neighbors.

"Yeah," he says, "they had the habit." In part, he adds, that was because hard cider was cheap.

Apples were plentiful, and Domenico Campetti's cider mill on Route 8 charged just \$2.50 to press the 16 bushels it took to fill a 50-gallon barrel with the fresh, sweet juice. Add 25 lbs. of brown sugar to each barrel, says Walter, a couple of boxes of raisins, install a fermentation lock in the barrel's bunghole to let the fermentation gases escape and keep air and bacteria out. Then just wait, and let the natural yeasts convert the fresh cider's sugars into alcohol.



Just over the New Marlborough line on Rt. 57, Mike Barrier stands with his cider press, with which he presses 8 or 9 barrels of cider every October.

The result was a refreshing, fruity beverage that was a fixture of the summer haying season.

"You'd put a load of hay in the barn, and then you'd come in and have a glass or two," said Walter. "Then you'd go out in the field and get another load of hay. [Everyone drank hard cider] 'stead of drinking water."

Nor was it just the haying crew that expected cider.

Domenico Campetti used to put 50 barrels in his cellar every fall because the workers in his cider mill and attached sawmill wouldn't work unless they had cider.

Bill Riiska of Riiska Brook Orchard remembers the old days, too, but he refers cider-making questions to his brother-in-law, Louie Gardella. Louie, a mere 83, remembers collecting apples with his grandfather, August Guarneri ("a distant, very distant, relative" of the violin-maker).

They would pick the apples from Guarneri's own trees, and then make the rounds of the neighbors, picking apples they didn't want in return for a promise of some of the resulting cider. Louie and August would load the harvest into a horse-drawn wagon and head down to the cider mill.

His grandfather, Louie recalls, typically fermented two barrel's-worth every fall. He'd tap the first one always at 8 o'clock on Christmas morning. In the following days, the company would come.

"We had a lot of company," Louie said. "When the cider was gone, the company thinned out a little bit."

Neither Linkovich nor Gardella still make hard cider, but the tradition lingers locally.

Just across the New Marlborough line on Route 57, Mike Barrier has been making hard cider for 45 years. He has his own press, and almost every October he gets together with old school friends to press eight or nine barrels that they then share.

Barrier mostly picks his own apples. A favorite are the Baldwins, a Massachusetts apple variety that dates back to the 18th century. But Mike likes a mix.

He'll even use wild crab apples from the hedgerows: "Some of them have got a real nice nose to

them. You can walk by the tree and it's just like, wow, it just blows you away, it smells so good."

One thing he insists on is that the apples haven't been sprayed. His cider is all natural: no added sugar or yeast, no sulfites. He ferments in bourbon whisky barrels until the sugars are practically all converted, then racks the cider off into bottles at just the right moment – bottle it too late and the hard cider will lack sparkle, too soon and the bottles will explode. If you time it right, though, in just 21 days, the cider will be ready to drink, and Barrier has found that it will keep in the bottle for a couple of years at least.




Times reporter Tom Christopher with a day's worth of cider pressing, the raw material for hard cider. "We had more that's not shown," he said. "We pressed it with friends. It was quite a day."

Barrier's brew is golden yellow, effervescent and slightly sweet with a complex flavor combining the residual taste of the bourbon and the oak of the barrel with those of the apples. Many people have tried to persuade him to market it commercially, but he won't.

For him, an intrinsic part of the pleasure of making hard cider is the sharing: sharing the work of picking and pressing with friends, and then sharing the product.

Anyway, as Barrier points out, there are lots of commercial ciders these days. Indeed, a call to Domaney's Liquors and Fine Wines in Great Barrington revealed a collection of some 30 different types. A cider, surely, for every palate.

But the original, what Mike Barrier calls "farmhouse cider," the cider home-made to drink with friends, once so common in our region, is now hard to find. 

"A Jug on Every Table"

Relating cider stories from the late 1800s, Elizur Yale Smith wrote in *Sandisfield: An Intimate History and Some Comments*, that "a certain farmer in South Sandisfield put from 20 to 30 barrels of cider into his cellar every fall; that he and one old crony of his drank it all up every year; that he was never known to sell a quart or even give away a glassful to anyone else but his old crony. On every table, at every meal in many farmhouses, the cider jug was filled to the brim, usually more than once."

