

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

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Volume VIII Number 4

July 2017

The Rugg Bridge — Beginning Again

BIDS TOO HIGH, REBIDDING STARTED

WHY THE BRIDGE FAILED SO SOON

By Seth Kershner

Every resident who travels Rt. 57 near the town Library knows – and most readers who don't travel that road will recall – that the bridge which crosses the Clam River has been limited to one lane after failing a state inspection in July 2015.

Now, with only three bids received – and all three for amounts far above what the town can afford – the Rugg Bridge rehab project has suffered a brief setback.

Engineers from Foresight Land Services helped the town determine the projected cost of fixing Rugg Bridge; their estimate was later used to help Sandisfield win a \$997,000 MassWorks grant. By May 25, however, bids had been received from Northern Construction, New England Infrastructure, and J.H. Maxymillian in the amount of a little over \$2.4 million; a little over \$3.2 million; a little over \$1.8 million, respectively, all considerably beyond the original estimate and beyond what the town could afford.

The bids were rejected. The project has been “re-engineered” by Foresight and put out for bid a second time. The work will be delayed an estimated three to four weeks.

Why were all the bids significantly higher than the original cost estimate and the town's MassWorks grant award?

According to Selectman Alice Boyd, who along with other town officials has worked closely with Foresight, the engineers felt that the high bids were due to a “combination of issues.” There is the problem of finding firms willing to work in the summer months when contractors are all at their busiest. Location is also a problem. As Boyd put it, “not everyone wants to deploy crews to such a rural location so far from their headquarters.” (Two of the bids came from firms based in central and eastern Massachusetts.)

Boyd met with Foresight's lead engineer, Steven Mack, to determine what changes could be made to keep the project closer to budget. One potential change would be to subcontract the painting of the bridge to a separate firm as that portion of the bids seemed extraordinarily high. The rebidding process is expected to move quickly.

Cont'd p.6



Oh That Pipeline

Trees and brush have been cleared along the Tennessee Gas right-of-way through the nearly 4-mile passage through the Sandisfield woods, some of which was protected state land in Otis State Forest. This photo, taken at the pigging station where the right-of-way crosses Town Hill Road at the north end of Town, shows the 36-inch pipe reaching up and over the hill. For part of the line the 7-foot deep pipeline trench has been dug. The beginning of the trench can be seen left of the pipe. Nearly 250 additional pipeline workers and welders are expected to arrive soon to begin work on the next phase of the project. The work is continuing, and so are the protests against it. See pages 8 and 9 for more photos and an update and page 17 for a report on pipeline blasting.

Photo: Bill Price

Town Administrator Resigns, PAGE 3.

Solar Fields Proposed for Town Property, PAGE 5.

Avoiding Conflict at Special Town Meeting

JUNE 28 RESULTS TOO LATE FOR THIS ISSUE

By Bill Price

When the warrant for the Special Town Meeting was presented at the June 12 Select Board meeting, the Finance Committee strongly opposed two of the articles as written. As of press time, Selectmen and committee members were working to resolve the conflict.

The results of the meeting will be in the August Times.

Select Board member Alice Boyd wrote in an email that she believes “we as a town must identify and clarify how we operate through our bylaws. Folks can always amend or change the wording on Town Meeting floor, but we need to solidify how we operate as a town.”

John Skrip said the board wanted the committee responsible for coming up with budget numbers after interviewing department heads, but the Select Board to make the final decision since they

are directly responsible to voters.

Article 1 established the duties and functions of the Town Administrator. Rather straightforward.

Articles 2 and 3 drew objection by the Finance Committee. The committee contended that changes in the Town Officer bylaws would “strip the Finance board of its statutory authority to prepare the budget.” Article 3 outlined a new format for the committee and added a new role for the Town Moderator. John Skrip and committee member Joe Gelinis were working on a compromise amendment that would coordinate the budget process and clarify who does what and when.

Article 4 cleaned up loose ends of accounting deficits in order to begin Fiscal year 2017 with a clean slate. Basically a housekeeping item. ♡

Congratulations!

TO ALL THE SANDISFIELD GRADUATES
Especially 8th graders at Monument Valley Middle School

- Charles Annecharico
- Joseph Beardsley
- Jessica Kopiec
- Shane Messina
- Alec Morrison
- Fisher Riiska

Correction: Land Report

At the May Town Meeting, Article 57 proposed that the Town set aside money “to purchase 19.63 acres of land” situated across Rt. 57 from Fire Station #2. A 2/3 vote was required, and the article failed by three votes.

The Times reported in June that this parcel had been found wanting by Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skill Center, that “it failed a perc test, there was a great deal of unbuildable ledge, and a considerable amount of wetland.”

We were misinformed and our report was in error.

The owner of the property, Bill Bures of Norfolk, Connecticut, reported that Athena Health Care had conducted extensive perc tests which passed; that most of the property is high meadowland, with a small amount of wetland or ledge. He added that over several years the land has successfully perced several times. ♡

BAKED HAM, SCALLOPED POTATOES

Come have supper prepared by the ladies and men of the New Boston Congregational Church.

SATURDAY, JULY 22, 5:00-7:00 P.M.

Fire House #2, Rt. 57, Sandisfield.

Plus coleslaw, desserts, beverages.

Take Out available.

Adults \$12. Under 12, \$6. Tickets at the door.

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Friends Launch Local Magazine

Town resident Hannah Van Sickle has teamed-up with former residents Tina Sotis and Liana Toscanini (editor, graphic designer, and publisher respectively) to create a magazine dedi- cated to the Berkshires nonprofit sector.



Launched June 28 in Great Barrington, Connections features profiles of nonprofits, columnists, and articles on topics of interest to the sector. It will be published bi-annually. One thousand copies of the inaugural issue will be given away at locations throughout Berkshire County including at the Sandisfield Arts Center. A downloadable version will be available at npcberkshires.org. For more information contact Liana Toscanini at 413-441-9542 or liana@npcberkshires.org.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Help Wanted

Every month—rain or hail, not unlike the post office—we keep on doing what we do. That is, we keep reporting and writing and editing and planning a newspaper. And every a month, the Sandisfield Times ends up in your hands.

The Times is the effort of a small team of excellent reporters, writers, photographers, volunteers. We need more of each. We need our team to grow.

We need reporters to cover the news at town hall and to report on what's happening at our schools. We need writers to share stories about friends and neighbors and all of the good things that happen in our community. We need readers to send us tips on stories, and writers to follow those leads. We need people to take pictures of things going on around town. In other words, we need some of our readers to become contributors. Maybe there's even someone out there who'd like to step in and be guest editor for a month.

I've been working on this railroad for five years. My first issue celebrated the town's 250th anniversary in July 2012. Since then we've gone through a couple Select Board generations and any number of big and small town events. I've enjoyed just about all of it, but frankly I can use help. And so can the rest of the team.

We're proud of this paper and love what we do. Still. As soon as one paper goes to press, the next issue is nipping at our heels.

Town Administrator Suddenly Resigns

By Bill Price

Barely a month after announcing at the May Town Meeting that he would stay on the job two years, Town Administrator Willie Morales submitted his resignation.

The town of Northfield in Franklin County offered him a full-time position at a salary nearly \$22,000 more than the \$71,000 Sandisfield voted. He told the Berkshire Eagle, "It was an offer I couldn't refuse."

When Morales publicly announced his resignation at the June 12 Select Board meeting. Fire Chief Ralph Morrison raised his hand. He said, "At the Town Meeting, you told me you would stay two years."

Morales said that his two-year commitment would have been in effect once the Town and he had agreed on and signed a contract. While town residents voted to increase his salary in recognition of his moving from a part-time to a full-time position, contracts had not been completed.

