

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



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Volume VIII Number 2

May 2017

## Financially, Town Is OK

### OTHER ISSUES COMING DOWN THE PIKE

By Tom Christopher

Financially speaking, Sandisfield has come a long way in the last 12 months.

A year ago, says Terry Spohnholz, during the very first week of her tenure as Town Treasurer, she was met with an ominous visit from an agent of the Internal Revenue Service. At issue was the town's failure to make financial reports and payments, so that there was an estimated \$161,000 of tax, penalties, and interest due. And she discovered the town was in arrears on unemployment payments; it owed penalties as well on that. What's more the town hadn't filed W-2 and W-3 forms for its employees in a couple of years.

Now the town's financial books are in good shape and up-to-date. The owed tax and interest has been paid, with a remainder due the IRS of \$36,000 in penalties. She and Town Administrator Willie Morales are working to get the penalties abated. The unemployment payment has been made, and Spohnholz is clearing up the matter of the W-2s and W-3s.

"It looks good for fiscal year 2018," she says.

### Budget Lowered

Chairman of the Select Board Alice Boyd seconds that sentiment. The budget for the fiscal year ending on June 30th was \$200,000 less than that of the preceding year, and thanks to hard work by the town staff, the cost of running the town will be reduced by a further 12 percent in the year to come.

This further saving was achieved by interviews by the Treasurer, the Administrator, Accountant Dawn Lemon, Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko, and the Finance Committee of all the individual department and committee heads of the town. They were asked to scrutinize their individual budgets line by line to identify how much was truly needed and how much could be done without, sometimes to the annoyance of department and committee heads who had seldom if ever been asked for detailed accounting.

The town's Technology Committee was disbanded because the town accomplished its goal of updating the town government's computer system; this resulted in a savings of \$22,500.

Cont'd p.6



### Before Cutting the Cake

A celebration in April at Town Hall Annex honored Dolores Harasyko for her 20th anniversary as Town Clerk. From left, Dolores' co-workers are Assessor Clerk Kathi Burrows, Principal Assessor Jackie Bitso, Dolores, Select Board Chair Alice Boyd, Clerk Assistant Pauline Bakunis, Road Superintendent Bob O'Brien, Treasurer Theresa Spohnholz, Selectman Jeff Gray, Conservation Commission Secretary Clare English, and Road Equipment Operator David McCuin. Story, page 5


Photo: Dawn Lemon.

## Memorial Day Parade, 2017 Sunday, May 28

Sponsored by the American Legion and the Sandisfield Fire Department, the Memorial Day Parade will kick off at 10 a.m. from its gathering place at the Town Garage behind the Silverbrook.

The parade will move south and east down Rt. 57, stopping for ceremonies at the New Boston Cemetery and at the Berkshire Skilled Care & Rehabilitation facility across from the New Boston Inn. The parade ends at the American Legion Pavilion on South Main Street with a ceremony honoring

all war veterans, followed by free hot dogs and refreshments at the pavilion.

Maria Domato, Commander of American Legion Post #456, and Fire Chief Ralph Morrison are co-chairs of this year's parade. If you'd like to march in the parade, drive your vintage car, or ride horseback along the route, call Chief Morrison at 258-4742 to give him a heads-up. Or simply show up behind the Silverbrook by 9:30 a.m., and get in line. 



# Election List

## Announced Candidates for Election


**Monday, May 15, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. at Old Town Hall**

Moderator (1 year)	Simon Winchester
Town Clerk (3 years)	Dolores Harasyko
Selectman (3 years)	Mark Newman
School Committee (1 year)	Billie Anderson Pachulski
School Committee (3 years)	Nicholas Dellagiustina
Board of Health (3 years)	Victor Hryckvich
Library Trustee (5 years)	Mary Turek
Constable (3 years)	John Burrows Nazario Sanchez

No Candidates for These Offices:

- Board of Assessors (3 years)
- Board of Health (1 year)
- Planning Board (5 years)

**Absentee Ballots** are available at Town Hall Annex. Stop in during business hours or call the Town Clerk at 258-4711. The reasons for voting absentee are:


1. Absence from the town during normal polling hours.
2. Physical disability preventing you from going to the polling place.
3. Religious belief. 

# Annual Town Meeting

**Saturday, May 13, 10 a.m.**

Fire Station #2, Rt. 57

All residents welcome.

Only registered voters can vote. 

# Clothing Drop Closed


The Saint Paulie Clothes Drop at the former American Legion Post #456 on Rt 8 in New Boston will be removed on May 23 due to low volume. A clothing drop remains at the Transfer Station. 

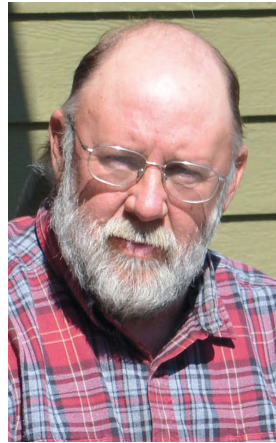
# Candidate for Select Board: Mark Newman

I live on Cronk Road with my wife, Donna, and our dog, Emma. We lived in Sheffield for 20 years before buying our property in Sandisfield in 2005. I'm currently the farm manager at Sheffield Sod Farm, where I have worked for the past 22 years. Previously Donna and I owned and operated our own dairy farm.


Having been involved in the operations of several different businesses, I have learned how to deal with a wide variety of challenges and issues.

As a selectman, a few of my goals are to get Yanner Park working as a family recreation center for the town. I also hope to be able to help work toward bringing our town buildings up to meet the future needs of the town. I also would like to look at the possibilities of making our transfer station more stream-lined and secure.


I have enjoyed speaking with many of the residents on the issues and challenges the town faces ahead and look forward to keeping Sandisfield a great place to live. 



# Road Updates

The Highway Department has begun posting weekly updates on the town website. To find them, go to [www.sandisfieldma.gov](http://www.sandisfieldma.gov) and to the Highway Department section. 

# Bulk Waste

Bulk waste will be accepted at the Transfer Station during the months of May and October. Bulk waste consists basically of large items you can't leave here during regular hours. 

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<b>INSIDE . . . . PAGE</b>	
Oh That Pipeline. . . . .	3
Bridge Update. . . . .	5
Finance Committee. . . . .	6
Sunny Rose Farm . . . . .	9
A Life of Community Service. . . . .	10
Near-Drowning — Again . . . . .	14



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Readers may notice there is no Town News column this month. That's because town news is all over this issue already: in Tom Christopher's story on town finances; Seth Kershner's report on roads and the Rugg Bridge update; Alice Boyd's call to attend the coming Town Meeting; Ron Bernard's stories on York Lake Beach and Rose Nelson's new barn at Sunny Rose Farm; and Kathy Jacob's report on the Finance Committee.

Of course, we're missing a Broadband story this month. But stay tuned. The Broadband team, working with the three towns that have signed on with us, is meeting and negotiating with Frontier Communications and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute. They're busy, believe me.

I'd like to introduce Seth Kershner, who's first report for *The Times* is mentioned above. A new voice for

us, Seth is a professional writer and the journalism advisor and librarian at Northwestern Connecticut Community College in Winsted. When Seth writes a news report, he knows what he's doing. Formerly of Lee, Seth and his long-time companion Sylvie recently bought the house on Rt. 57 that old-timers will remember as Daffer's Restaurant.

This year only nine candidates have signed on to run for elective offices, including Mark Newman for Selectman. All are running unopposed. Hats off to Mark and the other candidates, but three offices remain vacant and no one has signed up for them. For a look at someone who did sign up and took part, see Ron Bernard's story on pages 10-11 about Sam Wilber, a community leader and town booster who enjoyed doing just that, time after time.

— Bill Price  
West New Boston

## Oh That Pipeline

### PIPELINE WORKERS GETTING READY

#### *Beech Plain Plagued by "Security"*

By Bill Price

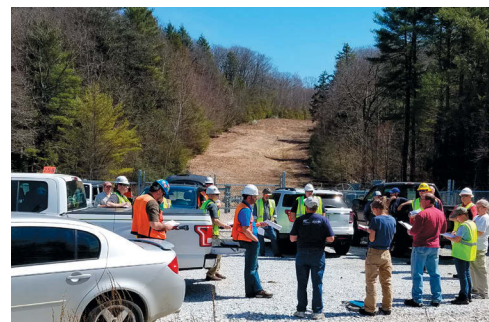
A crew of mostly out-of-state workers in hard hats and bright reflective vests has descended on the Spectacle Pond-Cold Spring Road neighborhood in the Beech Plain section of town, making final preparations for widening the right-of-way to accommodate a third pipeline over the existing 3.8-mile corridor. The company had earlier purchased the former Fales residence on South Beech Plain Road; it is now being used as a construction headquarters. Tree cutting could begin at any time.

