

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

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Volume VIII Number 9

December 2017

The Eagle is On Our Side

COLD SPRING ROAD, FINALLY, GETS BETTER

By Seth Kershner

For months now, *The Sandisfield Times* and area residents have been beating the drum about Kinder Morgan/Tennessee Gas Pipeline's impact on Cold Spring Road.

The list of grievances was long. Numerous potholes caused by truck traffic. Roadway edges collapsing in many places. The sounds of heavy machinery bouncing along country roads day and night.

Not to mention bitterness over the million dollars that Kinder Morgan had initially agreed to give Sandisfield to offset the expected wear and tear on local infrastructure caused by pipeline construction. The energy giant has yet to put a check in the mail or even, lately, to acknowledge that they remember the offer.

Over the fall, Highway Superintendent Bobby O'Brien kept pressure on the Kinder Morgan with weekly calls about the deteriorating roads and the risk to the town's snowplows during the coming winter.

Then a boost for our side came on November 14 when *The Berkshire Eagle* published an article by Heather Bellow headlined "Sandisfield Highway Chief: 'Road is shot from pipeline work.'"

The article was followed two days later with an editorial titled "Kinder Morgan Must Do Right by Sandisfield." It started: "The bucolic hamlet of Sandisfield, tucked away in Berkshire County's southeast corner, was minding its own business as it always had. Suddenly an energy-hungry world arrived at its doorstep in the form of legions of vehicles bearing heavy construction equipment and stacks of steel pipes."

The editorial concluded: "Sandisfield will not benefit from a pipeline built to transport natural gas to Connecticut. It certainly shouldn't be punished. The Houston-based energy firm has an opportunity to be a good corporate citizen and do the right thing. It is incumbent upon the governor's office to lead the way in prodding it in that direction."

In the days after publication of Bellow's piece and the *Eagle* editorial, O'Brien met with an attorney for Kinder Morgan about getting the company to pay for repaving Cold Spring Road with blacktop in the spring. In a phone interview, O'Brien told the *Times* that the project has the full support of state representative William "Smitty" Pignatelli: "Smitty's got my back 100 percent."

Then, suddenly, late November, just before winter weather set in, significant repairs were made to Cold Spring Road.

Cont'd p.6



Wait Long Enough, the World Turns

Repair of Rugg Bridge Begins At Last

The long-awaited repair of the bridge across the Clam River on Rt. 57 at West New Boston got underway mid-November. All traffic is now detoured along River Road, a narrow stretch of almost a mile of pavement that weaves past half a dozen homes and up and over a rise where the road narrows to a one-way passage. Traffic is alternating, controlled by automatic stop-and-go lights at both ends of the road so that traffic flows only one direction at a time. A third sign mid-way faces the O'Clair place so that Margaret can pull out of her driveway and know whether it's safe to go east or west. Patience while waiting for the green light is crucial to the success of the detour; no patience puts yourself and others at risk. Helpfully, all of Rt. 57 from its intersection with Rt. 8 to Great Barrington has been closed to trucks, except local deliveries.

Photo: Jean Atwater-Williams

A Look at Our Books

AN AUDIT SAYS WE CAN DO BETTER

By John Skrip, Select Board Chairman, and Joe Gelinas, Finance Committee Chairman

Scanlon & Associates, LLC, an accounting firm from South Deerfield, Massachusetts, completed the town audit for Fiscal Year 2016 (July 2015-June 2016). Members of the Town's administration participated in an exit review on November 14.

The town had not been audited since 2012, and the Select Board felt it was time to conduct one. The Commonwealth suggests an audit occur every three years.

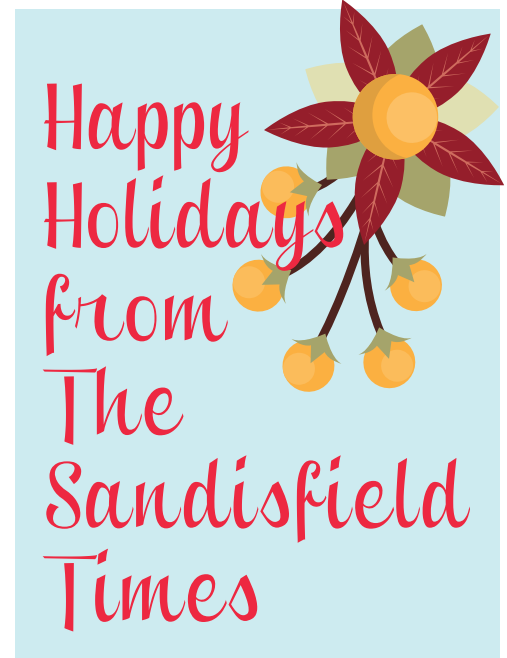
The audit itself resulted in many suggested improvements in the way the town was handling its finances during FY2016. Accounting irregularities had been identified by the Select Board over the summer of 2016 and improvements had begun by the fall of that year. Several suggestions outlined by Scanlon & Associates have been instituted by Town employees during the past year, however suggestions for further improvements were noted during the audit.

The suggestions are outlined below:

1. Develop a more formal cashbook that reflects all cash and checks received and perform a monthly reconciliation of that cashbook with the general ledger and individual bank account balances. The process of properly recording and reconciling all cash or checks and the detail of what account the money is being deposited into needs to be done consistently.

2. The Tax Title receivable subsidiary ledger has not been properly maintained and reconciled to the general ledger. It was noted, that our tax rate collection is about 91 percent. We do not feel this is satisfactory. Steps have been put in place to remedy this important issue.
3. Improvements need to be made on the collection of delinquent taxes on personal property (a third-party collection) and is being examined.
4. We do not reconcile the authorized town meeting votes, the tax recapitulation sheet, budget transfers, and the budgets for the expenditure and revenue subsidiary ledgers. This will be remedied.
5. There is a failure to reconcile and properly report payroll withholding. We need to set up a better system to account for this.
6. All town personnel who collect money should be giving receipts for the transactions. Example (dump stickers, inspection stickers, dog licenses). This must be a consistent practice each time money is collected.
7. We need to put into place acceptable accounting procedures, and follow through on the areas identified as opportunities for improvement. These are strongly suggested requirements of Scanlon & Associates and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
8. The Select Board is considering a limited audit in June of 2018 as a way of being sure we are on the right track to improved town financial accounting methods and procedures.