Many residents, however, assumed Willie's verbal commitment was very close to a contract and were surprised,

So consider joining the team. Give me a call at 258-3308 or email at w.billprice@gmail.com. Let's talk about it.

Tired of the Pipeline?

Unless you travel one of the roads in the Beech Plain section, you could live in Sandisfield and not know there's a deep trench being dug across nearly 4 miles of town. Beech Plain residents live with the pipeline all day, every day.

If you're curious, you can see the beginning of the trench at the north end of Town Hill Road just before you reach the Otis town line. Drive past Tennessee Gas's pigging station (where the pipeline emerges from the ground, surrounded by a chain-link fence topped by razor wire).

Regular readers of this paper know all about it, too, having read our stories since October 2013, when we first reported that "a pipeline is coming our way." Many of our readers must be tired of it. So are we. But it's important that we record the story so when the next intrusion comes our way residents will have a reference as to what happened this time. We would like to have had such reporting in 1981, when the pipeline first showed up.

So, like the pipeline that will go on until finished, so will our reporting of what happens to our friends and neighbors and to the land in that small corner of Sandisfield.

Bill Price
New Boston

Summertime

Why can't we turn the earth
Ever so slightly from the sun
To stem the Arctic flood?

We'll make a deal with God,
We'll trash a billion guns
And never hurt each other.

We'll think in poems
And string the instruments of peace,
Rhyme everything, shed war and grief.


And wake up one Monday morning
With a world all braced this time
With songs and syrups ... summertime.

Val Coleman
West New Boston



They Didn't Wait for Their Close-up

A bear destroyed Margaret O'Clair's anti-squirrel bird feeder one morning in mid-June, between 9 a.m. and noon. Margaret said, "I was in Great Barrington, dogs in the house. The bear didn't get any seed because it activated the anti-squirrel mechanism. It was the first attack on my feeders in 40 years."

Meanwhile, across the Beech Plain bridge at the Silverbrook at 2 p.m. on a Saturday afternoon, George Wheeler of Sandisfield Road noticed a slight movement of leaves in the underbrush of his east garden just outside his enclosed patio. "A small dark head popped up," he said, "with a chipmunk in its mouth. A slinky, beautiful mink then scampered down toward the Buck River." 

Cont'd p.4

Town Administrator Resigns

Cont'd from p.1

said.

Morales came on the job in September 2016, replacing Town Administrator Lisa Blackmer who had served nearly two years, resigning in September 2015.

He brought a more rigorous sense of state regulations than many town employees or committee heads had been used to. During his year in office he brought Sandisfield more in line with requirements for small towns, to the annoyance of a few residents who had been doing things another way for a long time.

Contributing to the annoyance this year was a budget process more grueling than earlier years, with a more granular examination of department and committee budgets. But Morales is credited with bringing Sandisfield into a more sustainable fiscal position which will allow the town to undergo a financial

audit this summer. He led the effort to upgrade Town Hall's communication infrastructure to a government format. The Town's website and telephone services are more consistent with those of other municipalities.

Alice Boyd told The Eagle: "Willie has been effective at pushing the town in the right direction." He helped solidify personnel policies, detailed job descriptions, and clarified the roles of different committees. She said she looks to the future. "We have the opportunity to hire someone who fits what the town needs at this point."

At the Select Board meeting, Morales said, "You have a great team here. It's been an honor to work for you guys." He added, "If you ever have any questions I can answer, please call me."

With bridge repair, broadband, the pipeline carving its way across northern Sandisfield, a solar proposal, and all the regular issues requiring Select Board attention, anyone replacing Morales as administrator will have their hands full. ♡

A Personal Farewell Note

From Willie Morales, Town Administrator, M.P.

It is with a sense of pride and humility that I offer this final message to the people of Sandisfield. Together we have grown and surmounted all variety of challenges that were presented to our operation as a town. From all of you I take away a deep understanding and appreciation for how grit and tenacity becomes manifest in New England. As a town you have impressed me for your embrace of policies and procedures that engage with tradition without being stifled by it.

Together we have looked beyond blame and met our fiscal challenges head on, developing professional practices that will protect the town's finances in perpetuity. Together we have held our budget process accountable to the people of Sandisfield and asked for the highest level of professionalism in the preparation of said budget by town officials. Together we have made necessary transitions that benefit the operations of your town.

The people of Sandisfield can continue to count on a town hall staff that is responsive, accountable, professional, and oriented toward public service. The men and women who serve the town of Sandisfield are always working to protect the interest of the town. Your town hall staff has impressed me with their ability to deliver professional public services while working through dynamic political climates.

I am most grateful for the moments when a misunderstanding or disagreement provided an opportunity for me to contextualize the role of a town administrator. When I first arrived some of you were apprehensive and did not truly understand the purpose of my role. Early on I encountered statements like, "We have been doing things this way for two hundred years, why should we change?" Others were excited for my arrival, enthusiastic for the opportunity to share ideas and objectives with a role that could possibly carryout said plans.

Both positions would have likely been frustrated by my performance in the role of town administrator. As administrator, I aimed to protect the interest of the town in the most objective manner. The role of a town administrator is to evaluate, free from subjective opinion, the parameters and feasibility of town interest.

I am leaving you with a united town hall staff, formal policies & procedures, positive notice from State agencies for your procurement functions and fiscal recovery, formal government communication platforms, successfully administered grants, improved town hall telephony, a balanced budget, access to state house notes, the ability to be audited, fiscal books that can reconcile, and excess capacity in your budget.

I am also leaving you with my heart. I profoundly expect great success from your town. ♡



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Solar Fields Proposed for Town Property

YANNER PARK AND CENTER CEMETERY CONSIDERED ...

By Bill Price

The faint glimmer of a possibly bright future for Yanner Park may be on the horizon. Town leadership, which has grappled for almost the last twenty years with the problem of what to do with this gifted land, has been given a formal proposal by Forefront Power, a San Francisco-based firm, to build a 20-acre solar panel field on the property.

Yanner Park is one of two properties in which Forefront has expressed interest – the other is a site on Center Cemetery property on Route 57.

The firm claims the two solar fields could generate power that could be sold to the Massachusetts electrical grid, generating possibly a quarter of a million dollars in annual lease revenue and taxes to the Town.

The currently open fields at the park and the cemetery would not be affected – the solar panels would be sited on woodlands to the sides of both properties. They would also be largely invisible to motorists and passers-by, shielded by forest or hills.

Forefront developed the plan working with the Town's Finance Committee. Committee member David Hubbard presented the proposal to the Select Board at its June 12 meeting. "This could work," he said. "It would bring the town revenue that we badly need."

After briefly reviewing the proposal, Select Board chairman John Skrip was cautious. "We'll follow through with a lot of due diligence. We have a lot of things to learn." He added, "This is not something that's going to happen overnight."

The Town would not be asked to participate in financing the project. Fully owned by Mitsui & Co., a global energy infrastructure and investment company based in Japan, Forefront would provide the initial costs of the project. In their proposal, the firm would also be responsible for the installation of overhead 3-phase interconnection lines which would be required at each site.

"We want to talk to other towns in Massachusetts where this company has installed solar fields," said Skrip, referring especially to New Bedford and Greenfield. "It seems many of the projects completed by Forefront were to major businesses seeking to reduce their electric bills. That's different from selling power to a grid. We would need to make sure that proper bonding is in place to protect the Town."

In Hubbard's opinion the Town should investigate


the plan with the thought of moving forward, while Skrip feels the idea is too preliminary to move fast. The Finance Committee has been seeking alternative revenue sources for the Town, and this is one of them.