Apparently Tennessee Gas Company expects trouble.

Dozens of unmarked cars are busy driving back and forth 24/7 along Cold Spring Road. These appear to be "security" vehicles, possibly to prevent pipeline protesters from setting up camp or roadblocks. State and local police have been seen patrolling the road as well.

The scrutiny of local residents as they drive roads in Beech Plain has been "creepy," several drivers report. "Townpeople should not expect this treatment driving through here." Because of resident suggestions the cars are now being identified and labelled "Security."

Complaints were made at the Select Board meeting April 24 and selectmen will relay these and further complaints to the State Police.



*At a meeting for land owners and other concerned parties April 11, representatives of Kinder Morgan and its subsidiary, Tennessee Gas Co., subcontractors, and consultants reviewed the 124 Orders of Conditions from the Sandisfield Conservation Commission. Massachusetts DCR was represented.*

Photos: Jean Atwater-Williams

Cause for hope for pipeline opponents was provided on April 18 when Massachusetts US Senators Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey urged the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to revoke its "Notice to Proceed" permit to Tennessee Gas. Their complaints were seconded by Congressman Richard Neal, who represents Massachusetts First District.

The lawmakers questioned the legality of the notice in view of the lack of a quorum of FERC Commissioners. The FERC Board currently has only two members when at least three are required by law.

They also asked that the Commission respond to the petition of Sandisfield citizens who had requested a rehearing in March, 2016 concerning the permit. The lack of response, the senators said, in effect silenced the citizens "before the Commission and before the Courts." Readers with online access can read the letters from the Senators and Representative Neal at [www.sandisfieldtimes.org](http://www.sandisfieldtimes.org).

### The Hijab

It wasn't so long ago  
That I believed the world could be changed  
By the simple act of sitting  
At a Woolworth counter.

Young men and women

In North Carolina  
Taught us our manners in 1961  
Braving old hatreds.

It was Gandhi stuff  
Spinning wheels and salt marches,

Teaching by example  
The absurdity of hate.

Then along comes Suzanne,

The wonderful, cockeyed lady  
Who teaches us to breathe sweet air  
And attend our sky.

She's wearing a hijab!

Bless me, she's wearing a hijab!  
It covers her beautiful hair  
And to me, it sings the following song:

You are welcome here!  
You are as precious  
As my great grandmother  
Who came from famine Ireland on a search  
To find a place where she could wear her hat  
On a Sunday in her church.

Val Coleman  
West New Boston



*A new, ominous sign appeared on Cold Spring Road late April.*

# Selectman Standing Down

## JEFF GRAY NOT RUNNING AGAIN

By Bill Price



After seven years as a Selectman, Jeff Gray is not running for a fourth term. First elected to the Select Board in 2010 to fill out the unexpired term of Elaine O'Brien, Jeff was elected to full 3-year terms in 2011 and 2014.


Blessed with a country charm, Jeff relieved a lot of strained encounters at weekly Select Board meetings with a combination of common sense and humor. He was especially effective on the board in regard to highway construction and maintenance, knowledge gathered from his previous career with the state as an engineer overseeing the construction of roads, bridges, and highways.

Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko claimed that she has "truly enjoyed working with Jeff." She added, "He has been a wealth of knowledge especially regarding the roads, bridges, and vehicles. He has kept that quirky sense of humor no matter the situation."

"Jeff is passionate about his beliefs and takes a stand," said Alice Boyd, Select Board Chairman. "I respect that. He has the ability to understand long range implications of a decision that is only gained with experience. We don't always agree but we respect each other's viewpoints and can put our differences aside afterwards and maintain our friendship. That's how politics should be."

"With his Sandisfield roots, has been a committed selectman," added Selectman John Skrip. "Jeff has shown interest in our roads, our DPW, and our town in general. When things got heated during one of our sessions, you could always count on Jeff for a good laugh. I wish him the best and hope he will continue to offer his help."

Former Select Board Chairman Patrick Barrett said, "Jeff's strength as a selectman was his deep knowledge of how to build and maintain roads. For seven years Jeff fought the good fight on behalf of the residents of Sandisfield. I am honored to count him as one of my friends and thank him for his dedicated service. I know that he will be sorely missed."

Jeff is in charge of maintenance at the Farmington River School. He and his wife, Sonja, live on Stump Road on the Annecharico family farm, now Red Barn Alpacas. 



York Lake Beach. Photo: Courtesy of Massachusetts DCR.

**FROM YORK LAKE STATE FOREST WEBSITE:** Within the rolling northern hardwood forests of Sandisfield State Forest is York Lake, featuring a popular day use area with a 300-foot beach for unguarded swimming, a picnic area and a boat launch ramp. Some of the lakes are stocked with trout and are accessible to non-motorized boats. York Lake is stocked by Mass Wildlife 3 times each year. Other seasonal activities include walking and biking, horseback riding and cross-country skiing. Hunters are also welcome (in season). Hike the moderate difficulty 2.2 mile Pond Loop Trail (Healthy Heart Trail) for scenic views of the lake.

The Park can be accessed on Route 183. The main entrance is just west of the Sandisfield/New Marlborough town line. Daily parking fees are \$8 per Massachusetts vehicle, \$10 for out of state. For more information Google "York Lake State Forest" or call 413-229-8212.

# York Lake Beach to Remain Open

## IT'S WHERE WE GO TO COOL OFF

By Ron Bernard


The Times had received reports that due to expected budget cuts the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation was considering cancelling maintenance and services this summer at York Lake Beach in the Sandisfield State Forest and closing its facility there.

Now Mark Steffen, DCR Press Secretary, has reassured us that York Lake Beach will be open Memorial Day through Labor Day this year, daily from sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

He added, "York Lake will be regularly maintained, and, similar to past years, the waterfront will be open to the public for unguarded swimming. The DCR's Western Region park staff expects to perform weekly clean-up duties within the park."

Every so often there are notices or rumors that DCR services here may be curtailed but that's not the case this summer.

In fact, the Department has recently improved Sandisfield State Forest for visitors. "Our projects," said Steffen, "have included stump removal and ground leveling activities in the picnic area, sand replenishment at the beach area, and gravel road improvements."

York Lake, a legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, is a clean, beautiful but under-visited park. It is a well-kept secret, perhaps due to lack of publicity or word-of-mouth. DCR hopes to change that. Steffen told us, "We want more people to come and enjoy this park." 

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# A Celebration for Dolores

By Bill Price

A surprise luncheon at Town Hall Annex honored Dolores Harasyko, who reached her 20th anniversary as Town Clerk in April.

Her Sandisfield co-workers presented her with a cake and gifts. She received roses from the Selectmen, a plaque from Representative Smitty Pignatelli, and more, including a few bottles of wine.


She said the luncheon was a “lovely surprise,” adding:

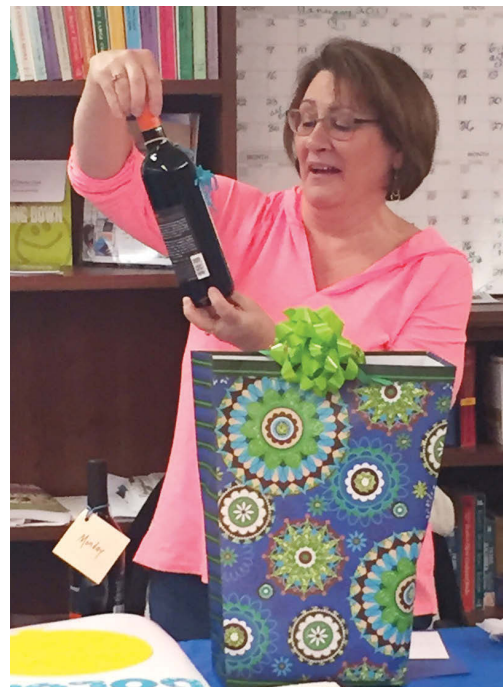
“Someone asked me to pick one thing that stands out from the last 20 years. I am most proud of the records restoration project.