To clarify in simple terms: we need to do a better job collecting taxes and a better job reconciling every dollar that comes into this town with every dollar that is deposited and every dollar that is spent. And, there needs to be proper supporting documentation for entries made to our accounting records. 📄



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

THANK YOU

Our thanks to donors who have already responded to our annual appeal drive and to those who contributed throughout the year. You keep The Times going, both in print and online. We're a volunteer crew who try to provide a service, but we need your help: we have design, printing, mailing, and other odds and ends of expenses. We did incur the extra cost of two color front pages this year, sort of a gift to our print readers (they were superb photographs), but we don't intend to do that very often; we want to be good stewards of your generosity. So, if you haven't yet, please send your tax-deductible donation before the end of the year. But, if you'd prefer, we'll be happy to receive your help in 2018. Happy New Year to all our readers.

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE PIPELINE CORRIDOR

It was brought to my attention, again, that The Times' reporting of the third natural gas pipeline constructed this summer and fall across the northeast corner of Sandisfield has not exactly

been balanced. We agree. We were against the pipeline from the get-go and still are. However, now that it's in the ground and supposedly the open land over it is being "restored," we have to accept it. Even grudgingly.

Another view of the pipeline is the opening of a kind of corridor through the woods, particularly Otis State Forest. Once restored to grass and pasture, the pipeline corridor provides browse for deer and small animals and gives balance to woodlands.

A friend of mine has pointed out that landowners who never log or disturb their forest land in any way can create, ultimately if unwittingly, a dead forest, a place where few if any animals roam through the dark beneath the forest canopy and nothing grows except piles of downed trees.

So, for balance, here's an acknowledgment of the pipeline corridor, once the land is restored as much as possible and animals return to graze the long, narrow meadow. Although humans will still be still forbidden and considered trespassers.

– Bill Price
West New Boston



TOWN NEWS

By Bill Price

From Select Board and Planning Board. Agendas and minutes of Select and Planning Boards meetings have been posted on the Town's website, www.sandisfieldma.gov. Starting with 2014 and continuing through 2017, interested readers can scroll through the minutes for, say, all of 2015 and see over the course of several months what questions and proposals advanced or were delayed, overlooked, or ignored. Agendas and minutes are also available for viewing at the Town Clerk's office at the Town Hall Annex.

Broadband. At the November 13 Select Board meeting, Chair John Skrip announced that "We are at a point where there are some serious issues. There will be a town meeting to explain the whole process before signing on." See also John's column, From Your Select Board, on page 7.

Mobile Homes and Campers. Town Administrator Fred Ventresco is working with the Planning Board to draw up more clear by-laws regarding mobile homes and campers. Several locations have been brought to the Select Board's attention. Apparently the state will not get involved

unless there are major septic issues. The Board of Health will make site visits to each identified mobile home or camper in which people are living.

Transfer Station. Yearly fees will increase from \$50 to \$65 in 2018.

Selectman Mark Newman reviewed the results of the unannounced inspection by Massachusetts EPA, which both the transfer station and the old land-fill failed. While the transfer station was relatively clean, the Town needs to clean up the embankment behind it and remove the junk and debris that has been thrown over there.

Solar in Sandisfield. Chair John Skrip will review the deed for Yanner Park to determine if a section of the park can be used for a solar field.

The Planning Board has met several times to write bylaws regarding solar panels and fields in Town. The goal is to have a preliminary draft ready by January, with Cell and Solar Bylaws ready for voting at the next Annual Town Meeting. Tom Matuszko of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, who advises the board, reviewed Solar Bylaws as set up in other towns and what needed to be covered by the Town.

Grant Writing. Former Select Board Chairman Alice Boyd will write a grant for the Town for

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the State Department of Housing and Community Development.

Knodding Head School of Hand-crafts. The Planning Board approved the preliminary plans for Kevin Kiwak of Sears Road for his proposed woodworking academy. Kevin will meet next with Mary Turek of the Conservation Commission and Victor Hyrckvich of the Board of Health.

IMPROVE THE AIR YOU BREATHE

In an effort to improve air quality, the American Lung Association is issuing grants to individuals with high-polluting, inefficient wood stoves. Vouchers will be awarded to help with the cost of changing over a non-EPA stove to a new EPA-certified wood, pellet, or gas stove. For more information, call or email Roger Kohler at the Board of Health. 413-258-0080 or rkohler.sandisfield@gmail.com.

Sandisfield Historical Society



Wars Past, and a Christmas Fair

By Ann Wald, President

What a wonderful event we had at the Society on Veterans Day, 2017.

The pews were filled to hear our local historian, Ron Bernard, talk about Sandisfield's role in numerous military conflicts during the period from the French and Indian War (1750s) to the Civil War (1860s). He touched on points ranging from the strategic importance of the Knox Trail to the hardships endured by the soldiers as well as their wives and children left behind on the farms. It was right that we honored all of them that day.

During intermission about 30 attendees, one of the largest groups in several years, enjoyed treats and libations at the annual wine-and-cheese reception.

Reverend Don Peet followed intermission with a fascinating talk about his father's Army service in World War I in France. He displayed a tableful of battlefield souvenirs recovered by his father 100 years ago.

Members and friends attending also wished Don and Charlene a fond farewell. The Peets are moving this month to a new home in Rhode Island, closer to family.