The Center Cemetery land was recently logged, which generated revenue for the Town. But the solar fields would require clear-cutting and grading a large section of the Cemetery land and another at Yanner Park.

Forefront would be responsible for land preparation. Their proposal states: "With our more than 80 projects of experience in Massachusetts these are costs that we are well experienced with and are costs the project will pay for, not the town. The Town merely sees the benefit of this project in the form of lease and property tax revenue."

Because of recreation restrictions placed on the use of the park when the land was donated to the Town, the idea of using a portion of the park for a solar field will be discussed with the Yanner family. Hubbard said at the meeting that income generated by the field could help the Town complete trails and hook up with the Hammettown Trail through Berkshire Natural Resources Council property, and could be used to create other recreational purposes at the park.

The Conservation Commission would have a role since some of the land under consideration is wetlands.

Forefront has presented an optimistic timeline, but John Skrip has a long list of questions to be answered before the Town thinks there might be a check in the mail. 

HELP WANTED

Farmington River Regional School is seeking a qualified, experienced, **Long-Term Substitute Teacher** for Grade 2. This position is to cover a maternity leave and will begin on August 28, 2017 through December 22, 2017. Please submit a letter of intent, current resume, 3 current work references, a copy of college transcript, a copy of MA DESE licensure, and any related materials to:

Tom Nadolny, Principal/Superintendent, Farmington River RSD, 555 North Main Road, Otis, MA 01253, tnadolny@frsd.org

Farmington River Regional School is seeking a part-time, qualified **Paraprofessional**. M-F when school is in session, 19 hours per week; hourly rate commensurate with experience and degree, no benefits. Minimum of Associate Degree or the completion of the ParaPRO Assessment. Please send a letter of intent/application, resume, copy of transcripts, 3 current work references, and any related materials to:

Tom Nadolny, Principal/Superintendent, Farmington River RSD, 555 North Main Road, Otis, MA 01253, tnadolny@frsd.org

Farmington River Regional School is seeking **Substitute Van Drivers** for the upcoming 2017-2018 school year. Must be 21 years of age, have a valid MA driver's license, have an excellent driving record and a 7D license or school bus license. A knowledge of Sandisfield and Otis roads are a plus. Please send resume or application with a valid MA Driver's License to:

Jane Gleason, School Business Manager, Farmington River RSD, 555 North Main Road, Otis, MA 01253, jgleason@frsd.org



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Rugg Bridge

Cont'd from p.1

Boyd said, with a sigh, that it was possible there would have to be a Special Town Meeting to appropriate the amount over the original estimate that would be necessary to repair the bridge.

WHY THE BRIDGE FAILED

Rugg Bridge was rebuilt in the early 1990s, following a year of construction that involved a detour along River Road. Sources report that it began to deteriorate soon after. Some speculate that at the root of the problem were “experimental methods” used in building the bridge. To find out more, I spoke to Highway Superintendent Bob O’Brien.

According to O’Brien, the bridge’s surface ended up being three-quarters of an inch too high. Consequently, a surface which normally would get an inch of blacktop only had room for a quarter-inch coat. That is partly why the decking on the bridge broke so quickly. Another problem was that the rubberized blacktop wasn’t installed properly on the decking. “Back in the ’90s,” O’Brien said, “fish oil was mixed in with blacktop – it was supposed to keep water from penetrating. But in this case it wasn’t applied thickly enough.”

As previously reported by the Times, the select board has been told that the Superintendent at the time, Eddie Riiska, had never officially “accepted” the work done on the construction of the bridge. He said in a recent phone call that he believed then “that it wouldn’t work. The rubber tar started reacting before the crews had even left. Of four bridges in New England that used that surface, three of them failed. As I recall, it was something to do with the product. The select board and I never signed off on the work.” And within a couple years the blacktop started to flake away, leading to its current deteriorated state.

O’Brien closed our conversation on a cautionary note: “The state should have had a warranty on this bridge. At the very least, the problems should have been picked up in an annual bridge report. And there should have been state and local folks looking at this from the start.”



The Jewish History Book Project

Former Sandisfield resident Eleanor Pinsky Skolnick was interviewed for the Jewish history book project at her home in Florida. Her parents, Nathan and Sara Pinsky, were part of the original Baron de Hirsch settlement. With her sister Frances Pinsky Chernick and brother Marty Pinsky, Eleanor grew up on what is now known as the Buck River Farm.

The project was awarded a \$500 grant toward publication of the book from the Wasserman-Streit Y'DIYAH Memorial Fund of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation.

Town-Wide Tag Sale

JOIN A TAG SALE ON
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July 22 The Great American Solar Eclipse of 2017

Astronomer Ruben Kier will share with us ways to safely enjoy and view the Great American Eclipse of August 22, 2017.

August 26 Gossamer Trio

The collaboration of New York Philharmonic Principal Harpist Nancy Allen, with internationally renowned flutist Carol Wincenc and emerging artist Claire Solomon, cello, playing a program of Fauré, Villa-Lobos, Ravel, and Gaubert.

September 9 The Power of a Woman's Voice:

Tina Packer and Calliope Renaissance Band

A fascinating program of readings and music with Tina Packer, doyenne of the Shakespearean world, and the venerable Calliope Renaissance Band.

September 16 Jay Ungar and Molly Mason

Perform their own work as well as 19th-century classics, lively Appalachian, Cajun, and Celtic fiddle tunes and favorites from the golden age of country and swing.

September 23 Kyra Xuerong Zhao

Internationally renowned Pianist Kyra Xeurong Zhao performs pieces by Ligeti, Debussy and Beethoven.

October 7 Award-Winning Authors with Host Simon Winchester

Simon Winchester interviews guest **Roy Blount, Jr.**, a humorist and prolific writer of prose, poetry, song and speech, with an approach to life and its foibles and follies such as Mark Twain might have offered up.

Receptions with the artists after the performances
Art Gallery shows through Oct. 2nd

FOR TICKETS & INFORMATION: www.newmarlborough.org (413) 229-2785

FROM YOUR SELECT BOARD CHAIR

By John Skrip

It has been one month since my appointment as chair of the select board and I now really appreciate the work that former chair Alice Boyd was doing. I am happy to relate that Alice will continue to handle the pipeline and broadband issues.

By now you are aware that Willie Morales, our town administrator, has resigned to take an administrative position in Northfield. His resignation is effective July 3. We will miss Willie, but with continued hard work on the part of our town employees and committee heads and some outside administrative support we will continue the advancements made by Willie and the town staff.

Willie Morales joined the Sandisfield town family in August 2016. He has worked hard on many projects: job descriptions for town employees, town policies, and grant applications, to name a few, and he now better understands about life in a small town. We wish him well in his next endeavor.

Here are a few updates:

- As of the writing of this report, the Town may have voted on a reallocation of some funds in order to balance the books. This was not new money, just a movement of funds that allows us to close out fiscal year 2016. Great work done by our town hall staff to get us to have all books balanced. If for some reason this transfer was not voted on or approved by the town, it will be discussed in the next Sandisfield Times issue as well as at the next board meeting.
- A grant for a handicap accessible van for Sandisfield has been filed with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through Mass DOT Community Grants Program: again a great job by

Willie and the committees that reported to him for documentation of need. Let's keep our fingers crossed that we have adequately identified our needs when writing this grant proposal.