“When I started in 1997 the town records going back to the 1700s were in the prior clerk’s house. This included the town’s original proprietors’ records, all vital records, school information, highway layout, and so much more. The books were so deteriorated they could not be opened.

“I applied for a grant for records preservation which allowed for an audit of all the historical documents and prioritization of them. Then I went to Town Meeting to fund the restoration of the books. This process took a couple years. The next step was to secure the books. They are now protected in locked fireproof file cabinets. I was told by the restoration company that by doing this project we added 500 years of life to the documents.”

Of her job as Town Clerk, Dolores said, “I enjoy helping people, which I do every day. Maybe it’s to register someone to vote, a birth, marriage, or death certificate, a dog license, a dump sticker, license information, census, genealogy research, working with all the boards and committees. This has been and continues to be a labor of love.”

Dolores is running again this year, again unopposed. 



*Possibly the most useful gifts for Dolores at the celebration were several bottles of wine labeled with each day of the week to celebrate “a good day or a bad day.”*

Photo: Dawn Lemon

# Getting There on Our Roads

## RUGG BRIDGE UPDATE

By Seth Kershner

For Sandisfield residents concerned about progress on local infrastructure projects, April brought a bit of welcome news.

First, there was the announcement by Rep. Smitty Pignatelli’s office that the State House of Representatives had passed legislation authorizing \$200 million in Chapter 90 bond funding to assist local communities in completing repairs to their roads and bridges. Towns are awarded monies based on a formula that accounts for miles of roadway, among other factors. Thus, Sandisfield’s roughly 90 miles of roads means that it’s slated to get \$327,359, a sum exceeding the combined amount allotted to Monterey and New Marlborough.

Reached by phone from Boston, Rep. Pignatelli told *The Times*: “I wish it were more money. It sounds like a lot until you get a project out to bid and you find it doesn’t get you that far.” Still, Alice Boyd, Select Board chairman, said in an email that she was “thrilled” at the size of the allocation and

was “very grateful to Representative Pignatelli for his continued work for our rural communities.”

Given differences between the House and Senate versions of the Chapter 90 bills, a conference committee is meeting to iron out the final terms. After approval, the bill goes to the Governor’s desk for signature.

The Chapter 90 bond bill is an investment each town gets from the state. It’s up to taxpayers and local officials to determine where the money should be spent. In an email, Alice Boyd noted that there are plans to work on West Street, Town Hill Road and various other potholed roads this season. “Our roads are in tough shape here,” Boyd added, “and we need a major influx of funding to make real headway.”

While it may not be enough to fill all the potholes in town, Chapter 90 funding and the MassWorks grant that the town will receive for the repair of Rugg Bridge should ensure that progress continues.

### Rugg Bridge Update


On April 7, a special meeting of the Sandisfield Conservation Commission was convened to hear from representatives of Foresight Land Services, the Pittsfield-based design firm hired to assemble the specifications for the repair of Rugg Bridge. The Rugg is the now one-way bridge across the Clam River near the Town Library on Rt. 57.

According to Town Administrator Willie Morales, Commission Secretary Clare English, and others, the ConComm meeting brought up issues such as where to store equipment and how to prevent debris from falling into the Clam River. Foresight recently sent the project out to bid; bids were due by April 30.

In a phone call with *The Times*, Road Superintendent Bob O’Brien said that early June was the likely start date for work and could take as long as six months to complete.

During the repair period, auto traffic on Route 57 will be diverted along narrow River Road. Culverts on the detour have been repaired and most of the road repaved. The middle section of the road will remain one-way, controlled by traffic lights that will be installed this month.

Alice Boyd recalled that 20 years ago River Road residents had to endure a similar detour during a Rugg Bridge rebuilding project. She said: “We hate putting them through this again but there’s no other way to do it.”

Semi-truck traffic will be banned, although school bus, DPW, and fire and emergency vehicles will be allowed to use the River Road detour. A heavy police presence by the intersection of Routes 8 and 57 will ensure that truckers and motorists obey the new rules. 

## Financially, We're OK *Cont'd from p.1*

Because all the scheduled construction projects are now up and running, the budget for engineering fees – \$12,499 – could be eliminated.

The Police Department found savings of \$3,000; the Fire Department cut the expense of Fire Training by \$4,000. The Snow and Ice account finished this past winter with a surplus of \$24,000, and has been reduced in the budget for the year to come.

All of these savings, Boyd asserts, were accomplished without affecting the quality of town services.

### Unexpected Income

In addition, there was unanticipated income in Fiscal Year 2017. A timber harvest in Yanner Park brought in \$108,000 (with two-thirds of the income to be received in FY18, although all expenses paid FY17). Another timber harvest in Sandisfield Center Cemetery earned \$26,000.

Thanks to the tightening of expenses, the town government has been able to propose three capital improvements without significant increase to the budget. If these improvements are approved, the Fiscal Year 2018 budget would exceed that of FY2017 by just 0.7%.

All of these expenditures, of course, will be subject to approval at the Town Meeting on May 13. These capital improvements are a proposed purchase of land for the eventual site of a new town hall, the purchase of new truck for the Highway Department, and a new police cruiser (to replace a current vehicle with a cracked frame).

Chairman Boyd says that she gives full credit to town staff. "We've done all the hard work," she says of Sandisfield, "and we've got the right staff in place. Now it's a question of maintaining." And also positioning the town for the pending issues of Broadband, pipeline construction, the Rugg Bridge repair, and issues not yet in sight.

# How the Finance Committee Works

By Kathy Jacobs, Chairperson

This year we rolled out a new budget review process. As with any new process, there were bumps in the road. Redundancies were quickly evident, and there were other bumps. We're still finding some. We appreciate everyone's efforts and patience as we refine the budget tasks for next year.

One thing is for sure: Refining the budget is a give-and-take procedure.

This was our process for this year:

Step 1. Held a meeting with each Board, Committee, Department Head, Town Staff, and Town Administrator to discuss budget expectations and to complete pre-budget estimates.

Step 2. Budgets were submitted by the Boards and Departments and reviewed by the Town Administrator.

Step 3. Those budgets were passed to the Finance Committee for review.

Step 4. The Finance Committee met with most Boards and Departments for a deep dive into the budget requests. It was up the submitter of the budget to justify why each and every dollar is needed. This year there were discussions, explanations, and then more lively discussions. But we all seemed to end on a good note.

Step 5. Final budget amounts were submitted to the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator.

After all is said and done, the final word still rests with the voters at the Annual Town Meeting to fund the financial workings of the town.

The Finance Committee is only one part of the overall financial process within the Town. We are the ones that ask the whys and have to determine how we are going to fund the approved requests. The question is how can we rub our pennies together to make sure that the Town runs at 100 percent full strength with the best possible tools.

The success of rubbing those pennies together depends on the combination of the Select Board, the Town Administrator, the Town Treasurer, and the Finance Committee, and all departments and boards within the Town working together to make the right things happen.



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## Who's on the Finance Committee?

**Kathy Jacobs, Chair.** An IT Business Analyst with more than 30 years' experience with customer service activities: accounting, actuarial, and wealth management products. Knowledge of IRS and Department of Labor requirements and processes. She and her husband Tom are the owner/operators of "Long Acre Farm" on Hammertown Road.

**Joe Gelinis** is a Professor Emeritus from Bentley University in Waltham, Mass., from which he retired after over 30 years teaching, research, and consulting in the areas of accounting information systems, auditing, and IT auditing. He previously served on the Finance Committee in the town of Walpole, Mass. Joe and his wife Roxanne live on Lake Shore Drive in the Sandisfield portion of Otis Wood Lands

**David Hubbard**, a graduate of the Columbia University School of Law, worked many years in the legal profession for a wide range of corporate clients, owned retail and wholesale businesses, and currently provides legal and financial counsel to a select group of individual investors and hedge funds on a national and international basis. He and his wife Patricia live on Dodd Road.

**Dominic Konstam** is managing director of Deutsche Bank Securities, Inc., a German investment firm with regional headquarters in New York City. In Sandisfield, he and his family live on Clark Road. 

