

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



Plebis

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume VIII Number 10

January and February 2018



A generous gift from Quincy. Photo: Ron Bernard

After Disaster, Recovery Begins

OFFERS OF HELP, DONATIONS OF TRUCKS

By Times Reporters

Early Sunday morning, December 10, soon after the snowplows were parked and locked in the town garage following the season's first significant snowfall, wooden roof beams near the building's furnace apparently heated to an ignition point and within minutes fire was racing along the eaves of the building and breaking through the roof. Passers-by called 911 about 9:40 a.m.

Despite the efforts of Sandisfield firefighters and others who soon arrived from surrounding towns, the garage and all three of the town's heavy trucks were destroyed within an hour.

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EMTs in Emergency

CONTINUED LOCAL SERVICE AT RISK

By Brigitte Ruthman

While maintaining a pledge to respond to medical emergencies around the clock, the town's volunteer ambulance service is sounding the alarm.

The growing struggle to meet the needs of an aging population, which includes a local nursing home and a busy Route 8 traffic corridor, is now in crisis.

Like many small towns in Berkshire County, Sandisfield sometimes relies on help from neighboring towns, but depends on a membership of about ten Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) drawn from here and Tolland to respond quickly to about 60 medical calls a year. All are trained to a basic life support level to stabilize patients for further care either at a hospital or a paramedic intercept.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been stepping up requirements for training and recertification at a time when many volunteers are retiring, burning out, or needing more time for work and family obligations. They are not being replaced by younger people.

In Tolland, Mary Bredenfoerder let her EMT certification lapse for a couple of years. When she recertified recently to make sure she understood updated standards of care, the textbook was three times thicker than it was in 1989.

"The populations are aging, younger people aren't moving in, and the ones here are busy making ends meet," Tolland Fire Chief Eric Munson said.

A nominal financial incentive has not been enough to attract and keep a sufficient pool of EMTs, each of whom is paid \$50 for a 24-hour shift taken on an elective basis on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, whether or not they are called out. All other calls are answered by any two EMTs who happen to be available. If none are, a neighboring town's ambulance is then summoned, a situation that poses a growing risk of longer response times in life threatening emergencies.

Cont'd p.5

Convention Delegates to be Elected

DEMOCRATIC STATE CAUCUS, FEBRUARY 17

Registered Democrats in Sandisfield will hold a caucus on February 17, 2018, at the Sandisfield Community Center to elect delegates and alternatives to the 2018 Massachusetts Democratic State Convention.

This year's state convention will be held June 1-2 at the DCU Center in Worcester, where thousands of Democrats from across the state will come together to endorse Democratic candidates for statewide office, including Constitutional Offices and gubernatorial candidates.

The caucus is open to all registered and pre-registered Democrats in Sandisfield. Pre-registered Democrats who will be 18 by September 18, 2018 will be allowed to participate and run as a delegate or alternate. Sandisfield can elect two delegates and two alternates to the Convention.

Youth, minorities, people with disabilities and LGBTQ individuals who are not elected as a delegate or alternate may apply to be an add-on delegate at the caucus or at www.massdems.org.

Those interested in getting involved with the Sandisfield Democratic Town Committee or to learn more about the caucus can contact Connie Canty at 413-258-4912 or email loveablecornflower@yahoo.com.



TOWN OF SANDISFIELD

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING SOLAR PANEL BY-LAW

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A, Section 5 that the Planning Board of the Town of Sandisfield will hold a public hearing to discuss proposed amendments to the Town of Sandisfield By-laws regarding addition of Solar Photovoltaic Systems.

The public hearing will be held Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at 6:00 PM at Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road, Sandisfield MA 01255. All persons wishing an opportunity to be heard on said proposed amendments will be provided an opportunity to speak. The complete text relative to the proposed amendments are available for inspection during regular business hours at the following place: Town Hall Annex, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA 01255 Monday through Thursday 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

Gary Bottum, Sr.
Chairman, Sandisfield Planning Board



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Transfer Station Permits Available

Transfer Station stickers for 2018 are available at Town Hall Annex, Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. The cost has increased to \$65 per household. If requested, each household can have two stickers. A license plate number will be required for each sticker.

The permits are available by mail by sending a check for \$65.00 made out to the Town of Sandisfield. Send the request and your check to Town of Sandisfield, PO Box 163, Sandisfield MA 01255. Enclose a self-addressed stamped return envelope. You will need to provide the license plate numbers for the vehicle/vehicles the stickers will be placed on.

Each household must have its own permit. If you have a caretaker or someone who hauls your refuse, they must have a sticker number for your household. A sticker will also be required in order to participate in various collections throughout the year, such as electronics, tires, and bulky waste.

If residents lose the original permit, the charge for a replacement stickers will be \$5.00. Any questions, please call 413-258-4711.



CLAM RIVER RESERVE SANDISFIELD, MA

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Broadband as of Mid-January

Update from Jeff Bye, Broadband Committee Chairman


A year ago, it seemed that Sandisfield was on the fast track to acquiring broadband internet coverage. Frontier Communications had responded to a call for proposals with a plan to connect what was then a four-town consortium: Sandisfield, Monterey, New Marlborough, and Tolland.