- Hopefully, by the time this issue is out we will have filed our Mass-DOT grant application for funds to improve wayfaring signs, speed signs, road postings, intersection refinement, etc. More information will be available in the next issue.
- We are in contract negotiations with the members of DPW, Teamsters Local 404, our highway staff. All parties are working together at this point in time.
- Blasting has been approved for the pipeline project and all controls are in place. All permits have been approved by the State and we have been told that everything that should be done has been done. Fire Chief Ralph Morrison is coordinating the blasting project. Blasting by its very nature is distressing, but we believe that in the long run everything will be okay.
- Finally, as I read this, I realize that nothing is guaranteed: we will do our best, we have good support from town staff, and we look forward to constructive criticism from all Sandisfield taxpayers.
- The town of Sandisfield is in a healthy financial position. We have overcome several hurdles but I am sure we will face others. I ask all taxpayers to be part of solutions; work with the select board; meet with your committees. Together we can work to improve all aspects of life in Sandisfield.

Please feel free to contact me or any board member with your suggestions and support. Contact information: Phone: 413-258-4788 or johnskripjr@gmail.com.



Chief Morrison in the new kitchen at Firehouse #1

Almost There

HELP FINISH THE JOB AT FIRE STATION #1

By Times Reporters

With the renovation of Fire Station #1 nearly finished, Fire Chief Ralph Morrison says, "We need a just bit more to lift us over the top. We're almost there."

The building is the former American Legion headquarters on Rt. 8 just south of the American Legion Pavilion. The Sandisfield Fire Department bought the building in 2015 and began rehabbing it soon afterward.

Planned as a training center for the Fire and EMS Departments, the building can also be used as a community center. Chief Morrison pointed out that an indoor center is badly needed. "It may be a long time before the town builds a municipal complex," he said. "We need something now, and this building would serve a wonderful purpose."

As project manager, Ralph has overseen the construction work. "We've had great volunteers." The electrical work and plumbing is finished with a bit of carpentry and flooring needing to be done. Then a roof and outside painting. "A lot of people donated money to the project and we've almost finished. But we still need just need a bit more."

Tax deductible contributions in any amount are welcome and can be made to the Sandisfield Fire Department, PO Box 22, Sandisfield, MA 01255. Call Chief Morrison at 413-258-4742 for a private tour of the building or to learn more about the need for the center.

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The Work — And Protest — Goes On

By Ron Bernard

June was a transitional period between tree clearing in May and pipe installation coming in July.

All downed trees and brush were removed, some for commercial timber. The bulk of what was left was shredded by wood chippers, swooshed into huge container trucks, and hauled to a processing center in Vermont.

Clearing stumps and boulders has commenced. A temporary roadway made of heavy sawn-timbers called “mats” was laid in wetlands ROW areas in order to protect the ground during the rest of the project.

Hundreds of tractor trailers hauled heavy equipment and stacks of 36-inch pipe between work areas and the Beech Plain marshalling site, six days a week. General contractor vehicles and private patrol cars from the security company and the state police made hundreds, maybe over a thousand trips back and forth along Cold Spring Road. The road is rapidly deteriorating and becoming hazardous.

Crews removed up to 24 Native American sacred ceremonial sites (CSLs) and several centuries-old stone walls. The company has said it will restore the CSLs nearby and rebuild the stone walls, although in both cases their historical significance will be degraded.

Specialized loud rock hammers called “John Henry’s” roamed the right of way in search of

ledge that might require blasting. The company at the outset told the Town that the probability for blasting was very low, however blasting did occur in Otis State Forest, June 19th through the 22nd (see *Blasting*, page 17).

The 7-foot-deep trench where the pipeline will lie has been dug along part of the right-of-way, commencing at the “PIG station” on Town Hill Road. Upwards of 250 men are expected to arrive in early July to install the pipes along with more specialized heavy equipment. That is more than twice as many workers as were on site during the hectic tree clearing phase.

A protest against the building of the pipeline was held June 24 by the Sugar Shack Alliance, a Massachusetts group opposed to the fossil fuel industry, resulting in eight arrests when the demonstrators blocked access to the worksite. About sixty people rallied at Susan Baxter’s place on Cold Spring Road for a demonstration at Spectacle Pond and later at the Thoreau cabin next to the pipeline right-of-way, where the arrests were made. One of those arrested was Frances Crowe of Northampton. At 98 years of age, Ms. Crowe is a well-known peace activist and very likely the oldest protester still on the lines. Before her arrest by state police, which was gentle and even friendly, Ms. Crowe said, “We’re raising our voices for Mother Earth. It’s important work we’re doing here today.”



Frances Crowe of Northampton, 98, was arrested at the demonstration.

Deteriorating Cold Spring Road.



The June 24 protest march from Spectacle Pond.



*Clockwise, from top left:
Moving heavy blasting mats to the site; a really big skidder;
Sugar Shack Alliance members at the "Thoreau cabin" on
Roberta Myers' property adjacent to the pipeline; removal of
historic stone wall on private land.*



Photos: Sandisfield Times. Thoreau cabin, Will Elwell

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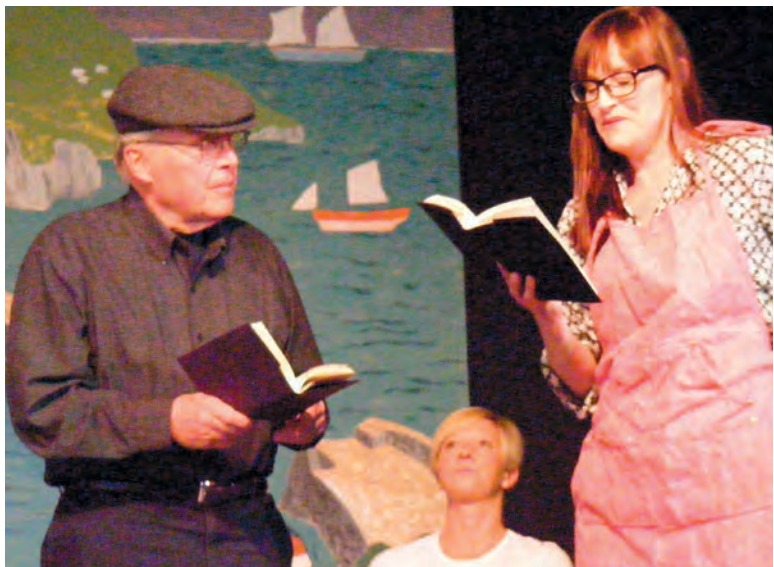
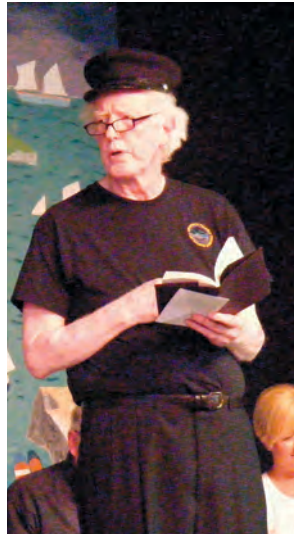
View from the Arts Center

Under Milk Wood

THREE YEARS LATER,
AND EVEN BETTER!

By Barbara Penn

Photos: Peter Baiamonte and Bill Price



In 2014, I wrote about the Sandisfield Players and their superb presentation of “Under Milk Wood,” not imagining that they could outdo themselves three years later in performances in three different venues – in May at the Unicorn Theater in Stockbridge, the Norfolk Library in Connecticut, and June 10 at the Sandisfield Arts Center.

To recap about the play from my 2014 review:

“To begin at the beginning: It is spring, moonless night in the small town, starless and bible-black, the cobble streets silent...”

So opens “Under Milk Wood,” Dylan Thomas’ last work, finished four days before his death in 1953 at age 39. Thomas had worked on this play for 20 years, beginning it as a teenager. While it is a “prose” work, the lines are sheer poetry: as Thomas and Ben Luxon (this production’s director) both note, it is a “play for voices.” “Under Milk Wood” takes place in one day and a night in a mythical, small seaside Welsh village.