**NOTE:** *The Finance Committee is seeking a fifth Committee member. If interested, please contact Town Moderator.*



## AROUND TOWN HALL Town Meeting Time

*By Alice Boyd, Chairman, Select Board*

Ah, spring. The snow has disappeared, the peepers have returned, and the trees have that bright green glow. There's nothing better here in the Berkshires except, perhaps, town meetings.

New England town meetings are a unique form of democracy, a direct link to our ancestors and ancient Greece. Town meetings are the most pure and democratic form of government. Each voter enters town meeting as an equal with the right to be heard and the right to legislate. We sit with our neighbors as we debate, speak our mind, and vote on the business of our town. The town moderator conducts the meeting, keeps it civil and moves things along. The rules are followed, and we get the work done.


Here at Town Hall we've been preparing for this Town Meeting for over five months. Our Town Administrator and staff met with each department and committee to prepare a budget and the Selectmen and Finance Committee vetted each article and line item. Every dollar has been scrutinized and questioned. Cuts have been made and feelings have been hurt.

We are presenting a budget that we believe in. You will have the chance to vote on salaries, equipment, and programs. Our work is done; it's now up to you. Meanwhile the work at town hall continues.

We have changed staff e-mail addresses allowing us to comply with state and federal regulations regarding e-mail retention. An updated directory of e-mail addresses is located on the town website. You'll also find a weekly update on where the Highway Department is working and what projects they're working on. You can sign up to receive notifications from every town committee and check on broadband progress. Our goal is to provide complete transparency.

We're also looking for an artist and any ideas for the creation of an official town seal. We'd like to take our current emblem and create a seal that will adorn our website and official documents. Please contact Town Administrator Willie Morales if you are interested.

Finally, please mark Saturday, May 13, on your calendar.

For 255 years Sandisfield residents have come together to do exactly what we'll do at our 2017 Town Meeting. Come and take your place with your neighbors and friends to direct the future of our town. 

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& may

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& auction!  
to benefit the arts center  
(reservations required)

gallery april 30-may 27  
reception: sun, april 30, 2-4pm  
peter ganick

sat, may 6, 7pm \$15  
\$5 under 12  
family cabaret  
with anni crofut

sat, may 13, 10:30-noon \$10  
exploring  
environmental memoir  
with jennifer browdy

## A Story of World War II

### SON OF HISTORIC PARTISAN TO SPEAK IN SANDISFIELD

By Joanne Lazarowitz Olson



The Sandisfield Arts Center will present a rare opportunity to share a film and discussion with the youngest son of the legendary commander of World War II partisans. Robert Bielski lectures throughout the world about the exploits of his father, Tuvia Bielski, and his uncles who led a resistance camp in the Belarus forests of Poland. By the time the Russian army overran the Nazis in the summer of 1944, the partisans had protected more than 1,200 Jews.

their homelands.

The home of one of my good friends, where I spent many hours, belonged to such a family. The father was a truck driver who worked long hours, the mother stayed home taking care of the family. Both had Eastern European accents similar to that of my grandmother. I remember pictures and plaques on the walls of the living room, but most were written in Hebrew which I couldn't read.

I was told by my friend that his father had things written about him in books, but the books were also in Hebrew.

Never in my wildest dreams would I think that my friend's father, the quiet man living on Avenue I, would be known years later as the man who saved a village of Jews in Belarus, and that Daniel Craig would portray him in the 2008 movie "Defiance."



The documentary, "Jerusalem in the Woods," includes rare interviews with Robert's father and with other Bielski Brigade survivors.

Allow me to share a personal story.

As teenagers growing up in Brooklyn, everyone was in and out of everyone else's homes. Our friends' parents looked out for all the kids, and we knew and respected them all. Everyone came from different backgrounds. Our fathers were all blue collar workers and most were members of the Greatest Generation which served in World War II. Some of our parents had been in the U.S. for generations, others spoke with accents telling of

Robert Bielski, my friend in Brooklyn, also served as best man at my wedding. Now he is on the board of the Museum of Jewish Heritage and lectures throughout the world about the exploits of his father and his uncles. I invite you to join us for this powerful story of a man who fought back against the Nazis, as told by his son.

The presentation will be Saturday, June 3, at 4 p.m. Tickets are \$20 and proceeds will help support the Jewish History Book Committee, currently gathering background and material for the publication next year of *Soil and Shul in the Berkshires: The Untold Story of the Sandisfield Jewish Farm Colony.*

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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.



# "Under Milk Wood" on the Road

## Sunny Rose Farm Open For Business


By Anna Konopatskaya,  
Managing Director, SArc

Three years ago the Sandisfield Players performed Dylan Thomas' great 20th century play, "Under Milk Wood," at the Sandisfield Arts Center. This spring, the Players will join together once again to take their production on the road, before bringing it back home.

Catch them Saturday, May 20, at 7:30 p.m. at the Unicorn Theatre in Stockbridge, or on Sunday, May 21, at 4:00 p.m., at the Norfolk Library. Venture together with our 'travelling troupe' into the small Welsh farming village of Llareggub to join its cast of eccentric inhabitants for an evening of humorous and often quite surreal poetry.

For information about these performances, please contact the venues directly. Unicorn Theatre: 413-997-4444 or berkshiretheatregroup.org. Norfolk Library: 860-542-5075 or norfolklibrary.org.

Or wait to see the Players at our very own Arts Center on Saturday, June 10 at 7:00 p.m., \$20 adults, \$5 children under 12. For tickets visit our website: [www.sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://www.sandisfieldartscenter.org).

There will be more information about the local performance in the June issue of *The Sandisfield Times*. 

By Ron Bernard

Last March we introduced Rose Nelson, daughter of Chuck and Zoe, and her plans for Sunny Rose Farm, an equine riding school and boarding facility at the family's expansive Dodd Road property in a report called "Not Horsing Around."

We were impressed if a bit skeptical about such an ambitious undertaking. No longer.

A dream no more, the Nelsons have erected a magnificent 7,800 sq. ft. indoor riding/training facility that's ready to go. Now Rose, a state-licensed certified instructor, is training students of all ages and riding



*Rose Nelson with the latest arrival to Sunny Rose Farm, "Honey Bee" the donkey, and with "Shaggy," her miniature horse and campers Alice, Erin, and Grace during Kids Camp last month.*

levels in all conditions for Events and Dressage.

"We just finished our first camp of the season and are signing up for the summer session that begins late May," she told us.


Students train by riding trails on the Nelson's South Sandisfield property which connects to trails in Sandisfield State Forest and York Lake. Rose said that she hopes to take her students

riding elsewhere in town, maybe at Yanner Park when trails become available.

The Nelson's have made a big commitment to this venture but they have confidence in Rose. And they are not done. "I'm planning a 12-stall boarding addition, hopefully by later this year," Rose said.

Part-time and year-round boarding of horses is a major component of Rose's long-range business plan. "We already have our first boarder, a four-year old who is here for physical therapy and to be trained for riding," she said.

The stalls addition will be a substantial new investment. A viewing room in the main building is also in the works. Rose has applied for loans and grants to help finish these projects

Good luck to Rose. We will report on her progress from time to time. For more information or to contact Rose, see the ad for Sunny Rose Farm on page 12. 



*Under construction in early April, the new barn is now finished.*

## Snow Farm Opens May 12!



Visit Snow Farm in Sandisfield and choose from locally-grown annuals, perennials and vegetable seedlings. Enroll in our Cut Flower CSA and enjoy lovely bouquets all season long.

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# A Life of Community Service

## NEW BOSTON PARK NAMED FOR SAM WILBER, JR.

By Ron Bernard

The splendid little park overlooking the Farmington River just south of the new bridge in New Boston village honors long-time police chief, selectman, and tireless town booster, Sam Wilber, Jr. and his family's legacy.

In the long tradition of community leadership and efforts to improve Sandisfield, many deserve the gratitude of posterity, but few can match the lifetime contributions of Sam Wilber, Jr. Maybe only George A. Shepard, the town's brilliant advocate in the 1870s and 1880s, rises to such distinction.

### The Wilbers Move to Sandisfield



*Sam Wilber, Jr., on the ground that became Wilber Park, before the family moved north on Rt. 8. In the photo, taken in the fall of 1956, Sam is holding his recently born daughter, Marie. In the background, the New Boston Store.*

Sam Wilber, Sr., moved to Atwater Pond at Sandisfield Center with his wife, Mary Ellen King, before 1920. His older brother, Oscar, had been living in Colebrook, Conn., since around 1910. The family was from nearby Green and Ulster counties, New York.