In July, however, Monterey withdrew from the consortium to pursue its own route to coverage. At the end of November New Marlborough, after several months of negotiations, could not reach an agreement with Frontier and withdrew as well.

At that point, Frontier was faced with the decision of whether or not to continue with Sandisfield and Tolland per their original proposal, with a reduced customer base. Since then, the Sandisfield and Tolland MLP Boards have been patiently waiting to hear from Frontier regarding their decision to continue negotiating the terms of an agreement for the procurement of internet service for the two towns.

The Sandisfield Select Board met with Representative Smitty Pignatelli, who is in contact with the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, to see what progress was being made on the state level with Frontier Communications.

Information received from Frontier the week of January 15 indicated that Frontier was still very interested in providing Internet service to just Sandisfield and Tolland. This is good news for both towns.

Frontier plans to present their final terms for the two-town agreement by the end of January. At that point the Sandisfield and Tolland MLP Boards will decide whether or not to agree to the final terms and continue on with the procurement process. If agreement is reached, the next step in the procurement process will be the drafting of the contract. 

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Thanks, and a Question

Your generous response to our annual appeal ensures us of another year of providing you with news of your community. But how can we do better?

The number of contributors increased nearly 20 percent over 2016, an indication that readers appreciate The Times, not only for its content – thanks to our reporters and photographers – but also for its great look, thanks to our talented designer, former resident Tina Sotis.

But we strive to get better. You can help by sending your suggestions. The Times depends on all the individuals who contribute stories, photos, memories, ideas, letters. Send us more in 2018. But also send us ideas on how we can do better.

Reporting in the New Year?

Last year The Times reported on an unusual number of major stories that impacted the community. These included significant changes in Town governance and administration, issues over the pipeline installation and accompanying protests, the disastrous fire at the highway department, and the proposal for broadband access.

While a few of those events have concluded, others are being resolved which will require additional reporting through the year. One story we won't need to continue reporting on is the Tennessee Gas Pipeline construction. That issue is in the ground, so to speak, and we will no longer be detailing every

shovelful of dirt up on the Beech Plain.

Broadband: “Not Dead Yet”

A story that appears to be moving toward resolution, but has had many shifts over the last few years, is the proposal for broadband access. See Broadband Update by Jeff Bye, Chairman of the Broadband Committee (story above, this page).

Town committees started working on the broadband issue in early 2008. Efforts were stepped up in 2011 when the Town joined the Wired West co-operative with the enthusiastic support of the community. Most other towns in Berkshire County joined as well. Some towns opted out of the co-op to develop and control their own broadband infrastructure..

Last year, taking the local lead, the Sandisfield Select Board quietly opened negotiations for a four-town deal with Frontier Communications. When the proposal was announced, it was represented as highly likely to succeed, and soon. Confident of success, the Board withdrew from the Wired West co-op, even as some in the community cautioned against the move.

The proposal seemed to need the participation of all four towns to maintain Frontier's interest. Subsequently, however, two of the four towns dropped out of the deal, Monterey and, at the end of November, New Marlborough.

As of mid-January, according to Jeff's Update, Frontier signaled that it was willing to continue with

only Sandisfield and Tolland, despite the reduced customer bases.

The end of January is the estimated date for Frontier to deliver its final offer of broadband to the Town. Even after that, a lot of negotiations remain to be completed, and the process could become increasingly delayed.

Meanwhile, several neighboring towns have secured funding from the State to build their own networks or use individual vendors. Otis, in fact, has begun stringing wire.

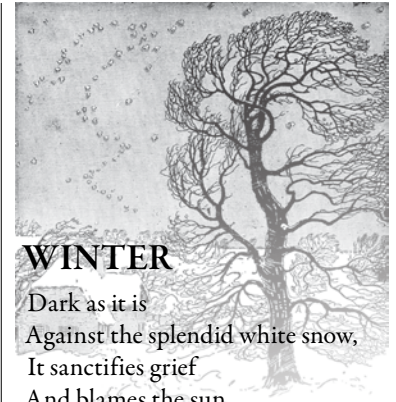
Sandisfield's agreement with Frontier is described by Select Board Chair John Skrip as “not dead yet,” and on “life support.” See John's column on page 6, which was written prior to Frontier's agreement to proceed.

With final offers and contracts still to be agreed to, will Frontier now ask for more state money and stricter commitments from Sandisfield?

After a decade of effort and lots of work, will our town be the last in the Berkshires to plug into high-speed internet? Will there be money left in the MBI coffers after most other towns have drawn from the large bucket?

Does Sandisfield have a Plan B in case negotiations with Frontier stall or, possibly, the Town decides it has to “walk away?”

- Bill Price
West New Boston



WINTER

Dark as it is
Against the splendid white snow,
It sanctifies grief
And blames the sun.

But, in fact, Winter
Like all of us
Persists
And brings us home
To the folly of the Spring.