The Peets have been active participants in town activities and are long-time supporters of this Society. They will be greatly missed. Good luck to them, and we hope they return often to say hi. Rhode Island is not that far away.

Our Christmas Fair is December 2 at Firehouse 2 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Santa is scheduled to appear, and there will be a bake sale and many vendors with lots of great items. We hope to see you there. 🍷



Rev. Donald Peet displayed his father's mementos from World War I. Photo: Richard Migot

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Pumpkin Decorating a Success

By John Skrip

A good Halloween event. At the pumpkin decorating festivity, October 28, some 40 kids had a good time painting pumpkins, dressing them up with stickers, sunglasses, even tiaras.

The event, endorsed by the Community Center Committee, was held at the Sandisfield Arts Center.

We thank the Arts Center for the venue and are grateful for the people and businesses that helped make the whole event a success. Thanks go to Ter-Mar Farm, Marcia and Terry, for helping to defer the pumpkin expense; Big Y for the donation of juice boxes for our children; the Sandisfield Library for its organizational help, especially Terry Spohnholz, our librarian; Lynn Rubenstein for supplying paints and brushes as well as pumpkin decorations, and the residents/parents who showed up to keep some order and help the children decorate the pumpkins: Nina Carr, Dawn Lemon, Chrissy O'Brien, and Rosanne Skrip.

Former Resident's Art Displayed



The work of artist Robin Thew, formerly of Sandisfield, filled the gallery at the Sandisfield Arts Center through the month of November. A successful clothes and pattern designer in the 1950s as well as a much-celebrated curator of the windows at Tiffany's flagship store and Macy's in the early '70s, Robin is the illustrator of *Katie's Dream*, the children's book by her daughter Katie Rocco, owner and dressage trainer at Dragonfly Farm on Rood Road.

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The Eagle is on Our Side

Cont'd. from page 1.

A contractor from Windsor Locks, Connecticut, Paganelli Construction, repaired the worst sections with a 2-inch deep layer of asphalt.

In an email, Cold Spring Road resident and *Times* contributor Ron Bernard expressed his appreciation for the much-needed road work: "Bottom line, what they have done was done well. It will certainly allow the snowplows to do their job without risking the equipment and safety this winter."

Bernard's canine companions also had reason to cheer the news: "Now I can walk my dogs without worrying about breaking an ankle or falling into the road."

Company representatives said the workers will be back in the spring to reconstruct the road "all the way to the Otis line." The sides of the roads have not been prepped for drainage, a sign, hopefully, that the company does really intend to return in the spring to finish the job. 🐾

Photos: Times reporter



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From Your Select Board

By John Skrip, Chair

Handicapped Van: First, the bad news: we were not approved for the Handicap Van grant; however, we will apply again next Spring. In the interim, Town Administrator Fred Ventresco will discuss the present COA transportation van with our COA members. We will depend on the COA members to advise us in this matter. Please contact Fred at Town Hall 258-4711, ext. 1, with your opinions and/or suggestions. The more facts we gather, the better the application will be.

Broadband: Broadband has turned out to be a very complex issue. MBI, Frontier, Department of Revenue, and the towns are all looking for a better understanding of the proposed term sheet and how this project can be implemented, especially, the financial commitment involved and the Municipal Lighting Plant/Town liability. The liability issue is still not clear and is being pursued for clarification. Broadband Committee Chair Jeff Bye is working diligently on this project and continues to update the Select Board and will keep the Town informed as issues are clarified and hopefully as we move this project forward.

Rugg Bridge: We have signed all documents that are related to the Rugg Bridge reconstruction and as of the writing of this article you will already have been inconvenienced due to the detour on River Road. The Town asks for your cooperation in dealing with this problem over the next several months and thanks you in advance for your patience as we move forward in securing our infrastructure.

Town Budgeting: You will notice that this year there is a change in the budgeting process. On November 14, the Select Board and the Finance Committee, along with the town administrator and town clerk, met with several committee members to help facilitate a new and more transparent and accountable budget process. This is a positive step and is not intended to penalize any committee or service but rather to show our town residents where our dollars are spent.

Transfer Station: Transfer station issues continue to be a problem. Garbage bags and cans of paint have been found over the back bank of the transfer station. We also are aware that the surface area of this station needs to be recapped. Selectman Mark Newman is working with Highway Superintendent Bob O'Brien to determine the best approach to these problems. These items will be on the Select Board agenda for the next few weeks. We welcome suggestions from all.

Please contact me or Mark Newman with your suggestions and support. As usual, I enjoy the calls I get from taxpayers and will follow up on each call and e-mail as promptly as possible. Contact information: Phone: 413-258-4788 or johnskripjr@gmail.com. 📧



OLD GETTING

Sometimes I think I am the oldest man alive.
I've been blessed with a fragmentary memory.
It's the damndest thing,
I remember knickers and nickels,
Crystal radio sets and the stations of the cross,
Stained glass and stereopticons,
First communion and Farmall tractors
And Hitler ... early ...
On Movietone News
Slobber shouting at a thousand flags
Down at the Will Rogers theatre
Or over at the Lincoln
Where Tom Mix and Flash Gordon were regulars.

I remember the curve of poverty
Out in the dusty middle of America.
Dark clouds and an empty square
When Shorty Gates' barber shop closed.

And when Bob Smith got drunk
And missed the Villa Grove game
So I got to play left tackle
And my mother heard on the loudspeaker,
"Coleman, number 32, made that tackle!"

All of this happened before Pearl Harbor ... Pearl Harbor.
My dad and I were driving out to Whelan's farm
To see the New Deal lights (which made the chicken's squeal)
When an announcer on the radio said the Japanese had bombed us
On a Sunday morning.
I don't remember if we stopped and turned around,
But we were all wrapped up in the sackcloth of war
For a very long time.

My brother was a Marine
And I walked carefully on the high curb
Around the courthouse and hoped he was OK.
And that we were OK and the grownups
Would let me live.