No Pipeline Decisions Until January

Cont'd from p.1

the jurisdictional question (and ultimately this higher court could decide on the merits of the appeal as well). Thanks to motions by Citizens, the Federal District Court agreed on September 27 to stay any ruling until after the Circuit Court makes its own ruling in January.

Citizens have hired a wetlands expert to look at issues that were ignored or minimized in DEP's review and to document problems for the January DEP hearing. Citizens' written testimony will be filed in November, followed by possible rebuttals from TGP and DEP, and if needed, answering testimony from Citizens.

Following the January 18 hearing in Springfield, the DEP Presiding Officer will issue a decision that the DEP Commissioner will then review. His review could conclude as early as April. Assuming that the Circuit Court (remember them?) does not agree with TGP that DEP does not have jurisdiction, the Commissioner can affirm the original permit, modify it, or deny it.

The legal process could be literally undercut if TGP begins tree-felling before the appeals process runs its course.

DEP agrees that cutting should not begin, but TGP has maintained to the District Court that the Federal Natural Gas Act preempts DEP's authority to put tree-clearing on hold. TGP's status reports to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) do not even mention that the 401 certificate is under appeal in federal court (the Massachusetts Pipe Line Awareness Network has corrected the record with FERC).

Legal issues aside, we have now entered the time of year (Nov-Mar) that tree-cutting is typically allowed, so the worst case is that if TGP prevails before the spring, cutting could begin.

Another potential roadblock to the project goes back to the determination of "need" – in this case, the need of Connecticut residents for more natural gas at a more affordable price. Since the original application in 2013, much has changed in the energy picture. It's possible that if the pipeline is built it will raise, not lower, natural gas prices in Connecticut. Further, the expected number of households converting to natural gas has not been realized.

According to Susan Baxter of STOP (Sandisfield Taxpayers Opposing the Pipeline), "It's clear from looking at the actual figures of available 'decatherns' of gas that the projected need has not materialized." Whether FERC will revisit the issuance of their order is in question, but STOP has requested a rehearing.

Susan added, "We need to continue to give decision makers the actual facts, and the facts are in our favor."

She points out that another hurdle for the project is a federal 404 Water Quality Certificate that the Army Corps of Engineers considers only after the state's 401 is complete. Although this is typically granted if the more stringent standards of the state have been met, it does consider whether there is a less damaging alternative.

As Susan says, "If there is no longer a need for the pipeline, not building it is definitely a less damaging alternative."



The pipeline path emerges from the woods near the high point of Beech Plain Road. If it is widened, during construction an extra 75 feet will be carved out of the woods to the left of the opening. Photo: Bill Price

The progress of the Connecticut Expansion project is being watched by land conservationists across the state because of the precedent it could set for pipeline expansion in Article 97 land. "It is also of national significance," points out Kathryn Eiseman, president of the Pipeline Awareness Network for the Northeast, "because the question of whether a state retains the right to complete its review of a 401 water quality application is a matter of first impression for the Circuit Courts."

Finally, on the bread-and-butter question of whether the Town of Sandisfield will receive the more-than-\$1 million compensation promised but not forthcoming from TGP, Alice Boyd offered no comment at this time. In fact, the compensation issue between TGP and the Commonwealth is going to a jury-waived trial in December. This may impact TGP's agreement with Sandisfield. ♣

Readers can support the extensive and effective legal and research efforts involved in the Citizens' appeal by sending a tax-deductible contribution to BEAT, with "401" in the memo line, to: Berkshire Environmental Action Team, 29 Highland Ave., Pittsfield, MA 01201, or contribute online at www.plan-ne.org/donate.

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Council on Aging



By COA Correspondent

A "thank you" to everyone who made an apple pie for sale at the Apple Fest in early October: Alice, Judy, Linda, Ann, and Baily. And thanks, as well, to everyone who purchased a pie in support of Cora's Library Books.

Notice: Flower Arrangement Class on Nov.14 at 2:00 p.m. at Town Hall Annex basement. \$10 fee. Call 258-4816 to register.

Notice: Seniors invited to Monument Mountain High School on Nov. 15, 11:00 a.m., for the Fall Concert and luncheon. Call 528-3346 for reservations.

Reminder – Foot Care Clinic coming up on December 6.

A special "thank you" to all our veterans and service members on Armistice Day, November 11.

Happy Thanksgiving (the election will be over).