I am done in by Winter,
The cold, cosmetic winters
Where I've always lived.
It will devour me,
This splendid snow.

*Val Coleman
West New Boston*

After Disaster, Recovery Begins
Cont'd. from p.1.

The town's fourth truck, a Ford F-350 dump truck, parked outside, was scorched, its wipers and mirrors melted, but survived. Firefighters were relieved that a 1,000-gallon gas tank a few feet from the building, doused with water during the fire, did not explode.

The same day as the fire, The Times published an online EXTRA alerting its web readers of the disaster, written from on-site reports by Simon Winchester and Brigitte Ruthman. Within days, The Times published a paper EXTRA with news updates.

Offers of Help

As news of the catastrophe spread across New England, about thirty towns throughout the state called with generous offers of help. Highway Superintendent Bobby O'Brien said that some offered to loan Sandisfield, indefinitely, good vehicles for \$1, and a few were offered free of charge.

The town of Quincy donated three used plow trucks and delivered them December 22, three days before Christmas. The Berkshire Eagle reported that Quincy's mayor "saw a brief news item" about Sandisfield's loss. Quincy had three trucks from the late 1990s and early 2000s they were preparing to auction off and they thought why not "skip the auction and give them to these folks."

The trucks admittedly need "a little love," but, said Superintendent O'Brien, "They're in good condition; they run good.

"As a matter of fact," he added, "they arrived in the nick of time, just before the big freeze, and the trucks functioned very well under very harsh conditions."

Loaned equipment included sand/plow trucks from Lee and Sudbury and an F550 truck from Needham.

The Eagle quoted Town Manager Fred Ventresco: "These gifts and offers of assistance have been tremendous." He added that the town didn't know the monetary value of the gifts but that the town would eventually have to affix a number. "We're just accepting what we need now."

The state picked up the initial snow plowing on the town's paved roads, using our own sand and salt. Local private companies were contracted to plow dirt roads. In January, the town's highway department, using the donated and loaned equipment, resumed clearing the roads following the season's snowfalls.

A New Garage?

The question of rebuilding the garage and where is currently under discussion. If the town rebuilds on the same footprint as the old garage and allows the insurance carrier to handle the process directly, the answer to those questions would be simplified.

However, a larger garage may be necessary given that the old structure was barely large enough to house the town trucks and, built of concrete block, was very expensive to heat. Changing the footprint of the building would require the town to put the work out for preferential bidding according to state regulations and could even involve the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency, given that a year-round stream runs near the site.

All of the rebuilding decisions, however, are to be made after the town government has met for discussions with all the agencies involved, the Fire Department, the police, the Department of Public Works, the architects, town residents, and MIIA, the insurance company. (See Select Board Chair John Skrip's column on page 6.)

"All in all," says Skrip, "it was a catastrophe. Thank God nobody got hurt. I don't see the fire affecting the town finances at this time, and we are going to do due diligence, step by step, to repair or rebuild as we see needed."

A Special "Thank You"

Highway Superintendent Bobby O'Brien extends "a special thank you to Bogart Muller and C.W. Nelson for assisting in plowing our dirt roads until we got back on our feet. And another special thank you to all the surrounding towns and communities that offered their assistance." 🇺🇸



Food Safety Class

**NO CHARGE.
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The Board of Health will host a free Food Safety class on Tuesday, February 13 at 9 a.m., in the Old Town Hall. The class is designed for anyone who serves food to the public, whether in restaurants, nonprofit groups, public committees, B&Bs, Airbnbs, farmers markets, flea markets, or any other venue.

There is no cost to attend. Included at no charge is a ServSafe Food Handlers Certification test. For a small fee, attendants can take the ServSafe Food Managers Certification test (this test re-certifies individuals familiar with food management as not all topics for this test will be covered in the class).

To ensure enough books/materials, all attendees should pre-register with Roger Kohler by calling or texting (413) 258-0080 or emailing rkohler.sandisfield@gmail.com before February 1. 🇺🇸

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EMTs in Emergency*Cont'd. from p.1.*

"We get to the point that if we don't do this, who will be there," said Sandisfield EMT Zoe Nelson, who has been answering calls for 30 years and knows her neighbors.

Fire and EMS Chief Ralph Morrison said he isn't seeing the young recruits he used to in his 37 years leading the department, which also includes firefighters.

The young people who once had time to give back to the community aren't here. Some can't afford to live in Sandisfield, or don't have the time to commit to a month's-long class held in Springfield or Great Barrington to complete the hundreds of hours of classroom and practical training. The commitment to answer calls can also be time consuming and stressful. A single call to a hospital in Connecticut or Massachusetts a half an hour away requires hours for care, paperwork, travel, and cleanup.

Even then, the work isn't for everyone. Morrison remembered a young woman who found her way to a new EMT card. "It was a bad crash scene and I finally found her throwing up behind the fire truck," he recalled. "She did well in the classroom, but said she was all done."

There isn't enough incentive, he said. "We are all old timers."

The alternative to a primarily volunteer based service is to pay for a commercial service to pick up the slack – a situation that could present a wide variety of options at taxpayer's expense. At last check, it could cost about \$350,000, Morrison said.