It is likely that Sam was already acquainted with the Atwaters and Dotys, prominent families from Poughkeepsie who had summered for many years in their Center homes including at Atwater Pond. The Atwaters and Dotys had built the 35-acre pond, and a 2½-story house, a residence for the property's caretaker. The 1920 US census includes the Wilbers, together with Mary's widowed father, John King, 71, as residents. Sam's occupation was listed as "gamekeeper."

Town correspondent Hen Manley on July 4, 1920 reported in *The Berkshire Eagle*, "Sam Wilber saw quite a commotion out on the pond." It turned out to be two huge snapping turtles "fighting like dogs." Sam managed to corral one into his boat but the other got away. Wilber told Manley, "It was three-and-a-half foot long and weighed 75 pounds. It was a tough-looking fellow."

Sam, Sr., and Mary had two children there, Mary Elizabeth "Betty," born 1922, and Samuel Rufus Jr., 1926.

Walter Linkovich, life-long resident of Sandisfield Center, remembers Sam, Jr., as his neighbor and good childhood friend.

"We were the same age," Walter said. "We used to go hunting together. Sam was a nice guy, a bit on the quiet side." Walter recalled that the Wilbers did not own an automobile. Chuckling, Walter said, "I taught him how to drive in our Model A."

### After the War, Community Service

Sam Jr. joined the US Marines Corps for the last half of World War II. His son, David, told *The Times* that "Dad was part of the Mariana Islands campaign including at Saipan, Tinian, and Guam." After the war, he mustered out with the rank of corporal.

Sam used his training and leadership experience plus inborn self-confidence and a strong work ethic to good purpose back home after the war. His life in Sandisfield exemplified community service.

In 1949, only 23, he was elected head Constable, a position he held until 1964/65 when he was hired as Sandisfield Chief of Police. Through these years he was also a Berkshire County Sheriff. Sam was elected Selectman, 1967-1974.

He retired in 1975 after a quarter century keeping the town safe, orderly, and well managed. After his retirement as police chief, he remained available as a "special policeman."



*Sam, 1974.*

He was active in the local Grange, the Red Cross chapter, American Legion Post #456, the Arts Council, the Radio Rescue league, the Republican Town Committee, the Sandisfield Taxpayers Association, the Massachusetts Police Officers Association, and the Sandisfield Youth Group.

According to Town Clerk and local historian Flora Rhodes, writing in 1980, Sam had a strong sense of history and loved to recount

old-time lore to entertain members of the Sandisfield Historical Society at monthly meetings.

In the 1960s and '70s, he was also a Boy Scout leader. Fire Chief Ralph Morrison recalls how Sam, as Scoutmaster, taught the Scouting way of life at meetings at the American Legion Pavilion. "Every year," said Ralph, "he would take us camping upstate for two weeks. We learned all the basics about hiking, camping, safety, and first aid."

In July, 1971 Sam and his troop helped the historical society clean out and begin rehabilitation of their new headquarters in the former Osborn House in West New Boston, a good deed worthy of a compliment and photo in *The Berkshire Eagle*. Sam Wilber was generous and selfless. Ralph said, "He was available to anyone, for any reason, at any time."

When Sam died in 1983, a tribute with full military honors was held at the American Legion Pavilion at Hamilton Grove. He had lived his life as an example of community service and good citizenship.

### About Wilber Park

Sam and his wife, the former Jeanne Blanchette, and their children moved from the home in New Boston to a house on Rt. 8 just north of New Boston center (today the residence of Jay Reynolds.)

The land where Wilber Park stands was owned by Sam's sister, Betty. She lived for many years in the old house by the bridge on land originally settled by Sandisfield founders, the Daniel Brown family. Thomas Brown, the first

## Sandisfield

### Froze Hands

**Clifford Palmer, stage driver, was unable to transport the mail Tuesday as he was suffering from frozen hands.**

**—Mr. and Mrs. Willard Platt of Two Bridge Farm spent Monday in New York.**

**—The temperature in Sandisfield was reported from 35 to 30 degrees below zero during the cold spell.**

**—Archie E. Welles and Angelo B. Campetti have been ordered to report to Springfield for induction into the Army Feb. 26.**

**—Samuel Wilber Jr. severely cut his wrist at his home Friday. He was taken to the hospital in Winsted by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Carter.**

*The Berkshire Eagle, February 23, 1943.*

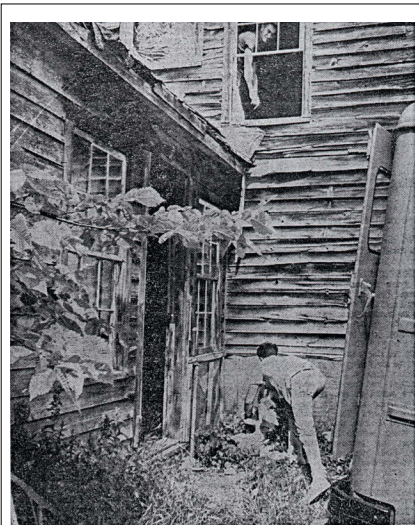




The Wilber house, New Boston, 1961.

settler here, built his cabin near this spot in March 1750. Betty Wilber died in Great Barrington in 2013. The Wilber land is very appropriate for a Sandisfield park.

David Wilber, Sam's son who was raised in New Boston, now lives in North Carolina but closely follows town doings each month in *The Times* online. Proud of his father, he followed in Sam's footsteps serving 21 years as a Marine. David maintains a strong affinity for his home town.



By 2010 the old Wilber place, unoccupied for many years, was so badly deteriorated it was condemned by the Board of Health. David donated the property to the Town, with the agreement that the parcel would be preserved and dedicated to his


Clean-up day by Sandisfield Scouts at the Osborn House. Sam Wilber leaning out of the upstairs window. From the *Berkshire Eagle*, 1971.

**HARD-WORKING** Boy Scouts clean out junk and load it onto trucks at the former Osborn House in West New Boston in preparation for its restoration by the Sandisfield Historical Society. The 100-year-old home is on Route 57. BARBARA NEWSON

father's memory and his legacy. The place and a neighboring condemned house were razed late in 2010.

In time (things take time, after all), the Town, led by Ralph Morrison with the help of a few fellow New Bostonians, members of the Fire Department, and other volunteers cleared, groomed, planted, and now maintain the site as a public park. Now this green, sometimes shady place with a proud flag pole, an historic marker, and sturdy picnic tables welcomes visitors to rest, reflect, and picnic overlooking the Farmington.

Last year Select Board Chairman Alice Boyd saw to it that the last piece was put in place. A monument – in fact the house's salvaged former step stone, saved for the purpose – was installed, with a bronze plaque proclaiming this place for all time as Wilber Park.

Thanks to David Wilber and caring residents we finally have a true, dignified sort-of town center, however humble it may be. 



Looking north, Wilber Park is a gentle entry to Sandisfield. A plaque on the Wilber house's former step stone, which stands upright as a monument, reads: "Wilber Park. In memory of Samuel R. Wilber, 2010."

Photos courtesy of David Wilber, Ron Bernard, Sandisfield Historical Society.

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# Sandisfield Historical Society



By Ron Bernard

"I feel that it is unacceptable for the Society to close. It is an institution that is so important for our town. I just could not stand by." That's what the affable new president, Ann Wald told *The Times* following her election on April 8 at the Society's headquarters.

Ann is the tenth in a line of past presidents dating to the society's inception in 1970-71. Some were amateur historians and some were not. But every one of them deeply appreciated Sandisfield's long and rich history. They understood the need to preserve the town's heritage and to inform the community about it. This is the basic mission of every historical society.

Almost twenty turned out this day in the historic former South Sandisfield Congregational church (1909) to witness and support the rejuvenation of a venerable organization. The Society went inactive last year for want of a new leader.

In the audience were past presidents Norton Fletcher (1987; 2007), Jo Freedman (2004), Connie Canty (2006) and John Kuzmech (2013-16). Also in attendance were new residents and second home owners. Long-time members nodded in agreement about the importance of involvement from new residents.