The characters are eccentric. Even their names are quirky, some names suggesting their occupation or preoccupation: “Dai Bread” (baker), “Morgan Organ Organ (organist), “Evans the Death”

(undertaker), but mostly the characters are the people of “every town” – old, young, shopkeepers, school teachers, funeral director, rector, musician, poet, farmer, butcher, postman. ... there is no denying that this play is filled with what being human is about – dreams, hopes, desires, disappointments, fear, illusions, and most of all, humor and life’s overwhelming joy and love.

Under the inspired direction of the incomparably talented Benjamin Luxon, this production is magnificent. I can’t imagine a better production.

I was wrong!

This production is better because the company has fully come together into a top-notch ensemble, blossoming under the leadership of Ben Luxon in their professionalism, but also showing new confidence and ability, especially actors who three years ago had only been on stage once or twice.

Most notable in this regard are Kenly Brozman who in her four roles exuded ease, assurance, and believability; the wonderful Ron Bernard, who in his various roles seemed to have found his voice, confident and funny. Sandy Parisky also has turned into

an actor, delivering his lines with force and assurance. Flora Parisky was terrific in song as the second woman’s voice, and Paul Van Sickle believable and quite good in multiple roles.

Adam Manacher, new in this production, was simply great, and Bib Bailey very good.

The performances from the more seasoned Players were of course top notch: Jean Atwater-Williams was luminous in five roles; Mary Anne Grammer wonderful; Susie Crofut, John Funchion, Lauren Paul, Evers White, and Val Coleman were once again a joy. Laura Whyte’s a capella singing was exceptionally powerful, and Simon Winchester in a cameo looked like he was born to the stage. The lighting by Jerry Herman was professional and perfect.

Again, as in 2014: “Commanding the stage are Ben Luxon, with his deep baritone voice, as both narrator and Rev. Eli Jenkin the poet. He effortlessly delivers Thomas’ rich poetry as if he had written it (perhaps the alter ego of Thomas?). Charles Fidler, as Voice 2, commands the stage, believable and brilliant.”

Once again, Llengyfareguadav – Welsh for congratulations! 🍷

Dream Come True

"STAMP COLLECTION"
TO OPEN JULY 8, ARTS CENTER


By Val Coleman
Author of "The Stamp Collection"

You come from a small town in southern Illinois and, finally, haunted by your memories, you write about it ... first a story, then a play that you give to Ben Luxon and, lo and behold, it ends up on the big stage at the Sandisfield Arts Center.

You call it "The Stamp Collection" and it's about the folks you grew up with ... square in the middle of the 20th century, surrounded by two world wars. They are brave, strong folks who are ultimately what Yeats called "the vital center" ... the heart of the nation, brimming with love, faith, and prairie poetry.

You come to see America through the picturesque narrative of its postage stamps and a room full of antiques owned by the Trimble family. They have both their share of troubles and their share of happiness.

Now, I don't want to give away the plot, but I can tell you that Harry the Undertaker (one of the characters) says that the play "is a dilly!"

Please come ... there are two performances, one at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, July 8, and a matinee at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 9. 



The **STAMP COLLECTION**
A Play
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Directed By BENJAMIN LUXON
With
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and Sanity Interrupted by
The Wars of the 20th Century.


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SUN, JULY 9 • 3 PM

Tickets: \$20
Children Under 12: \$5

INFO/TICKETS: sandisfieldartscenter.org
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Photo: Peter Baiamonte 2017
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 Librarian's Corner

By Terry Spohnholz

Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.

– Emilie Buchwald

Summer is for reading a good book, or maybe a dozen, for wading in cool rivers, and watching the meandering flight of a brilliantly colored butterfly. Besides, the light is much better. And so it begins, that luscious, sensational season called summer. You know, the one we hungered and dreamt about during those cold, dreary winter months.

So if you're ready to stretch out on the hammock, sip glasses of iced beverages, and delve into a good book or two, the Sandisfield Free Public Library has some great choices from mystery to romance to non-fiction.

Latest arrivals:

- *Nighthawk* by Clive Cussler
- *Dragon Teeth* by Michael Crichton
- *Indecent Exposure* by Stuart Woods
- *16th Seduction* by James Patterson
- *Lockdown* by Laurie King
- *You Belong to Me* by Colin Harrison
- *The Switch* by Joseph Finder
- *Matchup* edited by Lee Child
- *Black Mad Wheel* by Josh Malerman
- *The Gypsy Moth Summer* by Julia Fierro

And there are more great reads arriving throughout the summer.

Events:

Kids' Craft Day – It's FREE!!!! Lynn Rubenstein hosts a great crafting Saturday on July 8 featuring Slime and sun catchers. Storytime at 9:30 a.m., crafting from 10 until noon. Snacks and laughter included.

Adult Crafting – Vicki MacDonald offers card making and glass etching classes. Please contact Kathie Burrows for details at 258-4943 as well as to register so there are enough supplies. Classes with Vicki are July 21, 6:00-9:00 p.m., and July 29, noon until 3 p.m.

Summer Reading Program – The library will sponsor a summer reading program for children 2-16. The program features pirates and mermaids, weekly prizes from the Librarian's treasure chest, and an end of the summer Treasure Hunt. So come pick up your official Pirate/Mermaid reading card and join the summer fun. Cards are available at the library.

A big thank you to Dassy Herman who donated two beautiful flower baskets that now grace the library. The flowers add color and beauty to our little library. Thank you again, Dassy.

The library is trying to procure passes to cultural areas of interest. Currently we have discounted tickets to the Connecticut Science Museum and free passes to the Clark Museum and the Berkshire Athenaeum.

Notations: Due to the lack of space in the library, we will no longer be taking book donations. Of course, if you have a first edition classic we will consider it!

Closures: *The library will be closed on the 4th of July – Independence Day.*

Library Hours: Monday and Tuesday, 9:00 a.m. until 12:30; Wednesday, 2:00 p.m. until 5:00; Thursday, 5 p.m. until 7:00; Saturday, 9:00 a.m. until noon. 📖

Council on Aging



The Sandisfield COA would like to thank Commander Maria Domato for the use of the American Legion Pavilion for their Health Fair. Also a big thank you to the people who attended and to the "venders" who provided information and services. And a special thank you to the Historical Society who provided delicious healthy food!

For July and early August. All at Town Hall Annex basement.

- COA Business Meeting, July 5, 10:00 a.m.
- Pizza & cards, July 19 at noon.
- Blood Pressure Clinic, July 26 from 11:00 a.m. until noon.
- Foot Care Clinic, August 1, Tuesday, from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.
- Senior Medicare Patrol (anti-fraud), August 9, 11:00 a.m.

Volunteer transportation available on Tuesdays. Call 258-4816 for appointments.

The COA Wellness Fair

Story and Photo by Bill Price



Cailie Benedict enjoying strawberries at the Fair.

The Sandisfield Council on Aging sponsored a Health/Wellness Fair at the American Legion Pavilion on what seemed to be the first really hot day of June. Health organizations and a Sandisfield policeman were on deck to provide information about your health and wellbeing. Turnout could have been better, but organizer Linda Riiska suggested people might have been home mowing their lawns after two days of no rain.

June Green, a Palliative Care Director for Hospice Care in the Berkshires, offered information about the need for health care proxies and hospice care. Her group can provide local workshops on palliative care and bereavement counseling. "Five Wishes" is an easy-to-complete form so you can tell family exactly what you would want regarding health care should you become seriously ill. June conducted a COA workshop on Five Wishes in May. Contact her at 413-443-2994.