The Bill and Val Show

2016 POLITICS EXPOSED AT THE ARTS CENTER

By Bill Price

In early October, before this year's presidential election came completely unhinged, Sandisfield citizens Bill Cohen and Val Coleman held a two-man symposium on the election and the state of the nation. They enjoyed the full participation of about 40 people in the Arts Center audience.

That audience, for the most part, consisted of gray heads, people who hold memories of Johnson, Goldwater, Nixon, Reagan, Carter and others and who still remember how those individuals impacted politics in their time and today.

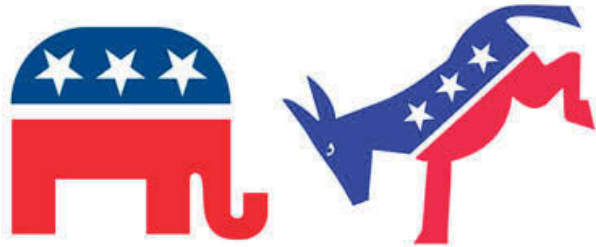
Bill Cohen, for his part, pointed out that this will be the 20th presidential election in his lifetime, beginning with Wendell Wilkie v. FDR.

Val pointed out that it seems that "running a country and dodging wars has been lost in the current climate of preventing a president of the opposing party from accomplishing anything."

will not return, which frightens people. People seek change, without a clear idea of where that change will take the country.

An audience comment that drew agreement and applause was by Charlene Peet. "The upcoming election," she said, "in this time of national frustration, unresolved social issues, and world crises leaves me with the dilemma of no candidate I can fully embrace. While I firmly believe in fiscal responsibility and accountability, I am very chary of the idea of operating the government like a business, especially if the only guiding principal of the business is the 'bottom line.'

"The purpose of government," Charlene continued, "is to assure we live by our guiding precepts. Precepts we can't afford to lose. So I still need to vote even if it is a more negative than positive vote.



Bill said that the country may be on the right track, generally, but 70 percent of the voters who say it's heading wrong are unable to say exactly "what the three or four things are that are going wrong, except that things aren't the way they used to be."

The audience agreed, generally, that while the economy may be healthy now, the faster growth and wealth creation of the 1960s and '70s and '80s

"But is there a more lasting answer? I think we have to remember who we are as a nation and what, at our best, we represent. We have to remember our common humanity. And redefine its meaning to us in 21st century terms. And live into it. This could prove a powerful tool toward evolving candidates we might more fully embrace."

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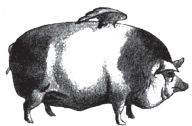
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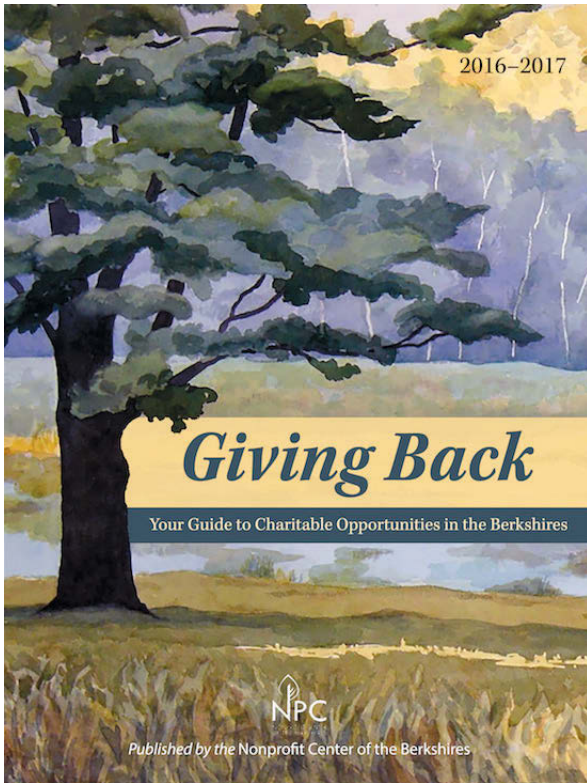
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The cover of the newly published Giving Back features a painting by Sandisfield's Susie Crofut.

Where to Give, How to Help

A GUIDE TO CHARITABLE OPPORTUNITIES

By Ron Bernard

A new guidebook to nonprofit organizations in Berkshire County provides a directory of over 900 local nonprofits and profiles of 60 nonprofit organizations. It includes detailed information on how potential donors and supporters can make a monetary gift or volunteer their time.