"Taxpayers aren't aware how much money we are saving them," he added.

Half of every \$100 generated by charges for ambulance calls goes to ambulance replacement. The other half goes into the general fund. The last two ambulances purchased by Sandisfield didn't cost the town a penny, Morrison said.

At the Office of Emergency Medical Services in Boston, Director Mark Miller and Training Supervisor Daniel Saxe said the town's struggle isn't unique. But the solutions must be.

"The town needs a champion, someone to talk to high school seniors, make the community more aware of what's happening, develop mentoring, and put a greater effort into local resources," Miller said.


Although the Commonwealth does not set a maximum acceptable response time, ambulance services within urban areas typically respond to calls within eight minutes, Miller said. In the hill towns, rallying a mutual aid service takes much longer.

No town is an island. Increasingly and inevitably, remedies have created new EMS systems that rely on regional, rather than community response.

"We have seen many models that work," Miller said, "including a combination of volunteer and paid services. We are concerned about it."

Shrinking rosters remain a problem, as much societal as local. To bridge the gap, legislation proposed by state Sen. Adam Hinds, D-Pittsfield, would ease up on staffing demands in rural districts by allowing a first-response driver who isn't EMT certified to transport a patient as long as one EMT is on board with a patient. But it would make matters more challenging for the single EMT and won't solve the underlying problem.

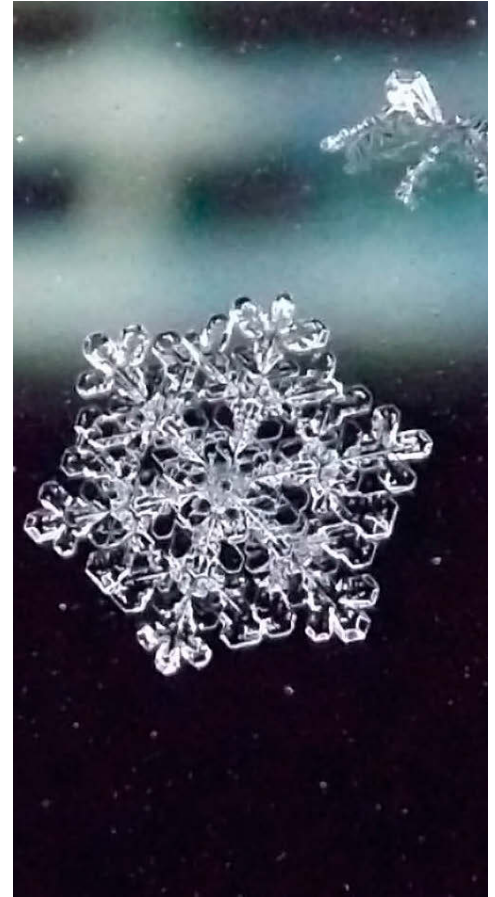
Morrison would like to see changes in local hiring practices to make more people available during the day, specifically a job description change to make EMT certification and response mandatory for Town Hall and highway department employees.

"We need help and we need it now," he said. 

Brigitte Ruthman has been a certified EMT in Connecticut for 33 years.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED NOW

To volunteer for Emergency Medical Service or for the Fire Department, call Chief Ralph Morrison at 413-258-4742.



*Snowflake on window, up close
Photo: Cindy Ragusa*

The Summer Aerosmith Came To Town

By Gerald Bethge

Not much of great importance ever happens up on West Street it seems – except for one time.

Guitar riffs, drum beats, bass thuds – the rock-and-roll band sounds were unmistakable. It was the late '70s and my cousins and I heard it clear as day. We jumped on our bikes and followed it to its source.

Peddling furiously up Stump Road and just past the Annecharico homestead, we sheepishly approached a group of long-haired musicians standing on the front porch of a small house counting down their next song.


"One, two, three, four," the lead singer began. He kicked into a bluesy tune I'd not previously heard, but soon recognized as "The Rattlesnake Shake" if only through its refrain.

"Hey, kids, don't go away, stick around," said the guy with the microphone. "We ain't gonna bite." We left, but returned the next day when we heard the band playing again.

And then they were gone.



"Hell, yeah, that was Aerosmith," said lead guitarist Joe Perry a few years ago when I interviewed him about his gun collection and his love for the outdoors. "We rented that place for two summers as I recall – always tried to get out to western Mass and away from Boston when we were starting out. It was a great way to clear our heads."

Not much ever happens up on West Street, until it does. 

From Your Select Board

By John Skrip, Chairman

I apologize for not submitting an article in December, but I believe there was more than enough for our residents to read as our Sandisfield Times reporters are diligent in pursuing a story. Great up-to-date profile of events. We thank them for a job well done.

The fire which destroyed our Public Works garage was thought to be started in the furnace area of the building. Our insurance carrier met with town officials and we have been assured that the insurance policies are in proper order. Most of the trucks were insured for replacement value, which offers the town maximum dollar value on the loss.