Ann admitted that she was not a true historian. "But I am concerned and I bring energy and enthusiasm. With support from the community I know we will thrive," she said. Ann, who is a 30-year+ town resident, brings solid community organization experience from her involvement on the Council on Aging and as a member of the Master Plan committee as well as her avid interest in town affairs.

It looks like she will get that support. New officers have considerable institutional memory. They include Barry Freedman, Treasurer, Vickie Baku-nis, Secretary, and Kathie Burrows, Historian. The position of Vice President is expected to be filled with an appointment later.

The new board also created an Advisory Committee. Its role will include suggestions for traditional historical programs and community social activities as well as long-term planning strategies like fund raising. Signing on were John Burrows, Connie Canty, Joanne Olson, Emily Melchior, Jo Freedman, Roger Kohler and Ron Bernard. Ann

expressed appreciation and the hope that others will join. Selectman John Skrip offered to be the Society's liaison with Town government. "There are so many ways that the Town can and should support this organization. It is really important," he said.

With this declaration, spontaneous, enthusiastic brainstorming ensued. Roger Kohler and Emily Melchior will create a web site and a Facebook page. A big list of significant to-do's was noted by Secretary Vickie. Society Historian Kathie Burrows vowed to complete the unfinished comprehensive inventory of the Society's holdings, no small undertaking.

Ann said that her priorities for this year are to re-establish awareness and interest in the Society generally and to balance educational programs and facilities management activities.


So the survival of this nearly half-century-old institution is not in doubt, at least for the near term. Public support will ensure that SHS continues serving the community indefinitely. Watch for announcements about programs and activities through 2017.

As in the past, regular gatherings are scheduled at the headquarters on the second Saturday of each month through November. The intention is for the board's regular business to conclude by 11 am followed by a speaker or historical display and then a hospitality luncheon for all visitors. For more information or to assist or to contribute contact Ann Wald at Tel 258-4415 or by email at [annaw2@verizon.net](mailto:annaw2@verizon.net).

*Late note: A Facebook page for the society is already up. Please visit [www.facebook.com/HistoricSandisfield](http://www.facebook.com/HistoricSandisfield).*



Former President John Kuzmech passes the gavel to President-elect Ann Wald.  
Photo: Ron Bernard



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# Fire/EMS/Police Logs

## Police:

911 Calls by Sandisfield Residents

Submitted by Michael Morrison, Chief

### March, 2017

- Mar 1. . . . . Medical call, Sandisfield Road
- Mar 2. . . . . Erratic motor vehicle operation, South Main St
- Mar 4. . . . . Erratic motor vehicle operation, South Main St
- Mar 5. Structure fire, New Marlboro mutual aid
- Mar 9. . . . . Erratic motor vehicle operation, Sandisfield Rd
- Mar 10. . Disabled motor vehicle, South Main St
- Mar 11 Suspicious motor vehicle, Silverbrook Rd
- Mar 12. . . . Disorderly person, Sandisfield Rd
- Mar 20. . Motor vehicle accident, South Main St
- Mar 22. . . Open house door, New Hartford Rd
- Mar 22. . . . . Motor vehicle accident, Sandy Brook Tpke
- Mar 31 . . . Disabled motor vehicle, Hubbard Rd



## Fire:

### March, 2017

- Structure Fire/mutual aid to New Marlborough 1
- Assist EMS at motor vehicle accident/  
Wires Down . . . . . 1



## EMS:

### March, 2017

- EMS calls, excluding vehicle accidents. . . . . 7
- Vehicle accident with injuries . . . . . 1



# Sandisfield Vital Statistics, 2016

Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko records only vital statistical records which occur in Massachusetts. If someone in Sandisfield was born, married or deceased in another state but were residents of Massachusetts, by law the event would be recorded in that state.

- Births Recorded: . . . . . 6
- Marriages Recorded. . . . . 3
- Deaths Recorded: . . . . . 9

## Board of Registrars Annual Street Census

- Men listed 17 years and older: . . . . . 381
- Females listed 17 years and older: . . . . 331
- Male children 16 years and younger: . . . 59
- Female children 16 years and younger . . 46
- Total resident population counted: . . . 817

## New Voters Registered

There were 71 new registered voters for the calendar year 2016:

- Unenrolled . . . . . 43
- Republican . . . . . 11
- Democrat . . . . . 17

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## A Second Memoir of a Near-Drowning

Last month the Times printed former resident David Wilber's memoir of the rescue from drowning of a friend at Spectacle Pond in 1973.

The article that follows is resident Thelma Esteves memoir of the same dramatic event. A resident of Beech Plain Road since 1963, Thelma writes that those memories "still have deep meaning for me, even after nearly 44 years. The clarity and importance of my memories of that day stem from the complex family challenges of that summer and the intensity of the life and death struggle in the water."

While their memories differ, as do most memories after four decades, Thelma and David certainly share credit for saving Philip Paterson, known locally as Fungas.

Born and raised in town, David is the son of Sam Wilber, Sandisfield's former police chief. (See a tribute to Sam and his life of community service on pages 10-11 of this issue.) David received a citation and medal from the

Town before joining the US Marines in 1974. After a long career in the service, David now resides in Jacksonville, North Carolina.

From Jacksonville, David wrote: "I want to give Mrs. Esteves and everybody else every bit of credit they all deserve. Cause like I said before I don't know how much longer I could have held on to that raft or how I ended up there to be truthful. From the time we both went under, Fungas and I, a few times, I really do believe, blacked out, not passed out but blacked out, all trace of memory gone. Then like turning on a light switch the second whoever grabbed me by the shoulders and yanked me and Fungas up on the raft the memory turned back on. ... that's where it gets really foggy on who did what when but I say let the fog role in – LOL.

"There was a lot of credit to be passed around that day and god knows I don't deserve all of it. I may have gotten the medal, but to each and every one who was a part of that day my heartfelt thanks and gratitude is hardly enough but at this point it's all I have left to give."

– Bill Price

## Personal Reflections of a Near-Drowning

By Thelma Esteves



Thelma Esteves, 2016

A reunion of the key people in the story would without doubt be interesting. It is likely we could learn even more about our survival and share what we learned from the experience. I intend to call David. I suspect we could have a lot to talk about.

First I would like to say to him that it is not surprising to me that he became a Marine. My grandson is in the Corps now and has taught me about the honor codes all Marines live by. David's refusal to give up or abandon his friend whose life was in peril is classic.

On a beautiful day in July of 1973 my husband and I took our two daughters, ages five and eight, to enjoy the water at Spectacle Pond, a magical spot we frequently visited. I was exhausted from working with a pick and shovel to improve drainage near our barn. My husband was not well. We were both pensive as we watched our young daughters laughing and splashing after taking off their life jackets. We were feeling vulnerable. We had recently been made aware that my husband's lethal illness had returned.

A car pulled up and two young men got out talking happily as they walked into the water. One was tall, the other much shorter. They were speaking together as they approached the shoreline. One, I later learned, was David, the son of Sam Wilber, the local police chief, whom I knew and respected. I had never seen the taller young man before, but watched as he entered the water.

The steep slope of the pond caught him by surprise and he fell into deeper water. It became obvious he was not a swimmer. He panicked, swallowed water, and began to thrash about in an attempt to reach the raft. David immediately, selflessly threw himself into the struggle to get his friend safely to the raft. It was clear to me we could be witnessing a drowning of two young men.

I threw the children's life jackets towards them, hoping these floats could help. I ran towards the white lifesaver on the nearby red cabin. When I pulled the lifesaver off the side of the cabin, my heart sank. I wasn't confident it could support us.

I am a poor swimmer. The struggle was the most intense I have ever experienced.

I remember taking off my heavy work boots, hooking my arm through the lifesaver, and running into the water in my work clothes. I lost track of David. I thought he went to hold on to the raft to catch his breath. Then I saw him again in the water as he tried with all his might to get his friend to the raft. If he had not pulled him and tried to keep him up, I have no doubt that I would have been too late.



David Wilbur, 1974

David was tenacious, but his friend was larger, heavier, and not a swimmer. When David got up onto the raft I began to push and pull his friend towards the raft. I had my left arm hooked on the lifesaver to hold me up and as I kept pushing a life jacket under Philip's chin. I kept telling him, "Help me. You are okay. Come on! Stay up!" over and over. We got to the raft. But his head kept going under.