Giving Back: Your Guide to Charitable Opportunities in the Berkshires is published by the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires, an organization founded in 2016 by Liana Toscanini, formerly of Sandisfield and now of New Marlborough. The Center is committed to facilitating growth for charitable organizations through shared resources, affordable products and services, and creative collaborations.

Liana said, "Second-home owners and people who haven't lived here that long have asked me for advice on where to volunteer or donate. They simply didn't have the information to make those decisions. I hope *Giving Back* helps make those connections for people."

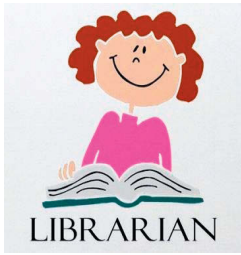
Two Sandisfield organizations are profiled in the guide: The Sandisfield Arts Center and The Sandisfield Times. Several Sandisfielders serve as NPC advisors.

Free copies are available at the Sandisfield Arts Center, the Sandisfield Library, or at the Nonprofit Center's office at 40 Railroad Street in Great Barrington. For more information call (413) 645-3151 or visit npcberkshires.org.



Annual Rite of Fall

Shoulder-deep in firewood for his daughter's place and his own, Richard Hamilton of West New Boston will split several cords of Sandisfield timber before he lights even the first winter fire.



The Librarian's Corner

By Terry Spohnholz

People flock in, nevertheless, in search of answers to those questions only librarians are considered to be able to answer, such as "Is this the laundry?" "How do you spell surreptitious?" and, on a regular basis, "Do you have a book I remember reading once? It had a red cover and it turned out they were twins.

Terry Pratchett, *Going Postal*

This morning, as the bright autumn sunshine burned off the last of the night's frost and brown, crackling leaves chased about before the breeze, I opened the library door and smiled at the day's possibilities. Would the day bring much delight with friends and fellow Sandisfield folk wandering in or was it to be a quiet day?

It was the former – the best kind of day for me. The Blass family came in with their two lovely grandchildren, Atticus and Dinah from Mississippi. We sorted through the children's books while discussing the merits of Mario video games with a very smart four year old. The room rang with their laughter and chatter. In the end they exited with five books, two DVDs, the Sorry game (yes, we have games that you can borrow) and squeals of delight upon receiving small prizes. (I try to reward young readers.) They were off to the Riiska's for an adventure involving apple picking.

Quintessential New England: apples, children, books, and fall.

Several people used the library computers to apply for cultural grants with help offered by members of the Sandisfield Cultural Council. Questions and answers rang back-and-forth as keyboards clicked and the merits of this phrase or that were examined.

Michelle came in with her mom and a computer that wanted a password that no one had, and Tim stepped in to help while his partner sat and kept

Texas the dog occupied. Yes, dogs, if people friendly, have been known to browse the stacks.

It was the library at its best, a center of a community, people helping each other, and enjoying a Saturday morning. The library is not just a holder of books. It is a very vibrant place. Michele and her Mom left with a computer updated and hopefully allowing them access. The grants were submitted, several books taken home to be read. The last patron breezed in to drop off a book and I slipped a new one in her hand (in less than two minutes – so yes there is express checkout!

And stacked neatly in piles were the latest arrivals – books waiting to be catalogued and covered. The new books range in taste from thriller to science fiction to stories of relationships and back to mysteries. Like the people that enter and exit the library door, they are very different, one from another. Book preferences differ but all are lovers of life and the stories that are told.

NEW BOOKS:

Apprentice in Death, J.D. Robb

The Wall of Storms and the Grace of Kings, Ken Liu

The Trespasser, Tana French

I am Here, Jonathon Safran


The Underground Railroad, Colson Whitehead

Dark Matter, Blake Crouch

My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry, Fredrik Backman

As I close the door to the library, I am happy that the library has been what it is today, a place of community.

On some nights and afternoons, there is card making downstairs with laughter and gentle teasing echoing up the stairs. Some days, raucous laughter of children coloring, drawing and finding enchantment in a Mo Willem book. Some evenings it is quiet, with only a patron or two quietly browsing the stacks for the perfect read while Vicki, the librarian aid, quietly crochets colorful scarves.