The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts provided information and application forms for SNAP, the

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that helps stretch food dollars. Contact Mary at 413-247 9738, #142.

Sandisfield Police Constable Mike Johnson presented methods to protect yourself from identity thieves, charity fraudsters, and health care scams. Crooks sit overseas or in our own country, he said, making cold calls; they only need a couple hits out of a few hundred calls to make an illicit living. A full-time Monterey police sergeant, Mike is filling in part-time for Officer Adam Gonska, currently on deployment with the Massachusetts Army Reserve in Afghanistan.

CHP on Wheels parked a van at the Fair, equipped for routine physicals, sick visits, follow-up care for chronic illness, and health education. **Family nurse practitioner Kathleen Floyd** took blood pressure for walk-ins and tested glucose levels. The Community Health Program van travels to remote sites to provide outreach, combining direct health care with enrollment assistance and referral services in rural settings. You can reach them by calling Kathleen at 413-528-8580.

The Sandisfield Historical Society provided a healthy and nutritious lunch and iced tea in return for small donations to the Society. 📖



From left, Commander Maria Domato, former Lt. j.g. Warren Ball, and his wife, Dorothy Ball.

Honor for a World War II Veteran

Photo by Bill Price

Over the Memorial Day weekend, a World War II veteran was honored at his home in Sandisfield by the US Department of the Navy and a large gathering of family and friends. Former Lt. JG Warren Ball received seven overdue medals, personally presented by Commander Maria Domato, American Legion Post #456.

Several months ago, Lt. Ball's son, Roger, and his wife Roberta were at the family home on New Hartford Road when they received a call from a former Navy shipmate of his father's, Mr. Ben Bost of Raleigh, North Carolina. Bost, who had tracked Warren to his Sandisfield address, said he had recently received his service medals and wondered "if Lt. Ball had received his." Roger contacted the Navy Department and within a short time received the following medals in honor of his father's service:

World War Two Victory Medal
American Campaign Medal
Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal
Navy Occupation Service Medal
Combat Action Ribbon
Philippine Liberation Medal
Philippine Presidential unit Citation

Following the medal ceremony Lt. Ball was presented with a Quilt of Valor by Roberta Ball and Cindy Guendert, volunteers with the Quilts of Valor of Connecticut.

Born in 1922, Warren Ball saw action during World War II in the Pacific Theatre. When he entered Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York in 1941, young Warren joined the Navy Reserve Officer Training Corps. He married Dorothy Pelton in May 1944 and, the following month, reported for active duty at the Amphibious Training Base in Virginia.

In July 1944, the USS LSM316, a US Navy landing ship was commissioned in Chicago. Warren became a Lieutenant j.g. on board, traveled with the ship down the Mississippi to the Panama Canal, and into the Pacific Ocean and the war. In December, Warren took part in the amphibious landing at Ormoc Bay during the Leyte Operation in the Philippines. In February and March 1945 he served during the Palawan Island landings and in March-April the Visayan Island landings. Lt. Ball was honorably discharged in December 1945, three months after the end of the war.

It was remarked at the ceremony that Warren's wife, Dorothy, should also have received medals, because in so many important ways wives at home also served the war effort.

After the war Warren worked as an engineer for Pratt and Whitney Aircraft, moved to Smyth Manufacturing, and in 1976 started Blumer North American, representing a Swiss manufacturing firm. Their New Hartford Road home was purchased in 1949 and remains in the family. 🇺🇸

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Working Together Gets It Done

By Billie Pachulski and Terry Spohnholz

It started with a small but good idea and people coming together as a community to make something happen and support our kids.

The Community Center Committee got together with volunteers to beautify our Sandisfield community playground that had been looking neglected for awhile.

As a group we were able to clean the grounds of any garbage, fix the nails in the gazebo, remove the falling-apart picnic tables, replace the sand around all the equipment and the main structure, power wash and clean the plastic slide and the main structure, and make a few changes to add a sand box and make the tire swing more accessible.

Thanks very much to all our volunteers; Nina Carr, Dawn Lemon, Roger Kohler, Paula Kohler, Matt Pachulski, and Bonnie O'Brien (who originally came up with the idea of the playground clean-up). And a very special thank you to P&R Construction (Bobby O'Brien) for donating all the sand and Bobby personally for his time and expertise.

The Committee is looking forward to offering more events, kicking off the summer with a Summer Beach Party at the community center/playground on July 22 starting at 12 noon. More details to come.

We are looking for members, volunteers, and donations. If you're interested and would like to help, please contact Billie Pachulski at 258-4025 or Terry Spohnholz at tspohnholz@gmail.com or visit Terry at the library.

Clockwise, starting at top left: Most of the playground volunteer clean-up crew; Power washing and scrubbing the slide; Cleaning out old and spreading new sand under the climbing bars; Pick and shovel gang: Dawn, Bonnie, Billie, and Terry;

Photos: Bob O'Brien and Bill Price



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Moreover... In My Sights: The *International Appalachian Trail*

By *Simon Winchester*

The through-walkers are beginning to drift by. Those clever hikers who know more or less how long it takes to walk the entire Appalachian Trail set out from Georgia's Springer Mountain late last March and expect to be at the summit of Mount Katahdin when the Maine leaves are just beginning to turn, before it gets too cold.

Now they are a little more than halfway along, reaching into our companionable neighborhood. You see them in their ones and twos, walking wearily – or hitchhiking, aromatically – into Great Barrington for a coffee or a bagel or a decent night's sleep.

I am sure that all of us in Sandisfield are pretty familiar with the Appalachian Trail. Even if we haven't walked it – and I'd recommend the ten miles from the Route 57/23 junction to the south end of Great Barrington as a great Sunday morning heart-starter – we know where it is in relation to us, where it starts and finishes, and how noble it would be to walk all 2,200 miles of it.

It was born as an idea back in 1921, was fully blazed and bridged by 1937, and is now one of those all-American creations that contents us every one, gives us a smidgen of pride when the worst days get us down.

But these days I'm less interested in the AT itself, much more so in its northern and eastern extensions – in part because I am a geologist manqué, and in part because, as part of my own literary bucket-list, I'm planning to walk it. It will take a good two years, and I can see at the end, if I survive the experience, the makings of a rather good and possibly rather thrilling book.

"It" is the International Appalachian Trail, or the Sentier International des Appalaches, and for those of us who fantasize about walking it, it is the more manly, meat-and-potatoes trail that takes off where the milquetoasts stop and head home to their mothers.

The IAT (or the SIA if you're a Francophone) begins at Mount Katahdin and heads down across the blueberry bogs of northern Maine, across the St. John River into New Brunswick

(passports must be packed), then into Quebec and Nova Scotia and by ferry to that long western arm of Newfoundland. From there the trail heads through the vastly impressive Gros Morne National Park and up to the Viking settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows where doubters can finally be convinced that it was not Columbus who got here first, but a Norwegian who settled, built a farm, and whose wife had a baby – the first European born in North America and who was named Snorri Thorfinsson.

But I digress, for the IAT then gets rather more interesting.

The part I've described so far was first hiked back in 1997 by a young man from Washington State who began his own walk down in Key West. His finishing in Newfoundland may have been sufficient for him. But it would hardly satisfy the geologist manqué in me, nor any other person interested in the tectonic picture of the North Atlantic Ocean. For the forces that created the Appalachian Mountain created a great deal more than our green hills – and most of what they made lies today on the far side of the sea. Which is where the real IAT runs, and which thus far has never been walked.