I was not always certain what was happening with David. But I believe he was on and off the raft trying to help his friend. I managed to get behind Philip and put each of my arms under each of his just below his shoulders. I hung off the raft with my hands. Holding his head above the water. I have no idea what happened to the lifesaver. Each time as he started to sink, I used my knee, and my leverage to kick him in the butt. Each kick led to water shooting out of his mouth.


It seemed suddenly that people arrived in a boat at the raft. The call to Otis had obviously been made. I believe David, Philip and I were on the raft when Philip began speaking and saying he was blind and couldn't see.

I have no idea how they got David and Philip into the boat. I did not see their maneuvers. I was suddenly alone and lying on my back on the raft giving my thanks to the sky above. I had noticed earlier that



my husband and children were shouting on the shore. My husband had unlocked our Sunfish that was moored some thirty feet to the right of the pond entrance. When the rescuers came they drove off with David and his friend. My husband paddled our boat to the raft and then took me back to shore.

**Post Script**

A few weeks passed, and I was in Steve's Store in New Boston (what was formerly known as the New Boston Store, later known as Pete's Store). I chatted awhile with people about small matters and then left the store. As I walked to my car a male voice called out, "I will never forget your voice." It was the tall stranger from Spectacle Pond who embraced me while saying, "Thank you. Thank you." We exchanged a few words and parted. I never saw Philip again, although I have thought of him often and would love to know how he is. 



**The Librarian's Corner**

By Terry Spohnholz

"Give me books, French wine, fruit, fine weather, and a little music played out of doors by somebody I do not know." John Keats

Ah, Spring has finally unveiled herself, after hiding under the cloak of winter for most of April.

Now comes that time of year when garden gloves, seedlings, and, in my case, vast dreams of colorful gardens and green lawns take precedence and then dissipate in the hot sun. I discover that the weeds, choking in sand from winter runoff, will continue to assail me in endless battles I never win; the flowers, will bloom briefly, be invaded by various insects and quickly be eaten alive and, alas, the lounge chair calls invitingly with a glass of wine and a book perched nearby.

But there is always more flowers and dirt to play in, no matter the weeks, and lots and lots of unread, need-to-read again, and, dang, I-need-to-finish-reading-that book lounging around.

And there are great new books arrived at the library, just in time for relaxation in the sun.

*Writer, Sailor, Soldier, Spy* by Nichols Reynolds. The untold story of Nobel Prize-winning author Ernest Hemingway's secret life as a spy for both the Americans and the Soviets before and during World War II.


*Lincoln in the Bardo* by George Sanders. The death of Lincoln's beloved son and a president's grief, a cemetery filled with ghosts of soldiers, drunks, fools, and slaves, is a reading experience in itself.

*Song of the Lion* by Anne Hillerman. If you are a fan of Tony Hillerman's Lt. Chee stories from Navajo country, Tony's daughter writes as well as her father and breathes new life into the Chee stories.

*Beartown* by Fredrik Backman. The #1 New York Times bestselling author of *A Man Called Ove* returns with a dazzling, profound novel about a small town with a big dream – and the price required to make it come true.

**Save the Dates:** Once again, in the lower level of the library, Lynn Rubenstein will be **crafting with the kids on Saturday, May 6, from 10:00 a.m. until noon.** This craft day will have Mother's Day in mind. There will be a **story time at 9:30** upstairs prior to crafting. And again on the **Saturday, May 13, from 10-noon** (this time with Dads in mind). **Story time again, on the 13th, at 9:30.**

Check out the library department on the town webpage for updates, events and news: [www.sandisfieldma.gov](http://www.sandisfieldma.gov).

So, as the sun warms up, the breeze is balmy, the wine chilled (or beer or lemonade), stretch out, relax and READ. 

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**Youth Saved From Drowning At Pond**

A New York youth was saved from drowning by a Beech Plain Road woman at Spectacle Pond off Cold Spring Road last Monday after he was unable to reach a raft offshore.

Philip Paterson was pulled to the raft by Mrs. Fausto Esteves, who buoyed him up with a child's life jacket until others could help pull him to safety - a feat, she said, she could not accomplish herself.

Mrs. Esteves, who described herself as a "poor swimmer" jumped from the beach into the water fully clothed except for shoes and supported herself on a life preserved to reach Paterson, witnesses said, was swimming with David Wilber, 17, of Route 8 when he was unable to reach the raft about 75 feet offshore. After Paterson, who is over 6 feet tall, had gone under water several times, Wilber made an attempt to pull him to safety but was unable to handle the bigger youth.

Mrs. Esteves then threw the life jacket toward Paterson. He was unable to reach it, but when she swam to him, she was able to keep him afloat by pushing the jacket under his chin until they reached the raft.

Then Wilber and Mrs. Bruce Hawler of Otis, who had called for an ambulance when the trouble was observed, helped pull Paterson onto the raft. He was taken by boat to shore and then by ambulance to Dr. Henry H. Erbe's office in Otis where he was treated and released.

Paterson is staying for the summer at the Morton J. Lichter residence in New Boston.

William H. Rowley, an owner of the pond, said that to his knowledge there has never been a drowning there. He said a Winsted, Conn. man was rescued there last summer, however.

Local historian Ron Bernard turned up a contemporary news report from the *Berkshire Eagle* crediting resident Thelma Esteves with a major assist in saving the potential victim, Philip Paterson, known locally as "Fungas."

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Photo: Joanne Lazarowitz Olson

## Old Friends

Two summer friends from Montville in the 1950s and '60s recently met for lunch in Brooklyn. After not seeing each other for over 50 years, they were reunited while working with the Jewish History Book Committee that is gathering the story of the Sandisfield Jewish colony. Left is Sheila Skolnick Gamradt; right is Sandra Lazarowitz Lemlein. Sheila is the daughter of Eleanor Pinsky Skolnick and Sandra is the daughter of Al (Abe) Lazarowitz, both of whom were children in the original Jewish settlement in the early 1900s. 🇺🇸



## The Egg Hunt

The Annual Otis/Sandisfield Easter Egg Hunt took place on a very cold and very windy Saturday morning, April 8, behind the Otis Town Hall. About fifty kids attended, with about the same number of shivering adults. A few hundred decorated eggs were hidden in clever places by the Easter Bunny and all (or most) were found by eager searchers. Free and open to the community, the event is sponsored and conducted by the Otis Recreation Commission, with the help of loyal volunteers.

## OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



Long-time resident **Mary Leary** and her husband Jim have sold their house on Rt. 8 in New Boston, near the American Legion Pavilion, and will move to Lake Wales, Florida, mid-June. Mary, who delivered mail in Sandisfield for 40 years, from 1972 until 2012, was married to Eric Lundgren until his death in 2005. Through Eric she was related to the large Campetti family, also long-time Sandisfield residents. Mary knows almost everyone in town and is friends with them all. She and Jim will be living in a 55-Plus complex in Florida with plenty of activities. "We won't worry about not being busy," she said.



**Rosanne Skrip's** mother, Rose Daddona of Waterbury, died April 15. She was 92, and had lived her entire life in Waterbury, where she worked for the city's parks department until her retirement.

Former neighbor and tireless volunteer, **Liana Toscanini**, attended the celebration at the Library of Congress of the 150th anniversary of her great-grandfather's birth. The celebration of Conductor Arturo Toscanini's birth was designed to enhance Italian-American relations.



Photo: Richard B. Migot

## The Farmington River PTA

By Wendy Berman

### Screen-Free Week

During the week starting May 15, the PTA is recognizing Screen-Free Week – encouraging students to stay away from online screens by offering "offline" activities such as hiking and swimming. Details will be sent home by early May.

### Box Tops for Education

The PTA has raised over \$400 through the Box Top return program, but the goal of \$1,500 is still a bit far. Be sure to clip Box Tops, ask friends to clip them, raid the pantries of relatives. Each Box Top is worth \$0.10 and each dime adds to other dimes to turn into real money. Visit [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com) for a list of products with Box Tops. Simply drop your Box Tops in an envelope and mail to Farmington River Elementary PTA, PO Box 679, Otis, MA 01253.

### Teacher Appreciation Week

Teacher Appreciation Week will be celebrated the week beginning May 1. The PTA has selected a special theme for each day and will treat the teachers to thank them for all they do for the students of Farmington River. 🇺🇸



# Council on Aging



By Linda Riiska

Come, grab a book from the lending library and sit outside in the spring sunshine!