Oh! I forgot to tell you that Christmas came again and again
No matter what ... the balsam and the blessed,
A single day between the commas
Given to boxes that rattled and beckoned
And a young green tree.

Val Coleman
West New Boston

“Too Much.”

OUR OWN NORMAN ROCKWELL STORY

By Bill Price

When former resident Jack Newsom died at the age of 91 early last year, his widow, Barbara, sent *The Times* a memorial booklet about Jack and his long career. The Newsoms lived on Gremler Road from 1961 to 1978. We published a summary of the booklet in June.

The recent controversy in Pittsfield over the Berkshire Museum’s proposed sale of some of their art collection, including two Norman Rockwell paintings that had been gifts to the museum by the artist, reminded us of this family anecdote related in the Newsoms.

Jack Newsom grew up in Pelham, New York, not far from the New Rochelle studio of artist Norman Rockwell. In the memorial booklet, the family wrote:

“One day when Jack was coming home from school, [Norman] Rockwell and one of his helpers stopped him and asked if he would pose for a Saturday Evening Post cover for which he was trying to find a model ‘whose face people would feel sorry for.’ Jack’s seemed to fill the bill.

“The result was a July 13, 1940, cover painting of a teenage boy holding a pair of melting ice cream cones, looking for his girlfriend under a sea of umbrellas at the beach. When Jack’s father asked Rockwell if he ever sold the originals of his Post cover paintings, Rockwell quoted a price of \$100. ‘Too much’ was Newsom’s reply. Although the cover still shows up in catalogs of Rockwell’s works, the original painting was subsequently destroyed in a fire in Rockwell’s studio.”



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The Librarian's Corner

By Terry Spohnholz

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

Winter was made for warm blankets, large books, and hot chocolate!

Ah, wood smoke in the air, the aroma of fresh-baked pies and cookies lazily drifting in the air, and a brisk north wind to remind you that winter has arrived and with it, its plethora of holidays.

Tucked into a cozy chair, lamp lit, and a pile of books scattered about me like good friends, I can escape from the howling wind and the brisk north wind. Just turn a few pages and I am basking in the warm sun of Italy and solving a mystery with Commissario Guido Brunetti (*Earthly Remains* by Donna Leon) or drawn into the a deadly game of vengeance involving ISIS and the Israeli Secret Intelligence service (Daniel Silva's *The Black Widow*.)

So if you are looking for a few or a lot of books to take you a way, shake the snow off your boots and head to the Sandisfield Free Public Library.

New Books

Count to Ten by James Patterson. Santosh Wagh quit his job as head of Private India after harrowing events in Mumbai almost got him killed. But Jack Morgan, global head of the world's finest investigation agency, needs him back.

Deep Freeze by John Sandford. Class reunions: a time for memories – good, bad, and, as Virgil Flowers is about to find out, deadly. Virgil knows the town of Tripton, Minnesota, a little too well.

The Long, Long Trail Home by Cynthia Harrod-Eagles. In 1917 the Great War wages on for the Hunters, their friends, and servants. The war is where they live now.

Origin by Dan Brown. Brown's latest novel again features the iconic Robert Langdon as well as a character that is artificial intelligence. Creationism is pitted against science as a futurist believes he will destroy the foundations of world religion with his scientific discovery.

Strange Weather by Joe Hill. Four haunting novellas, each dealing in their own way with "strange weather:" a rain of crystal needles, flashes of 'lightning' that are missing their thunder, suspiciously shaped clouds, and raging fire tornadoes.

Hardcore 24 by Janet Evanovich. New Jersey bounty hunter Stephanie Plum returns, battling brain eating

zombies, headless corpses and, yes, Ethel, a fifty-pound boa constrictor.

Events

December 2 – Lynn Rubinstein will be at the Holiday Fair at FireHouse #2 offering **children's crafting featuring Snowmen and Reindeer**. Don't miss out on the fun.

December 16 – **Coffee with a Cop**. Sit, chat, and discuss your concerns with Sandisfield's Constable on Patrol, Michael Johnson. He is known to bring delicious baked goodies and the Keurig at the library has plenty of coffee, tea, and hot chocolate.

December 23 – 10 a.m.-noon. **Story time** featuring winter and snow fun as well as a bit of crafting for the holidays. Juice and kind-of-healthy snacks. Come join in.

Other Things

The library would like to thank all its patrons, both adult and child, for their visits, camaraderie, and insight into the world of reading. We also thank those who have donated monetarily to the continued updating of the library inventory especially the Sandisfield Cultural Council. Your gifts keep the library moving forward and expanding young minds.

The Sandisfield Ladies Book Club will hold its last meeting of the year in December. The new line-up of books for 2018 will be decided. If you are looking for a fun, lively, and diverse group of readers to discuss books, *this is the group for you*. Please contact the library for details.

Of special note, after more than twenty years of gently leading this wonderful group of ladies, Charlene Peet is moving from Sandisfield to Rhode Island. She will no longer be shepherding the flock through its monthly reading assignment. We will all miss Charlene, very much. ♥



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Farmington River Regional School PTA

HOCKEY AND FUND RAISING


By Wendy Berman

The Fall Fundraiser raised over \$4,000 for our teachers and students. Half the funds will go to classroom teachers and the other half to the classroom accounts for 6th grade field trips to Boston. Top sellers were Mia France, Megan DeCelle, and Hailey Dubiel. Top-selling class was Mr. Keller's 5th grade home-room. Thanks to everyone who helped support our fundraiser.

At "Farmington River Night" at the Springfield Thunderbirds hockey game on October 22 our 4th, 5th and 6th grade chorus students did a fantastic job singing "God Bless America" at the start of the game, followed by parent Jon Berman performing the National Anthem. A great time was had by all, with some students experiencing their very first hockey game.