So the plan – maybe a pipedream, but an interested friend from Tyringham is eager to come along – is first to head (via a good deal of waterborne travel) north from Newfoundland to Greenland, then to Iceland, then the Faeroe islands and finally to Svalbard, north of Norway. Trails are marked in all of these countries, and with a pretty IAT logo to boot.

From the islands of Svalbard – and it would be nifty to begin there at the Global Seed Vault: please Google it – the trail goes south to Norway (by way of the Child Wanderers Path, please ditto), then to northern and western Scotland, through portions of Ireland, Cornwall, Brittany, and Spain (touching the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, which I walked twenty years ago) and finally by way of the ferry from Algeciras to Tangier, down into Africa, to the Atlas Mountains and the trail's formal end.

There's said to be a signboard announcing so, somewhere near Agadir, and I have a plan to find it. Three thousand-odd miles of walking and two years to do it. The publishers have said they are interested. My boots are looking up at me, saying c'mon, you wuss. As is my old blackthorn walking stick, and my venerably battered haversack.

All I have to do first is to take that short initial stroll – a heart-starter of a kind – from Sandisfield to Mount Katahdin. And after that, as they say, it's all downhill. 🍷

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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.

From New York, Now a Sandisfield Author

By Bill Price



Christopher Bollen, who bought the former Peter and Ceci Hitchcock place on South Beech Plain Road near Snow Farm two years ago, published his third novel, *The Destroyers*, in June.

An early reviewer, Jay McInerney, said the novel is “a smart, sophisticated literary thriller.” The publisher describes *The Destroyers* as “an enthralling odyssey and a gripping expansive drama ... from a writer at the very height of his powers.”


Chris is editor at large of *Interview Magazine*.

His primary home is New York City. Asked “why Sandisfield?” Christopher replied, “To me it’s paradise. It’s peaceful and far enough from Manhattan not to feel connected to the city by an invisible thread.”

His view from Thurtillperk Hill, as the Hitchcocks called their place, is the panorama of Bear Mountain. “Ceci was kind enough to give me a lot of material about the 1923 hunting cabin they made into a house. I want to be a good steward to it. I feel lucky to be here. But I tend to write better in the noise of the city. I step away from my desk too much here.”

His novels have been described by *The Daily Telegraph* as “expansive, psychologically probing in the manner of Updike, Eugenides, and Franzen, but he is also an avowed disciple of Agatha Christie.” The combination is interesting, for sure. Another reviewer compared the new novel to “equal parts Graham Greene, Patricia Highsmith, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.”

He will share a stage at the Volume Reading Series in Hudson, New York, July 8, with Courtney Maum, the former Sandisfield resident now in Norfolk, who published her second novel in May.

Christopher’s first novel, *Lightning People*, was published in 2011. His second, *Orient*, published in 2015, was a thriller based in Orient Point at the tip of the north fork of Long Island. He donated a copy of *Orient* to the Sandisfield Library, and will do so with *The Destroyers* as well. 

Could You Be a Firemen, an EMT?

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED, CALL NOW

By Times Reporters

Local calls to 911 are answered in a Pittsfield call center, but the responders are your neighbors who have volunteered to fulfill the missions of the town’s Fire Department and Emergency Medical Service. “And we need new volunteers, men and women, for both departments,” says Fire Chief Ralph Morrison,


“If we don’t start getting new volunteers, I don’t know what we’re going to do,” Ralph said in late June. “For fire and ambulance calls, it’s always the same responders. All our neighboring towns are in the same boat, and we’re in trouble if we don’t get new people to turn out and help.”

The Sandisfield Fire Department answers about 150-160 calls per year. The EMS ambulance responds to an average of about 150. But the number of volunteers has remained static for some time. And is aging. Half the town’s volunteer firemen are over 50 years old, and Ralph himself is 63.

“We welcome younger volunteers,” he said, “but we can use older volunteers, too. There is a job for everyone.” For instance, older volunteers could take highway safety training in order to direct traffic at a fire site and not have to drag hoses.

Most of the training for the Fire Department and EMS ambulance service is on-site. Ambulance volunteers do attend state-sponsored classes, but graduate as certified emergency medical technicians and can carry their credentials with them, if they move.

The town pays a modest stipend in most cases. Fire Department volunteers are paid for each call in which they participate. Ambulance staff can receive a daily fee for weekend days if they agree to stay home and be on call.

To volunteer for either the Fire Department or as an EMT, please call Fire Chief Ralph Morrison at 258-4742. 





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Blasting. Just Thuds... So Far.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE EVACUATION PLAN?

By Ron Bernard

How did your Monday morning June 19 start out? Ours began with an early phone call from the pipeline company. "Good morning. We're going to blast in your vicinity at 11."

O boy.



Expecting a dramatic experience, Jean and I took a safe position 1,000 ft. from the target, the crown of the frequently fog-shrouded rocky hill known hereabouts as "Old Smokey." The land was part of the former Rowley Bros. farm at Spectacle Pond until 2005. Now it is Otis State Forest conservation land. It is also the pipeline right of way.

Chaperoned by nervous company representatives, movie camera rolling, we were ready to witness and record something important. Surely at least heaving blasting mats and ... smoke. Better yet, maybe flying dirt and tossed rocks like in the movies. Something.

Then a series of air-horn warning blasts. This is it! We braced ourselves. A short pause, then in the distance the sound of ... of, thud. Is that all? It would not even rate a mention in *Annals of Anticlimactic Events*.

There was more blasting on the hill that week but we did not attend. On Thursday a bigger

multi-charge event lasted several seconds and sounded like distant rolling thunder. That one however produced delayed ground and air vibrations that shook our old house some 2,000 ft. away. The company has installed seismographs at our place. It will be interesting to see what the registers say.

Sandisfield Fire Chief Ralph Morrison, who has oversight authority during blasting, stopped by to explain about the process. "This is nothing like what happened in 1981," he said, referring to a serious mishap that occurred during the construction of the second pipeline and the general evacuation which is forever embedded in the memories of all who experienced it, including Ralph.

In that scary incident the contractor inserted dynamite into a gigantic rock that could not be dislodged any other way. It blew up, as planned, but a big chunk landed on the adjacent 1951 pipeline which ruptured. Fortunately there was no gas explosion with the inevitable forest fire.

Ralph said that today's regulations and industry standards for blasting are very strict. Licensed professionals do this work, and he is especially impressed with the people responsible here. State standards are more rigorous too, he said. The company also told me that their own standards exceed what is required by the industry and the state. Ralph said, "On top of all that I have full authority to shut down the operation if I feel anything is wrong. Immediately. No questions asked."

The John Henry rock hammers will continue to poke and prod along looking for obstacles to blast. Project managers maintain that given the remaining topography no more blasting is likely.

What About Evacuation Planning?

Although we never expected problems of the 1981 variety in this installation, the experience has revealed a problem. A big one. Several Beech Plain residents petitioned the Fire Department and the Town for assurance that there is an evacuation plan.

Turns out there is no one-size-fits-all plan. "This," Ralph said, "is because of unpredictability. Every instance could be very different."

But what happens if there is a serious incident at some point? An explosion, perhaps due to malfunction, or sabotage or even some crazy thing like an airplane crash? There are three pipelines here now. Stuff can happen and those of us living within 900 feet of even just one line are in an "incineration zone." Realistically the entire Beech Plain section and a good part of Otis are at risk. Area officials should take this question seriously. We need more than just a shrug and hoping for the best. 🍷

Out on a Limb: an op-ed

Subject should be interesting to most of us and have a strong link to Sandisfield, written by and for Town residents. The Times does not accept *Out on a Limb* contributions submitted anonymously, but if the author identifies him or herself to the editor and asks not to be named in the article we may agree to withhold the author's name on a case-by-case basis.