We have also met with the insurance company's adjusters and are waiting for their financial offers to settle this claim. We would like to take our time as we determine what the town should do in terms of replacements of a new building and vehicles. We are open to ideas/suggestions. Feel free to call me or attend a Select Board meeting. Currently, it appears that we are getting by with our limited equipment. We are still being assisted by the State and a few private contractors.

During our crisis, we received much needed help from the State. We also received three free trucks from Quincy, Mass., and loaners from the towns of Lee and Sudbury.

We are faced with a problem and an opportunity. We will not be purchasing any new or used vehicles until we can sit with DPW and local town officials and take the time to review ideas/suggestions from our town residents to make sure we anticipate our needs for now and for the future.

The Rugg Bridge repair is on time and it appears the structure is not as bad as we expected: this is the good news.

As you may be aware the budget process has begun for the town. We sent requests to every department advising them that the process is more cumbersome than in previous years because we want more detail from them (mission statements, expenses, salary breakdowns, anticipated future needs, etc.) This will help with transparency and accountability. Department heads have been willing to look carefully at budget items and have been working diligently with the finance committee. Not all departments have complied with these requests and we hope that this will be remedied quickly. The Select Board will

begin the review of the submitted budgets after February 2.

The broadband issue is not dead yet. However, it is on life support. The Select Board met with Representative Smitty Pignatelli, who is in contact with MBI, to see what progress is being made on the State level with Frontier Communications. We thank Smitty for his efforts on our behalf.

I have attended many shared services meetings with other town representatives and am sure those of you who read the Berkshire Eagle and other newspapers know what a problem staffing volunteer ambulance services represents.

I received an e-mail from Senator Hines informing us that he has presented a bill to request that only one EMT and one driver man rural ambulances. This could be a temporary fix for the problem dealing with the current mandate that requires two EMT's on each ambulance. This problem is high on the shared services agenda. I will keep you informed of actions on this front.

Tax bills are out and as you saw there was an interest statement included. This was an error. We tried to inform all taxpayers not to pay the interest unless you pay your bill after January 22, 2018.

Selectman Mark Newman is working with Highway Superintendent Bobby O'Brien to bring about improvements in the DPW. We want more transparency and accountability. Mark is also working on Transfer Station issues.

I enjoy the calls I get from taxpayers and will follow up on each call and e-mail as promptly as possible. Please feel free to contact me or any board member with your suggestions and support. Contact information: Phone: (413) 258-4788 or (203) 233-0518 or johnskripjr@gmail.com.

Attention Homeowners

The Town of Sandisfield will be submitting a Community Development Block Grant with the towns of Monterey and Egremont to provide home repair services to local residents.

The funding, from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, would provide up to \$40,000 to make critical repairs to your home. Examples of eligible projects are roof replacements, new siding, correcting code violations, replacing doors and windows, septic systems, etc.

If you are interested in learning more or participating in the program, visit the town website at www.sandisfieldma.gov for an application or call 413-258-7055. Funding will be distributed on a first come/first served basis. Pre-applications should be submitted by February 15.



Have Kids? Come Join Us.

By Nina Carr

South Berkshire Kids and the Sandisfield Library have generously underwritten another weekly playgroup to serve Sandisfield, Otis, and Tolland.

The playgroup takes place in the Sandisfield Library Community room (below the Library) on Mondays at 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. No pre-registration is necessary, but a caregiver must accompany the children. The playgroup will be appropriate for children up to 5 and features a story time in the library. We will also introduce children to skills they will need when they begin school. Our Otis playgroup on Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. will continue at the Otis Town Hall.

Caregivers, come join us and avoid those "winter blahs."

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Jack Came for the Holidays

The Sandisfield Players presented "Jack and the Giant Beanstalk" at the Arts Center's holiday presentation in early December. The cast included ten adults and seven children. Directed by Ben Luxon, the play was pure comedy, quirky, and hilarious.

Photo: Peter Baiamonte

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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.

"What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness."

— John Steinbeck

If the end of 2017 and the beginning of 2018 is any indication – and if Steinbeck is right – Summer should be very sweet indeed this year. It's cold and white outside, and I am staying very much inside the library where there is warmth, books, and hot beverages.

2018 rode in on one bone-chilling steed, and I am still penciling out my New Year's Resolution. I have been searching for the perfect list of "100 books to read before you die." Not intending to die soon, that means my resolution could carry forward.

I compared the lists of 100-best from the New York Times, NPR, the Guardian, and Good Reads and created my own 100, based on the number of times a book appeared on one of the other lists. The more the book was listed the more the experts agreed, and the more securely that book's place became on my new-and-improved books-to-read-before-you-die list.

It's a long list. Some of the books I read (under threat of not passing various college and high school English) and some reside on my home library shelves, with barely cracked open spines and dust gathering along the edges. The list has always been in the back of my mind, I am just moving it forward this year. The list is formidable (*Crime and Punishment* and *The Trial*), intriguing (*Go Tell it on the Mountain* and *Midnight's Children*), a few are high school throwbacks, already read but I wonder what my understanding of the book will be many years later (*The Catcher in the Rye* and *1984*), and beloved books, ones I can read over and over, no matter my age (*Jane Eyre*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*). So I begin my journey through the list with *The Great Gatsby*. Yes, I read it in high school because I had to, now I will read it because I want to.