Our annual Scholastic Book Fair in early November allowed us to keep \$1,504 in Scholastic Dollars to be spent on books for the library and classrooms.

Holiday Shop, scheduled for Thursday and Friday, December 14 and 15, is a traditional PTA-sponsored activity where children hand-pick affordable gifts for family members, teachers, friends, or pets. Helpers will assist with budgeting and wrapping two gifts per child. A letter with more details will go home to families soon.

Email us at pta@frrsd.org with any questions. Thanks for your help and support! 

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Moreover...

Pressure

By Simon Winchester

Each Sunday morning I wind all the clocks in the house. There are seven of them, and the process takes about a half hour, what with all the tinkering and adjusting that is needed. My intention in doing so is that when they each chime the Sunday midnight they will do so more or less in unison – and may continue thus until the following Wednesday or Thursday, after which, inevitably, they gradually each fall out of rate, and then chime their various twelves, as the saying has it, “in friendly disagreement.”

There is one other Sunday task, the one which I cherish most: I change the paper on the dining room barograph.

I have been doing this now for all of the sixteen years I have lived in town, and as a result now have a stack of papers a good six inches thick, on which Sandisfield’s weekly weather has been faithfully recorded in a succession of wavering lines of blue ink.

This barograph is an elegant English-made instrument of brass levers and drums and a silver vacuum chamber, all enclosed in a pretty case of glass and teakwood. My late parents sent it to me for my 57th birthday, in September 2001 – and as a Sandisfield housewarming present.

Most will remember that, with the events of what is now known as 9/11, that particular month was terribly grim. This quite unexpected gift arrived from London two weeks later, in an enormous box – not inspected by U.S. Customs, which rather surprised me – and opening it to find this exquisite instrument offered our family a brief moment of joy, a reminder that for most, life could indeed now continue.

And so I have kept on changing the barograph’s recording paper weekly ever since, more than eight hundred times so far – as a reminder to myself of the kindness of my faraway parents, as a memorial, as a celebration of the continuation of good cheer and human existence.

And because I’m totally enthralled by weather.

... a rather elegant
means of recording
what *did* happen ...

The instrument itself is a simple thing, built simply to record on paper the outside atmospheric pressure as it fluctuates, hour by hour, day by day. The recording paper, eleven inches long and matched to wrap around the outside of a clockwork-powered brass cylinder (parent reader: demand from your child the cylinder’s diameter), measures out the passing days. A pen, its nib filled with a slow-drying glycerine-and-ink mixture, presses lightly against the unscrolling paper and, since it is connected by an intricate arrangement of levers to the aforesaid vacuum chamber, rises and falls along with the pressure outside, leaving its wavering blue trace.

A barograph is not a means of forecasting what will happen to the weather – I have an array of barometers that help do that – but rather a rather elegant means of recording what did happen – a meteorological history of town.



Simon’s wonderful barograph.

Photo: Setsuko Winchester

From time to time, when nostalgia beckons, I venture into the dining-room cupboard to fish out the papers and look back at how the weather was at some earlier time. I am then reminded, quite charmingly, of quite another Sandisfield. I am viewing a portrait of a country environment that somehow transcends all of our more mundane arguments we have over tax increases and road repairs and the travails of Wired West.

Here at random for instance, on one of the sheets, is the record for the week ending December 14, 2008.

The blue line, shivering its way unremarkably through the week’s beginning, makes a sudden, massive downward dive late on the evening of Thursday, December 11th. It plummets further still during the night and the dawn-ing, and continues yet further almost until noon. During that time, I have noted on the graph: 2 a.m., power cut, phones down; 3 p.m., two inches of ice accumulated; dusk, State of Emergency; 6 a.m., National Guard deployed.

And then, beneath all these lesser notes, I see I had written, in a larger capitals: GREAT ICE STORM. ONE FOR THE HISTORY BOOKS.

And all this on one little sheet, one of eight hundred in my dining-room closet. It is a tiny if memorable component of a history book that grows ever longer, week by succeeding week.

If I’m lucky – and if my plucky little machine keeps on ticking – I’ll be able to accumulate another eight hundred sheets, maybe more, before I run out of my own personal ink. After which, here will lie three decades of Sandisfield’s weather story, of her rain and sun, her snow, her mud, her blackflies, her autumn colors, and her all-too-frequent accumulations of ice.

What will my successors do with the records? Keep them, and keep on recording more? Or toss them all away, along with this puzzling little contraption on which all was recorded?

Sad to say, I suspect that it will be latter – since in twenty years’ time few will probably know or care what a barograph is or ever was. Maybe some kind of relative of a typewriter, a telex, a flip phone or a tape-recorder? Cute, like a sextant or an astrolabe or an orrery – but a device quite mysterious and unfathomable. Of no immediate use.

Put it up in the attic, dear. Along with all those wretched clocks. 🕒

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Sandisfield, MA

Raising Funds for Local Jewish History Book

By Ron Bernard

The Sandisfield committee working on *Soil and Shul in the Berkshires: The Untold Story of Sandisfield's Jewish Farm Colony* has announced a fund-raising campaign to support the book. The project was launched early last year when interested residents formed a steering committee to research and produce the book (Times, April 2016). The Sandisfield Arts Center is serving as Fiscal Sponsor for the project.

Principal author Lorraine German, daughter-in-law of Sylvia German, late of Montville, is an amateur historian known for her thorough research. Lorraine contributed chapters

to *Sandisfield Then And Now: 1762-2012* which was prepared for the Town's 250th anniversary. She and her husband, Steve, seasonal residents in town, own an antiques business in nearby Granby, Conn.

Asked why she agreed to embark on such an ambitious project, she said, "Due to space and time limitations in *Then and Now*, we were unable to properly address this important and fascinating story. The legacy of the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who came here by way of New York over a century ago is very compelling. These Jews formed the largest ethnic group to settle in Sandisfield in the 20th century. It is past time for this story to be told and preserved."