Qi Gong sessions continue, Mondays at 11:00 a.m., Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road.

Council on Aging business meeting, Wednesday, May 3, at 10:00 a.m., downstairs at Town Hall Annex

Cards and pizza, noon on Wednesday, May 17. Please join us.

Blood pressure clinic, Wednesday, May 24, 11:00 a.m. until noon.

Check the COA website or watch for posters for classes on jewelry making, candles, and soap making, and more paintings!

Please remember to support our veterans by lining up along the route of the Memorial Day Parade, May 28. Give them a wave!

Mark your calendars for the COA-sponsored Wellness Fair on June 10, 10:00 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the American Legion Pavilion at Hamilton Field.

Call us for volunteer transportation on Tuesdays. Call me at 258-4816.

Special Note: We now have a Stair Glide lift at the Town Hall Annex for help getting downstairs to the basement (and upstairs, too). We're more accessible!



At a COA class in March, Karlene Blass, Laurie Loring, Dede Loring, and Dolores Harasyko learned some new skills in flower arrangement. The class was taught by Bob Palmer of Wildflowers, a florist shop in Great Barrington.

Photo: Linda Riiska

## A Big Thank You

On behalf of the Andros family of Blandford and the staff here at Berkshire Rehabilitation, we would like to extend a big thank you to the Sandisfield American Legion, Mike and Ralph Morrison, Gary Bottum, Gene Riiska, Patrick Fosby, Alec Morrison and friends for all their help and efforts regarding the pancake breakfast fund raiser recently held in Fire House #2.

Their efforts went way above and beyond. Due to their help this event was a great success. Thank you all for your kindness.

Brenda Bull, Recreation,  
Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center

## Oops

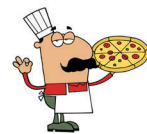
Last month *The Times* printed the wrong information regarding the sponsor of the pancake breakfast, the fundraiser at Firehouse #2. We wrote that the Sandisfield VFW was the sponsor. A case of editorial thinking too slow while typing too fast.

The Sandisfield American Legion Post #456 was the sponsor. There is no VFW in Sandisfield. The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars are different organizations.

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# Letters to the Editor

## The Silverbrook Co-op

I think the idea of turning the Silverbrook Cafe into a Co-operative is an excellent idea and I would love to be a part of making that happen.

I don't have bags of money, and I am an Otis resident, if that matters. What I do have is a small financial contribution and a reasonable amount of time to be invested in sweat equity, brainstorming, interior decorating, marketing, anything to get this idea into a reality. When I think of all the surrounding local farms and residents who could sell their meats, cheeses, milk, eggs, wool, flowers, plants, pottery, etc., etc., all year round in an easy central location my mind blows.

I think of the Old Creamery Grocery in Cummington, which is a co-operative success story to rival and would love to be a part of the movement for a Sandisfield Co-op.

*Arlene and Dave Hiller  
Otis Reservoir*

*Anonymous, For Now  
Otis*

## April Was Good

Another wonderful enjoyable issue of *The Sandisfield Times*!

It was a very heart-warming and interesting article about Kit. What a wonderful lady she was.

Who knew about ramps?! Maybe there are some lurking in the woods of our back yard in Connecticut! LOL!

We are sending a donation to the Sandisfield Fire Department (small, but maybe a bit of help toward their goal ...)

We're still waiting for Real Spring to get back to the Reservoir!



*Great Blue Herons nesting in north Sandisfield in April.*

*Photo: Cindy Ragusa*

## SAVE THE DATE Townwide Tag/Craft Sale Saturday, August 12<sup>th</sup>

On the Grounds of the New Boston Inn

For the benefit of the  
Jewish History Book Committee

For table info: Joanne Lazarowitz Olson  
917-686-1985

## HELP WANTED

*Dependable, responsible applicants ONLY. Complete job descriptions available upon request.*

### PT SEASONAL GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

18 or over, valid drivers license. May 15 to Sept 15, Duties include mowing, trimming, light landscaping, and miscellaneous grounds upkeep.

### PT LIFEGUARD

16 or over. Memorial Day through Labor Day. Private Association Beach. CPR, First Aid and Water Safety required. Must be certified or willing to complete certification prior to start of duties.

### PT CLEANING POSITION

18 or over, valid drivers license. Weekly cleaning of community clubhouse year round. Weekly cleaning of four bathrooms; Memorial Day through Labor Day.

### PT GREETER POSITION

16 or over, valid drivers license. Memorial Day through Labor Day. Stop, greet and record all incoming residents/guests vehicles and boats. Applicant must be confident with excellent customer service skills. Records must be accurate and detailed.

### APPLY TO:

Audrey Miller

Operations Manager, (413) 258-4900,  
wildwoodpoa@aol.com

Wildwood Property Owners Assoc., Inc.  
254 Beetle Rd., Tolland, MA 01034



# NOW HEAR THIS!

*Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.*

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

## MAY EVENTS

**Council on Aging Business Meeting** on Wednesday, May 3, at 10:00 a.m. in the Council on Aging Meeting Room, downstairs at the Town Hall Annex, Route 57.

**Crafts for Kids with Lynn** on Saturday, May 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library, lower level. This craft day, led by Lynn Rubenstein, will have Mother's Day in mind. There will be story time at 9:30 upstairs, prior to crafting.

**Family Cabaret** on Saturday, May 6, at 7:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road. Anni Crofut hosts this popular event featuring eight acts by performing artists from the Berkshires and beyond. \$15 or \$5 under 12.

**Crafts for Kids with Lynn** on Saturday, May 13, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library, lower level. This craft day, led by Lynn Rubenstein, will have Father's Day in mind. There will be story time at 9:30 upstairs, prior to crafting.

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** on Saturday, May 13, beginning at 10:00 a.m. at Fire Station #2, Route 57. Only registered voters can vote, but all residents are welcome to attend.

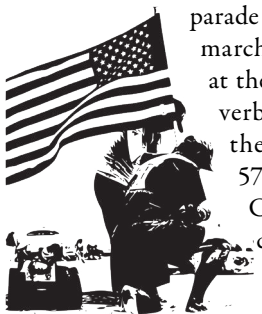
**Church Service** on Sunday, May 14, at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Church, Route 57. All are welcome.

**ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION** on Monday, May 15, from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road.

**Cards & Pizza** on Wednesday, May 17, at 12:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging Meeting Room, downstairs at the Town Hall Annex, Route 57. All are welcome.

**Blood Pressure Clinic** on Wednesday, May 24, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Council on Aging Meeting Room, downstairs at the Town Hall Annex, Route 57.

**Memorial Day Parade** on Sunday, May 28, parade begins 10:00 a.m.. To march in the parade, meet at the Old Town Hall, Silverbrook Road, or view the parade from Route 57 down Route 8 south. Come to the American Legion Pavilion at Hamilton's Grove for refreshments.



## MAY EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

**Birding Beyond Your Backyard** on Friday, May 5, at 7:00 a.m. at the Thomas and Palmer Reserve in Great Barrington. Meet at Koi Chinese Restaurant on Route 23. This walk is designed for beginning bird watchers and consists of a walk along mowed field paths and wood roads. Participants should wear long pants, bring water, and a snack. For more information, contact Doug (dbruce@bnrc.org or 413-499-0596). Free.

**Huge 11th Annual Tag Sale** on Saturday, May 27, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. sponsored by the Otis Cultural Council at the Otis Ski Ridge parking lot on Route 23. Collectibles, furniture, craftspeople, household items, treasures. Table space for Otis residents, \$10; non-residents, \$15. For information, call Vicki (269-4008).

## SAVE THE DATE

**Under Milk Wood**, on Saturday, June 10, 7 p.m. The Sandisfield Players will reprise their performance of the famous Welsh play by Dylan Thomas. The play will be performed earlier on May 20 at the Unicorn Theatre in Stockbridge and on May 21 at the Library in Norfolk, Connecticut.

**Town-wide Tag Sale** on August 12-13, on the grounds of the New Boston Inn. To support the Jewish History Book Project. For space, contact Joanne Lazarowitz Olson, 917-686-1985.

### HELP WANTED

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*The Times is grateful to donors who responded to our annual appeal and to these individuals who have donated this month.*

*Laura Bykowski & Jeffrey (Lazlow) Jones*



*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](http://www.sandisfieldtimes.org).

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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.

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