If you have a list of books you intend to read this year, or simply want to get warm on a cold day, come join me in the library for coffee, cocoa, or tea and I will regale you with tales of a long list to be read and how my journey is going.

EVENTS AT THE LIBRARY

Every Monday morning, from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m., the Community Center (below the library) will again be sponsoring the weekly playgroup for families with children up to 5. The dynamic Nina Carr will shepherd this group. And the library will follow with story-time in the library. The program is free and open to the community. No registration is required. Program began January 8.

CRAFTING WITH LYNN

Lynn will be hosting crafting for kids once a month on Saturday. These crafts are designed for children ages 2-12 and are always a delight. Times are 10:00 am to noon with story time in the library at 9:30. Please call the library for dates. 413 258-4966.

NEW ARRIVALS AT THE LIBRARY

Two Kinds of Truth, Michael Connelly. Harry Bosch is back as a volunteer working cold cases for the San Fernando police. In this new thriller, he is called out to a local drug store where a young pharmacist has been murdered.

Little Fires Everywhere, Celeste Ng. This portrait of suburbia and family, creativity, and consumerism burns bright. Celeste Ng's second novel is about the events leading to the burning of the home of a perfect-seeming family in Shaker Heights, Ohio. A story of morals and motherhood set against the mystery of a burning house.

Artemis, Andy Weir. You can count on an Andy Weir novel to be out of this world. In "The Martian" he took us to the Red Planet in his mind-blowing debut novel. And yes, the movie was excellent, too, and I generally do not like movies based on books. In his second novel, Weir sends us to the moon.

Fall from Grace, Danielle Steel. From this bestselling author comes the story of a woman who loses everything – her husband, her home, her sense of self and safety, and her freedom.

The Immortalists, Chloe Benjamin. A family love story. In 1969, the four Gold siblings, two boys and two girls, visit a psychic on Manhattan's Lower East Side who predicts the date each of them will die. If you knew the date of your death, how would you live your life?

So stay warm and stay inspired with journeys through books, be they short and sweet or long and languid. And remember – after every winter, spring does arrive. 🍷

Sandisfield Historical Society



Thanks, and See You in the Spring

By Ann Wald, President

Our final event of the year, the Christmas Fair, was a smashing success. Thanks to all the hard work of Gary Bottum and his fellow firemen for setting up and breaking down the tables. Gary stood by all day just in case he was needed.

We had a wonderful array of vendors with a wide choice of items. Thanks to everyone for coming out to shop.

A special thanks to the Recreation Committee for the great decorations and Santa. The children were very happy to see him; of course a few were not. Each child received a very nice gift. The ladies of the church served refreshments.

Of course, nothing would have taken place without the help of our dedicated members. A huge thank you.

We will be taking the winter off but are busy planning our own antiques appraisal day in the spring.

Please do not forget our membership drive. If you have not had a chance to join our organization please do so now. You can write it off as a deduction. Thank you all for your support this past year. Please continue and we will see you in the spring. You can contact me at annaw2@verizon.net. 🍷

Hunter

It was two weeks before I saw him more than once – I got him on a trail camera set up on my porch along with dinner.

A wild animal really, but from where?

He had found a place to curl up in November on my hunting clothes left outside on a wicker chair – the clothes kept from human scents – and dashed off faster than a shadow when I opened the front door.

A ferret maybe, a fisher cat, or just a wise old barn cat that can navigate deep snow, a cat someone dropped off at the end of the road?

He is tough, stealthy, and wise. His eyes ...

He comes now when I call from a place where the coyotes must know him in the pasture, a bead of black that pours from the seams of a bitter winter night down the driveway, then under the porch before slipping carefully toward the bowl of food I leave for him.

*Brigitte Ruthman
Joshua's Farm, Dodd Road*



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

Newton Hartshorn of Sandisfield

CIVIL WAR DIARIST, NOTED PORTRAIT ARTIST LIVED AMONG US

By Ron Bernard

Recently a friend and fellow local history enthusiast, Fred Newman of Winsted, was the successful on-line bidder for a piece of Sandisfield ephemera. It is correspondence between one Newton Hartshorn, then of South Sandisfield, and Andrew Coe of Meriden, Conn.

Fred surmised that the letter, posted April 22, 1895 at the South Sandisfield post office, could be historically significant, at least in Sandisfield. He was right.

In the letter, Hartshorn (pronounced as Harts-horn), a portrait artist, informs Coe that a portrait Coe had commissioned to him in 1894 was nearly finished and would he please furnish dimensions for the space where the canvas would be hung.

"Are you aware of Hartshorn?" Fred asked me. "Well, no," I said. But then I recalled there was a mention of him in my book, *Sandisfield Then and Now*, in an August 10, 1899, news report about the burning of his house.