The draft is well underway. The book, expected to be about 250 pages including chapters on social, economic, and religious life and rare family photos, will serve both as a research source for scholars as well as entertaining reading for anyone connected to or interested in the Jewish American experience in the Berkshires.

Committee member Nina Carr told *The Times* that the goal is to produce a high-quality, affordably priced publication. Emphasizing that the book will be a limited edition, she said, "This book should be widely acquired and a welcome addition to home and school libraries and religious and cultural organizations in western Massachusetts and beyond. In order to offer it inexpensively, we are depending on leadership gifts from the community to help make that possible."

She said that "lead donations" ranging from \$500 or greater to \$100 are essential. Donors at these levels will be recognized in the book in three gift levels – Platinum, Gold, and Silver. Gifts can be made in celebration, in memory, or in honor of a friend, loved one, or special occasion. An informational brochure is in the works for distribution this month.

In the meantime, tax deductible contributions may be directed to Sandisfield Arts Center, Jewish History Book Project, PO Box 31, Sandisfield, MA 01255. For more information or to be included in future announcements, please contact me at Ronbernard@aol.com.



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Pipeline Flush Water Highly Contaminated


By Bill Price

The more-than 500,000 gallons of water pumped from Lower Spectacle Pond to flush out and test the newly installed third natural gas pipeline across the northern corner of Sandisfield waits now to be disposed of. Some way.

Initially, the Kinder Morgan/Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company proposed that the water, after being pumped through new pipes, be dumped into the Clam River to disappear downstream, ultimately joining the Colebrook Reservoir. When the temperature of the water proved too high to pour into the Clam, the idea changed to dispensing it across fields in Otis State Forest where it would turn into sludge and eventually return to ground water.

A lead article by reporter Mary Douglas in *The Berkshire Edge*, November 18, reported that that idea didn't work either.

TGP's Environmental Project Manager discovered that heavy metals and chemicals from the inside the pipes had contaminated the water to very high levels of zinc, tetrachlorethylene, copper, lead, and other effluents and would need to be "cleansed" before disposal anywhere.

The water was pumped into large storage tanks for hauling to an off-site decontamination facility and not returned to Sandisfield. One of the pipeline protesters suggested that the cleaned water be hauled to Texas to be spread across the lawns around Kinder-Morgan headquarters, but the proposal didn't go far up the chain of command at TGP. 

Not Yet, But Getting There

During October, enormous boulders dug up and moved during pipeline construction were hauled elsewhere for disposal. Restoration, seeding, and final cleanups were scheduled for November and by press time Tennessee Gas crews may all have been reassigned to other pipelines, at other places.

Photo: Ron Bernard



Council on Aging



Remember the Christmas Fair at Firehouse #2 on Rt. 57 on December 2, 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Visit the COA cookie table and buy a ticket for the drawing for the Christmas Dinner Basket.

- Wreath decorating class on Monday, December 4 at the COA, at the Town Hall Annex basement. Call 258-4816 for sign-up.
- Foot-Care Clinic will be on Tuesday, December 5, Town Hall Annex basement. Call 258-4816 if not registered yet.
- COA business meeting, Wednesday, December 6, 10 a.m., before the COA luncheon. Town Hall Annex.
- COA members will attend the Berkshire Rehab Holiday Fair on Friday, December 8, at the Rehab Center across Rt. 57 from the New Boston Inn.
- No meeting Wednesday, December 13. We will be away for our annual Christmas Lunch.
- Pizza and cards on Wednesday, December 20, noontime at COA, Town Hall Annex basement. All welcome.
- Lunch and blood-pressure clinic will not be held on December 27. Too soon after Christmas.
- Note: QiGong will be canceled until spring.

Reminder: Tuesday volunteer transportation available for ambulatory seniors. Call 258-4816 for a lift almost anywhere. ♡

Berkshire's Leading *a capella* Choir Coming to Sandisfield, December 10

'Tis the season for Christmas music in Sandisfield.

The Sandisfield Arts Center will present the Cantilena Chamber Choir in a concert of carols from around the world and featuring Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*. Now in its 13th season, the Berkshire region's leading *a capella* group features two Sandisfield neighbors among its ranks, Hannah Fries and Paul Van Sickle. In addition, Ben Luxon will narrate several numbers.

Sunday, December 10, 3 p.m., Sandisfield Arts Center. \$20 adults, \$5 for children. ♡

Fire/EMS/Logs

Fire:



October, 2017

- Oct. 8 Carbon Monoxide detector activated
- Oct. 10 Motor vehicle accident
- Oct. 13 House fire
- Oct. 30 Wires in roadway



EMS: October, 2017



- Oct. 1 Bicycle accident, transport
- Oct. 6 Medical call in Tolland, Granville did call
- Oct. 8 Medical call, transport
- Oct. 10 Medical call, no transport
- Oct. 13 Medical call, Tolland, transport
- Oct. 13 Standby at fire scene
- Oct. 16 Medical call, transport
- Oct. 17 Medical call, transport
- Oct. 18 Medical call, no transport
- Oct. 19 Medical call in Tolland, New Marlboro did call
- Oct. 23 Medical call, Tolland, transport
- Oct. 23 Medical call, Tolland, Otis did call Cancelled en route.

OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



We may as well become friends with the **trees taken down** over the summer. Many have taken up residence along Rt. 57 downhill from New Hartford Road (as well as along that road itself). Eversource, wanting to protect its power lines, spent an enormous amount of money all summer and part of the fall clearing their right-of-way of trees that could have toppled over and caused power outages during wind, rain, or snowstorms. As of late November, the downed trees are still in place. Eversource may not be back to take them, ever. So say hi to your new friends, they're already your neighbors. ♡



Comings & Goings



Former Fire Chiefs Fred Slater, left, Ludwick "Tiny" Tuluszczyk, and, right, current Chief Ralph Morrison, 1998.