Send to Editor, Sandisfield Times, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or by email to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org.

Sandisfield Historical Society



Events Coming Your Way

By Ann Wald, President

It was an honor to represent the Historical Society in the Memorial Day Parade. What a wonderful small town affair. Perhaps we can be better represented next year with more and new members.

On June 10, the Society provided healthy food items at the COA Wellness Fair and they were well received.

On July 1, our annual flea market will be held at Firehouse #2 from 10 a.m. until 2. Come join us. You may find just that item, or two, you've been looking for.

On August 12, from 2 p.m. until 3, Willard Platt will educate us on the old desk factory in Roosterville, something that some of us never knew existed. Willard will meet us at the site of the old factory near the Roosterville end of his new bridge across the Farmington. For many years, it was known as "The Old Red Shop."

The Society will hold an open house with a guest speaker on Sunday, September 10, from 2 to 4 p.m., at the Society building on Rt. 183 at South Sandisfield Road from 2 to 4 p.m.

Our annual apple fest will be held on Saturday, October 7. Please join us, we would love to share our festivities with you.

If you're interested in helping with the Society or have questions, please call me at 258-4415. 🍷

Thoughts About Painting the Little Brown Church

By Karlene Blass



Richard Hamilton and William Bakunis pitch in on the outside walls.
Photo: Bill Price

I have mixed memories of the Gilead Chapel in Waterford, Connecticut, when I was young. It was exciting to be an angel in the annual Christmas Pageant at age 7. I had some extremely moving experiences during prayer and testimony meeting when I was 12 and 13. But when I was 16 and had to attend weekly choir practice it was excruciating.

But the appearance and vibes felt in that special space left indelible memories in my mind. I'll bet there are many folks in this town who feel the same way about

New Boston Congregational Church. Did you go to Sunday school there? Was someone in your family married, baptized, or eulogized in that sanctuary?

So with these memories I started prepping the peeling paint from the brown church along with two other gals who are interested in seeing it look tidy and refurbished again. This is not a campaign to restore an aging building, more of an effort to beautify a little glimpse of Sandisfield's history and in doing so remember Cora Roraback, whose wish it was to see the church painted.

Several of us have organized to start the work, and Richard Hamilton and his grandson William Bakunis have finished the trim and moved to the lower outside walls. Sandy Morrison has been on a ladder painting under the eaves. Later a hoist will be rented to reach the upper sections.

It is my hope that passersby, visitors or locals, might have the same fond memories of the place and decide to pitch in with a ladder, paintbrush, a scraper or a hammer. A small crew – three of them middle-aged women with kitchen stools – may take a long time to finish the job. However a bunch of people for a few hours over 2 or 3 weeks might make something happen and actually have fun too. If you are interested, call Karlene at 258-3341.



Photo: Elijah Holland

Just Married

JENNIFER MARY FLOREK
MARRIED
CHARLES ANTHONY PEASE
ON JUNE 24, 2017
IN SANDISFIELD.

225 of their relatives and friends joined them in celebration at Joanne Paladino's residence, 15 Sandisfield Road. The bride and groom were honored to have the support of their families and friends.

Parents of the Bride: Mary and Jim Florek of Westfield, Massachusetts.

Parents of the Groom: Charles and Lauren Pease of Sandisfield.

Maid of Honor: Emily Dorsey, sister of the bride.

Best Man: Charles Pease, father of the groom.

When Mr. and Mrs. Pease return from a honeymoon in Ireland, they will make their home on Rt. 8 south of New Boston.

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Now Hear This!

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

JULY EVENTS

Flea Market on Saturday, July 1, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Fire Station #2, Route 57. Sponsored by the Sandisfield Historical Society. Vendor space is \$15, call Ann (258-4415).

Crafts for Kids with Lynn on Saturday, July 8, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library, lower level. Led by Lynn Rubenstein, this craft day will feature "Slime & Suncatchers." There will be story time at 9:30 upstairs, prior to crafting.

The Stamp Collection by Val Coleman on Saturday, July 8, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, July 9, at 3:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. A tender, humorous play set in Val Coleman's childhood home in southern Illinois. It's a story of pacifism, faith, and sanity interrupted by the wars of the 20th Century. Ben Luxon directs the Sandisfield Players in this production. \$20 or \$5 for children.

Church Service on Sunday, July 9, at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. All are welcome.

Free Movie Night! on Friday, July 14, at 7:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. Online tickets are recommended to ensure a seat (www.sandisfieldartscenter.org). Check website for movie title.

Sacred Bones and Talking Heads: The Mystery of the Reliquaries from the Court of Charles V of Spain. A workshop conducted by NYU professor and Sandisfield resident Michele Marincola on Saturday, July 15, at 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. \$10. For more information, visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org.

Adult Crafts with Vicki MacDonald on Friday, July 21 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library. Vicki offers card making and glass etching classes. Please contact Kathie Burrows for details (258-4943).

Church Supper, Ham & Scalloped Potatoes on Saturday, July 22, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Fire Station #2, Route 57. Includes coleslaw, desserts, beverages. Adults, \$12, Kids under 12, \$6. Tickets are available at the door and takeout is available.

Summer Karaoke Evening on Saturday, July 22, at 7:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road.

Blood Pressure Clinic on Wednesday, July 26, 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.

Adult Crafts with Vicki MacDonald on Saturday, July 29 from 12:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library. Vicki offers card making and glass etching

classes. Please contact Kathie Burrows for details (258-4943).

Bobby Sweet on Saturday, July 29, at 8:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center, 5 Hammertown Road. A Berkshire native and sixth-generation musician, Bobby Sweet is a sought-after lead guitarist. This summer, he celebrates the release of his 7th solo album. \$15.

SAVE THE DATE

Town-Wide Tag Sale on Saturday, August 12, on the grounds of the New Boston Inn to support the Jewish History Book Project. Rent space, keep your proceeds in your pocket. For space, contact Joanne Lazarowitz Olson (917-686-1985).

Sandisfield Volunteer Firemen Steak Roast on Saturday, August 12. Dinner from 5 to 7 p.m., dancing from 6 to 8:30. Firehouse #2 on Rt. 57. Tickets can be purchased from any volunteer or call A&M Auto, 258-3381. Not available at the door.

JULY EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

You are invited to join the parishioners of Immaculate Conception Church for Sunday Masses in Mill River

at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays (with the exception of the First Sunday, when Masses are offered only in Sheffield at 7:00 and 9:00 a.m.). The church is located on the hill on the right side if you are headed away from the village toward New Marlborough Central School or on the left just past Hayes Hill Road. For information, call 413-229-3058.

Courtney Maum in Conversation with Joe Donahue, host of WAMC's The Roundtable on Thursday, July 6, at 3:00 p.m. at The Terrace at The Mount, 2 Plunkett Street, Lenox. For information, call 860-551-5111.

Yoga in Tolland on Thursdays at 9:00 a.m. and Mondays (beginning July 10) at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Complex. Sponsored by the Tolland Council on Aging. \$5.

Tolland Fire Department Annual Steak & Lobster Roast on Saturday, July 15, at the Tolland Public Safety Complex. Served from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Adults \$25. A la carte hot dogs and burgers for the kids. Dancing from 8 to 11 p.m. Call 413-258-4794 ext. 108 for tickets.

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who have donated this month.*

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Donations of any amount 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.

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Otis at Berkshire Bank, Katie's Market, Papa's Fuel, Otis Library, Farmington River Diner, Otis Poultry Farm, Otis Woodlands (May-September), and the Laundromat. 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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