It is a magical place in a magical town, called Sandisfield. 



Fall Fair

Home-grown and home-baked goods were for sale at the Historical Society's Apple Festival and Fair in October. COA sold home-made apple pies as a fund raiser for Cora's Library Books. Liz Kuzmecz pressed apples donated from Riiska Brook Orchard in a hand-turned press, as was done at the Sandisfield Fall Fair in 1916, a hundred years ago.



Everyone Left with Something Good

A bag of apples. A very large pumpkin. Home-pressed apple cider or home-baked cider donuts. None of the many visitors to Riiska Brook Orchards on New Hartford Road on Columbus Day left empty-handed. And many brought their kids and picked and carried their own Honey Crisps, Galas, and Ida Reds.

Photos: Bill Price



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A Little at a Time

Over the Columbus Day weekend, the Sandisfield Fire Department held a fund-raiser in the middle of Route 8, stopping traffic going both north and south, to raise money for the rehabilitation of its building at the site of Fire Station #1.

They collected over \$3,000.

Here Firewomen/EMTs Mary Bredenfoerder (left) and Sheri Jenison accept a contribution from a homeward-bound Constitution State resident who was, he said, "happy to help out."

Photo: Bill Price



The Town of Granville requests applications for employment for the 40-hour position of Department of Public Works employee.

- The successful candidate should have, a CDL driver license, OSHA 10 certification, and Hoisters License (hydraulic and side boom).
- The position requires customer service and communication skills, equipment operator and maintenance experience, general labor for building and ground maintenance, general construction and snow plowing experience is preferred.

Please send a cover letter with resume and references to Town of Granville P.O. Box 247 Granville, MA 01034 Attn: Personnel. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. First review of applications will be on October 28, 2016. Applications may be kept on file for six months for possible future DPW positions.

For more information, please visit www.townofgranville.net. EOE/AA

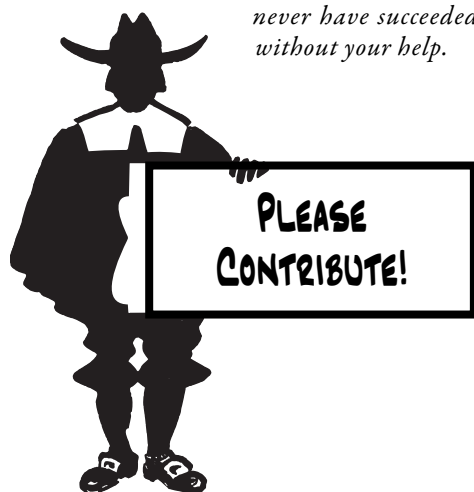
Donate Locally

By Bill Price
Editor, The Sandisfield Times

If you enjoy and value reading The Sandisfield Times, help us keep it going.

Attached to this issue of The Times is our seventh appeal letter from founding editor Simon Winchester. In it, Simon wrote that perhaps the annual appeal from The Times has become another sign of impending winter. He added:

"The fact is: We would never have succeeded without your help."



"A determined number of you had faith in us when we embarked on this venture in the New Year of 2010. We tried hard to make ourselves a newspaper for everyone and, slowly, as you became more and more convinced that we had you and your interests firmly in mind, you have given us your blessing. You started to read us, to write to us, to write for us, to think of us as an essential component of Sandisfield life."

Simon's letter concluded:

"To those who believe in the importance of thinking local, we are defiantly so. *We are as local as it gets.*"

"So please continue to help us pursue our mission of binding this remarkable, venerable, beautiful, and wonderfully isolated New England community together."

Contributions – tax deductible – are appreciated by mail: PO Box 584. Or the Internet: sandisfieldtimes.org via Paypal or your credit card.

Help our all-volunteer team continue to give you the best newspaper we possibly can.



Sandisfield Historical Society



Annual Wine and Cheese Party, Nov. 6

By John Kuzmech, President

Although the Society has gone inactive for the foreseeable future, we will again hold our free Annual Wine and Cheese Party to acknowledge the support we receive from friends and neighbors. We would, though, appreciate donations to help cover necessary operating expenses. The building on Rt. 183 has to be heated over the winter and the electricity turned on, so we do have a few ongoing expenses.

Please join us on Sunday, November 6, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., at the Sandisfield Historical Society Meeting House, Rt. 183 at South Sandisfield Road. If you can, bring some wine and cheese to share, or just come and say hello.

NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

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

NOVEMBER EVENTS

Cooking with Mama Mia on Saturday, November 5, at 10:00 a.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. If you believe food is love and making good food is your passion then come join Linda Mironti and Mom Josephine as they team up to bring love and passion to a Saturday. \$10.

Church Service on Sunday, November 6, at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, 4 Sandisfield Road (Route 57).

Historical Society Wine and Cheese Party on Sunday, November 6, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the South Sandisfield Meeting House on Route 183. All are welcome to this free event. Contributions accepted cheerfully.

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

Berkshire Jewish Farm Communities on Saturday, November 12, at 11:00 a.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. Dr. Michael Hoberman presents the largely untold story of Jews in small-town New England, tracing their settlement patterns, civic involvement, and religious life since the late 1800s. Admission is complimentary; contributions for the Sandisfield Jewish history book project are appreciated.

“Crazy World” Linda Mironti in a Cabaret Performance on Saturday, November 12, at 8:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. Linda entertains with stories and song. \$20. Tickets available online at www.sandisfieldartscenter.org.

Fall Flower Arranging Class on Monday, November 14, at 2:00 p.m. at the basement of the Town Hall Annex, Route 57. \$10.

SAVE THE DATE

Sandisfield Holiday Fair on Saturday, December 3, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Firehouse #2, Route 57. Penny Auction to benefit the Sandisfield Scholarship Fund, crafts, bake sale, miniature horses, children’s craft table, Santa and Mrs. Claus, new vendors, and more!

EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Moose in the Woods on Sunday, November 6, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at Bartholomew’s Cobble in Sheffield. Talk and walk with Westfield University wildlife expert Dr. John McDonald. Participants will hear about the habitat needs of these incredible animals and the current state of their population. Members of the Trustees of the Reservation, \$5; non-members \$10.

Free Sandisfield Day at Berkshire South Community Center on Sunday, November 13, from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Berkshire South, 15 Crissey Road, Great Barrington. Swim in the pool, use the exercise room, take a class.

We Still Live Here – Native American Movie Night on Sunday, November 20, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Bartholomew’s Cobble in Sheffield. View the incredible story of the Wampanoags and their cultural revival. Members of the Trustees of the Reservation, \$5; non-members \$10; children free.

Story Book Walk on Friday, November 25, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Bartholomew’s Cobble in Sheffield. Walk the beautiful ledges trail, stop along the way, and read pages of the Trustees of the Reservation’s new children’s book, “Charley Eliot and the Knights of the Woods.” Free!

September Fire/EMS Calls:



Fire:

Outside fire	1
Power line down	1
Smoke in building	1
Assist EMS	1
False alarm	1

EMS:

Medical calls	8
Motor vehicle accidents	1



SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER



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NOVEMBER

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COOKING WITH MAMA MIA

IN THE GALLERY
NOVEMBER 5-27

TERESA BILLS:
“RUNNING WITH SCISSORS”
OPENING RECEPTION
NOV 5, 2-4 PM

SAT, NOV 12, 8 PM \$20
“CRAZY WORLD”

LINDA MIRONTI
IN A CABARET PERFORMANCE



These programs are supported in part by a grant from the Sandisfield Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

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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.

Donations of all sizes are needed to ensure the continuation of this newspaper. Please send checks to: *The Sandisfield Times*, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or donate online at our website: www.sandisfieldtimes.org.

Copies of *The Sandisfield Times* are available in Sandisfield at A&M Auto, the Arts Center (in season), the Transfer Station, Post Office, the New Boston Inn, New Boston Sleds, Villa Mia, MJ Tuckers, When Pigs Fly Farm and Town Hall. Copies are also available in Otis at Berkshire Bank, Katie's Market, Papa's Fuel, Otis Library, Farmington River Diner, and Otis Poultry Farm. Locations in 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.

The Times can be mailed to your home by paid subscription (see form below left) or you can read it (free) online as a PDF document at www.sandisfieldtimes.org.

We welcome submissions, comments and suggestions, including letters to the editor **BY THE 15TH OF THE MONTH PRIOR.** We may edit for space, style or clarity. We will try to publish Public Service Announcements when we have room, with priority given to Sandisfield organizations. No portion of the *The Sandisfield Times* may be reproduced without permission.

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