Photo: Matt Pachulski

FRED SLATER

1932 – 2017

Fred will be missed by his family and many friends. Born April 11, 1932, he died November 5, 2017.

He was married for 49 years to his wife, Mary, whom he met while working at the Torrington Company in Connecticut, one of the world's leading producers of friction bearings.

Fred also left a legacy of town service to Sandisfield. A founding member of the Sandisfield Fire Department and Ambulance Squad, he served as Fire Chief from 1979 to 1981. He was Highway Superintendent for 13 years and, following his "retirement," continued to work part-time for the Highway Department.

For many years he drove the Sandisfield school bus. He was one of the organizing members of the Sandisfield Hillbillies Snowmobile Club. He very much enjoyed snowmobiling during winters, playing cards any time, and during summer months camping with his travel-trailer.

Fred will be remembered for his great sense of humor, his love for his family and friends, and for his expressive hats and T-shirts.

He leaves four children, Wendy, Connie, Fredrick, and Gregory, step-daughter Susan, five grandchildren, ten great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren.

In later years, before the destruction of the New Boston Store in 2012 and after he finally really retired, Fred could be seen, every day, at Pete's Store, scratching lottery tickets, hoping for the "big one." His daughter, Wendy, wrote on her Facebook, "I think his 'big one' will be the smiles on everyone's face, be it doctors, visiting nurses, neighbors, family when they think of and remember Fred."

Memorial services for Frederick Howard Slater were held on November 11 in Winsted.





Letters to the Editor

Broadband: A Different View

Imagine you decide to build a house. You pay a builder the full cost, plus a nice profit, to build it and when it's finished the builder owns the house and charges you ever-increasing rent to live in it. After 15 years you can move out, but the builder still owns the house you paid for.

In the real world, this is a ridiculous scenario that no sane person would agree to, but when you go down the rabbit hole of government, everything gets turned inside out.

Sandisfield, together with New Marlborough and Tolland, wants to pay a private for-profit outfit, Frontier Communications, nearly \$7 million plus another \$15.5 million over 15 years to build a fiber network that Frontier will own entirely.

To put this "great deal" (as Mr. Trump would say) in perspective: In an August review of 50 internet companies by *Consumer Reports*, based on value, reliability, technical support, and customer service, Frontier rated last place for bundled service and next-to-last for TV service, scoring "worst" in all categories.

In addition to what we will pay via taxes, Frontier will apparently charge each user \$50 per month for internet speeds of up to 30 Mbps, and \$100 per month for a data/TV bundle: for comparison, the average US broadband speed was over 50 Mbps last year and is estimated at 70 Mbps now.

Jeff Bye, Sandisfield's Broadband Committee chair, is excited. He claims the town would save \$5 million over the deal's 15 years vs. building its own network. That figure, however, assumes that none of the state's \$7 million would go to Sandisfield if it built its own system. But why have Egremont and Monterey decided to reject this deal and go with a local company, Fiber Connect? Do they know something we don't? And how come Frontier isn't planning to use any of the "middle mile" network that we taxpayers paid \$85 million to build?

And, of course, what about when the 15 years are up? If we were disgusted with Frontier's abysmal service and astronomical rates and wanted to opt out, how much would we have to pay Frontier to escape from its clutches and finally own our own network? Of course, by then the folks who made this "great deal" will be long gone, and we'll be left holding the bag.

George Riley
Cronk Road

Community Spirited

We truly enjoy this wonderful paper. It is so positive and so community spirited!

Arlene and David Hiller
Wallingford, Conn. & Tolland, Mass

The Times Helped

Please accept the enclosed donation with my sincere regards for *The Sandisfield Times* and its great reporting. Recently, I discovered Sandisfield and your great publication online. I was interested in learning more about Sandisfield because my ancestors once lived there. One of your colleagues agreed to come to Winsted and share with me his knowledge about Sandisfield residents from long ago. That visit developed into a chapter within my recently completed Larkin family history. I certainly enjoy reading all the happenings about Sandisfield with each issue of *The Times*.

I've passed through Sandisfield many times not realizing what a rich town history and well-deserving community you have. After reading each issue I feel I have made another visit to your lovely community.

Fred Newman
Winsted

Close to Home

Although we are sustaining contributors, I feel compelled to make an extra contribution, in part because of Simon's fund appeal, so well written. I felt he was speaking to me directly ("whether you read us on Viets Road or Vietnam").

But mostly it's because I have a strong affinity for *The Sandisfield Times*, which comes from my small involvement with its precursor, *The Sandisfield Newsletter*.

Back in the last century, I created the design of the masthead for the *Newsletter*, a cumbersome idea because we needed a new one each month. Primitive as it was in style and production values, it did survive for 12 years, thanks to the tireless efforts of people like Roberta Myers, Liana Toscanini, Elaine Ziegler O'Brien, and others long forgotten.

It is so gratifying to have a town newspaper like the *Times*, which keeps evolving. As my granddaughter would say when I tell her a good story, "Please continue."

Ray Stollerman
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Now Hear This!

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

DECEMBER EVENTS

Jack and the Giant Beanstalk on Friday, December 1 and Saturday, December 2 at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, December 3 at 2:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center at 5 Hammertown Road. Written by Linda Daugherty and performed by the Sandisfield Players and friends. Adults, \$15; children, \$5. For additional information, visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org.

Sandisfield Holiday Fair on Saturday, December 2, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Firehouse #2 on Route 57. Craft Fair, Bake Sale, Penny Auction, Lunch, Miniature Ponies, Crafts for Kids, Santa and more! Support your town's non-profits and buy local!

Foot Care Clinic on Tuesday, December 5, at the Council on Aging, basement level of the Town Hall. Please call 258-4816 for an appointment.