FIRE IN SANDISFIELD. Newton Hartshorn's Dwelling and All Its Contents Destroyed – 'Pansy's' Serious Loss

The dwelling house of Newton T. Hartshorn, with all its contents, was completely destroyed by fire Monday morning about 9 o'clock. The loss is quite heavy, insurance; \$800. Rev. Mr. Alden and wife 'Pansy,' the well known story writer, who have been spending the summer there, lost all their wearing apparel and some very valuable manuscripts, which latter cannot be replaced and which were valued at \$2000. The cause of the fire is said to have been a match which Mr. Hartshorn's oldest son had lighted to aid him in looking for a knife.

"Pansy" was the pen name for Isabella Macdonald Alden (1841-1930), who, according to a 1904 news account, "is known and beloved by some millions of children as the author of the 'Pansy books.'" In her life she authored about 100 books, mostly fictional works influenced by religious principles and biblical precepts. Her books were enormously popular in the late 19th century when annual sales were estimated at some 100,000 copies, including translations.

This was my first indication that Hartshorn associated with prominent figures. I thought, "There is a story here."

Research led me to Derick Hartshorn III of Conover, North Carolina, Newton's great-grandson and proud Hartshorn family historian. Mr. Hartshorn generously shared his prodigious family biographical collection, the product of decades of genealogical research and writing.



The Remarkable Life of Newton Hartshorn

Newton T. Hartshorn, born in 1842 in Amherst, New Hampshire, served in the Union Army 1861-65, virtually the entire Civil War, participating in 19 battles. He kept a diary which described the mundane, uncomfortable, and sometimes terrifying lives of soldiers. The diary also featured sketches about the things he saw. This first-hand account of the war is now part of Dartmouth College's Rauner Library Special Collections.



Hartshorn advanced in the enlisted ranks and was assigned in 1864 to a detail at the White House. Known for exaggeration, he claimed that he helped guard President Lincoln, even as the company officer-in-charge. According to an anecdotal account (perhaps of his own making), Lincoln supposedly once remarked about him, "The captain drilling those troops certainly gets the most from them."

Passing up a military career after the war, Newton settled back home in Amherst. He soon married Miss Hannah Barker. The couple would have five children between 1865 and 1874. With his communication ability, a growing reputation, and knack for self-promotion, Newton sought out prominent people as potential customers for his portraits.

One was President U.S. Grant (1869-77) who had been Newton's commander in Virginia. In 1872 Grant sat in the East Room at the White House for his charcoal sketch portrait, Hartshorn's greatest accomplishment. It earned a glowing testimonial from Grant which helped establish Newton's career as a portrait artist in both the United States and Europe. Today many of his portraits hang in libraries and museums in New England, including at Dartmouth College.



*President Grant, drawn by
Newton Hartshorn, 1872.
Credit: Library of Congress*

Perhaps as a consequence of his frequent absences from home, Newton and Hannah divorced. But he won custody of their three surviving children.

Cont'd p.11

Anna Belle Evans Hartshorn



Anna Belle Evans (1852-1920), who became Newton's second wife, was born into a well-to-do family in Ohio. She had the benefit of a private education which included travel throughout the north-

east, including Montreal. As a young woman she spent two years touring western Europe with family friends where she was exposed to European culture and society.

Although she had many suitors, often much older men, she heeded advice not to marry until, at age 25, in 1877, she married world-wise, debonair, and socially connected Newton Hartshorn, 35. She called him, "Mr. H." Young Anna Belle accepted the challenge of parenting as step-mother to his children, ages 10, 9, and 3.

In 1915, she completed her memoirs, a remarkable work of 65 typed pages. Intended for Caroline, her first-born and unabashed favorite child, the memoir shows us a great deal about Anna Belle and her family's joys and sorrows, adventures and misfortunes.

She had 11 children with Newton (four died in infancy), plus helping to raise the three children from his first marriage.

For twenty years Newton's commissions mainly in the eastern U.S. and England resulted in a grueling, whirlwind life style – with many separations. Witness for example their children's amazing birthplace history:

William	1878	Liverpool, England
Caroline	1879	Dublin, Ireland
Newton Jr	1881	Meriden, Connecticut
Derick	1883	Worcester, Massachusetts
Grace	1885	Montreal, Quebec
Alice	1886	Burlington, Vermont
Owen	1887	Winooski, Vermont
Edalina	1888	Burlington, Vermont
James	1890	Painesville, Ohio
Anna Belle	1894	Sandisfield, Massachusetts
Rachel	1898	Lakewood, New Jersey

Through the years Anna loyally followed and supported her husband and his work while residing in rentals and hotels, often poorly appointed. According to her memoir, sometimes they had to buy or ship in furniture. The planning and travel was exhausting. Generally, at least some of the children accompanied them while others remained in boarding schools or were placed with families. Despite all kinds of problems, financial

difficulties, and frequent illnesses, in her writing Anna Belle did not complain, was not resentful, and she rarely criticized.

The period 1891-92 was especially hectic. "Inside of one year we moved nine times [culminating at Buffalo]. As practically all the work of moving fell on me, I was simply used up," she recalled.