Christmas Lights Bus Trip on Saturday, December 9, at 5:00 p.m., pick up at American Legion Pavilion on Rt. 8, New Boston. A school bus trip to Forest Park, Springfield, to see the Christmas lights display. Contact Robbin Campetti, 413-717-1833 to reserve a seat. Sponsored by the Sandisfield Recreation Committee. Free.

Yuletide Festival on Saturday, December 9, at 2:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center at 5 Hammertown Road. December is a month rich with holidays of all sorts. In that spirit, the Arts Center invites you to a festival with crafts, caroling, refreshments, and holiday tree trimming. For more information, visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org.

Church Service on Sunday, December 10, at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. All are welcome. Thank you for your support through 2017!

Cantilena Choir on Sunday, December 10, at 3:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center at 5 Hammertown Road. The Cantilena Chamber Choir is the Berkshire's leading a cappella group. Adults, \$20; children, \$5.

DECEMBER EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Made in Monterey Holiday Sale on Saturday, December 2 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Monterey Community Center, on the corner of Route 23 and New Marlborough Road. Visit the sale after you attend the Sandisfield Holiday Fair!

Winter Scavenger Hunt on Monday, December 25 through Sunday, December 31, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Bartholomew's Cobble in Sheffield. Members, free; non-member adults, \$10; children, free.

Owl Prowl on Wednesday, December 27 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Bartholomew's Cobble in Sheffield. Members, \$5; non-member, \$10; children, free.

Lantern Walk on Friday, December 29 from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Bartholomew's Cobble in Sheffield. Members, \$5; non-member, \$10; children, free.



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The Times is grateful to donors who have responded so far to our 2017 appeal.

If you haven't yet, please send your tax-deductible donation before the end of the year.

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AMERICAN LEGION Post 456: Maria Domato, Commander:
258-4578 (April-October) or rainbow2498@embarqmail.com

ANIMAL WARDEN/DOG OFFICER:
Kim Spring: 258-4450

ASSESSORS OFFICE: 258-4711 x 6
Office Hours: Tues, Wed, Thurs. 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Meets 2nd Tues: 5 p.m.

BOARD OF HEALTH: Victor Hyrekovich: 258-4711 x 3
Meets 2nd Tues: 7 p.m., Old Town Hall.

BROADBAND COMMITTEE: Jeff Bye: 258-4711
Meets as needed. Check for schedule.

BUILDING INSPECTOR: Eric Munson Jr.: 258-4590

CONSERVATION COMMISSION: Meets 3rd Tues: 7 p.m.

COMMUNITY CENTER COMMITTEE:
Billie Pachulski: 413 652-0252

CONSERVATION COMMISSION: Meets 3rd Tues: 7 p.m.

CONSTABLES:
Nazario Sanchez: 258-4705 John Burrows: 258-4943

COUNCIL ON AGING: Linda Riiska: 258-4711 x 8
Wed: 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Senior Center/Town Hall Annex
Business Meeting 1st and 3rd Wed: 10 a.m.

FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOL:
North Main Street, Otis, 413 269-4466; Thomas Nadolny, Principal

FRRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEE meets 1st Mon: 7 p.m.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Joe Gelinias: UGELINAS@bentley.edu
Meets as needed. Check for schedule.

FIRE DEPARTMENT: Emergency: 911
Ralph Morrison, Fire Chief: 258-4742

HISTORICAL SOCIETY: Ann Wald, President
258-4415 or annaw2@verizon.net.
Meets 2nd Saturday, Apr-Nov. Sandy Brook Turnpike/Rt. 183.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE: John Skrip: 258-4788

LIBRARY: Librarian: Theresa Spohnholz
258-4966 or sandisfieldlibrary@gmail.com
Mon/Tues: 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
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Theresa Spohnholz: 258-4966 or 258-4711 x 4

PLANNING BOARD: Gary Bottom, Sr.: 258-4711 x 5
Meets 2nd Tues: 6 p.m., Old Town Hall

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Michael Morrison, Chief: 258-4742

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SANDISFIELD TIMES: Bill Price, editor: 413 429-7179
Published monthly (Jan/Feb combined)
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SELECT BOARD: 258-4711 x 2
Meets Monday with working session at 2:30 p.m. or regular meeting,
7 p.m. Town Hall Annex. See posted agenda for time.

STATE OFFICIALS:
Smitty Pignatelli, State Representative.: 413 637-0631;
rep.smittypignatelli@hou.state.ma.us
Adam Hinds, State Senator; 413 344-4561; adam.hinds@masenate.gov

TAX COLLECTOR: Theresa Spohnholz
TAX COLLECTOR ASSISTANT: Christina O'Brien; 258-4911 x 9;
Mon/Tues, 11:30-4 p.m.; Wed/Thurs, 9-2 p.m.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE: Paul Jacoby
258-4682 or pauljacob53@gmail.com
Town computers and technology.

TOWN ACCOUNTANT: Dawn Odell Lemon
258-4711 x 5 or accountant@sandisfieldma.gov; by appt.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR: Fred Ventresco
258-4711 x 1; Mon-Thurs or by appt. townadmin@sandisfieldma.gov

TOWN CLERK: Dolores Harasyko
PO Box 163 or townclerk@sandisfieldma.gov
Town Hall Annex: 258-4711 x 2
Mon-Thurs: 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Mon: 6 p.m.-7 p.m. by appt.

TOWN HALL: At Town Hall Annex, 66 Sandisfield Road,
PO Box 90. Open Mon-Thurs: 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Mon: 6-7 p.m. by appt.

TOWN TREASURER: Theresa Spohnholz
TREASURER ASSISTANT: Christina O'Brien, 258-4711 x4 or
treasurer@sandisfieldma.gov
Hours: Mon/Tues, 11:30 - 4p.m.; Wed/Thurs, 9 - 2.

TRANSFER STATION: Tony Melloni: Wed: 2 p.m.-5 p.m.
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THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



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The Sandisfield Times
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January/February issue,
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