Coming to Sandisfield

While in Buffalo, the couple agreed that it was time for a permanent home. "Newton looked about the country at different farms. We finally settled on the Sandisfield place, where we moved in September."

This was possible because Newton had finally received a back pension of \$1,100 for his military service. At this time many old Sandisfield farmsteads were for sale, advertised around the country, and inexpensive.

Anna wrote, "We had an old farm house, of ten rooms in fairly good repair, large barn, comparatively new, a hundred and twenty acres of land, some apples, lots of berries. We paid six hundred dollars cash. We had good neighbors, particularly the Daniel Websters, Persons, Smiths, Gaylords, McNamaras and others. We bought a horse, wagon, cows, etc. Carrie was now thirteen, Derick nine, Grace seven, Owen five, and Sibley [James] two and a half. That first winter I broke down utterly, and the doctor said I was threatened with paralysis, and advised a rest."

The Hartshorn's property is known in the deed records as the former "William Smith farm" after a previous owner. Their house, probably built by 1800 in Federal-style, stood on the west side of South Sandisfield Road opposite Gremler Road.

It was here on April 17, 1894 that a tenth child was born to the 42-year-old mother. "She had my name, Anna Belle, to which we added Delight, and she certainly was a delight to us all. She was quite dark,



with the finest, smoothest skin, dark eyes, yellow hair that grew dark. She was always good, always sweet, but very shy, and always well. She rode horseback almost as soon as she walked, was very active. We always called her Nan."

In 1907, Nan died at Winsted hospital of kidney failure, a result of typhoid fever. Anna wrote: "Years have passed, but there has not been a day when my heart has not ached with its sense of loss, and as I feel the time is not long for me now, and while I really want to live as long as I can be of any use to my children, yet the thought of before very long having my darling Nan again, fills me with a sort of exultation."

Anna also described a special experience that took place on April 27, 1897. "Newton and I went to New York when he put his portrait of General Grant on exhibition at the Fifth Avenue Hotel where the Grants were guests of the city at the time of the dedication of Grant's Tomb."

"The Great Catastrophe"

"Dr. and Mrs. Alden came to board with us with their little girl, Frances, and part of the time their son, Raymond [summer, 1899]," Anna wrote in her memoir. "They were delightful people, and we were enjoying them exceedingly, when the great catastrophe occurred. It was Monday morning, and one of the boys dropped a lighted match, which swept under a crack, and set fire to some hay in the shed. Everything was dry as tinder, and a hard wind was blowing. The time that might have been utilized in taking things out of the house was spent in trying to put the fire out. We got the baby [Rachel] out, then a very few articles, when the heat and smoke put an end to our efforts. In half an hour from the start all that was left was a pile of smoking ruins, none of us saved a single article of clothing, except the Aldens, who got one trunk of clothes safely down. Mrs. Alden, known in the literary world as "Pansy" lost a number of valuable manuscripts. Providentially no one was hurt. People were very kind, the use of the Bullard place partially furnished was tended us, and furniture, clothing and bedding was sent in, as well as money, until we were obliged to call a halt, and say enough. That fall we decided to rebuild some buildings. An old hotel had been torn down in Montville and the material was offered to us at a low price."

Daughter Caroline, who never married, was a school teacher who began her career at the Sandisfield Center schoolhouse. Their son, Owen and his wife, Vera bought the next door property (32 South Sandisfield Road). Owen served as chairman of the Sandisfield Board of Assessors until 1938.



Cont'd p.12

Newton Hartshorn of Sandisfield

Cont'd. from p.11.



c. 1918

Derick Hartshorn, the Hartshorn family historian, has mixed feelings about his great-grandfather. He told me, "Newton was a difficult person to understand. He was satisfied to live off the laurels of his artist's reputation and did little else to sustain himself or his family in his later years. After moving to Sandisfield, he would fill a horse-drawn cart with apples and take it to Boston for sale." He also acquired "some strange spiritual beliefs" which caused an estrangement in the marriage.

Newton Hartshorn, father of 16 children, spent his last months in Springfield at Caroline's home where he died in 1922, age 80. Anna Belle Evans earlier had moved to Berwick, Maine where she died in 1920 at 68. Newton, Anna, and their daughters, Anna Belle Delight and Caroline, rest together in the South Sandisfield cemetery on Sandy Brook Road.



Photo: FindAGrave.com

Winter Snowfall and Extreme Temperature 2017-2018 To Date

Snow, as measured/estimated at a Beech Plain back-yard weather station.

November Total	2 inches
Dec 9	5
Dec 12.	2
Dec 13.	1
Dec 25.	3
Dec 30	<1
December Total	12 inches
Jan 4	8.5
Jan 16/17	7
January to date total	15.5 inches
Season to date	27.5 inches



Extreme Temperatures

Historic cold wave December 25 – January 7. Coldest day Dec 31 -3 to +3 degrees

December extreme low temperature: on December 15 and 28, minus 5 degrees

January to date extreme low temperature: on January 1 and 7, minus 10 degrees



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Close-up with the Clam River

The Berkshire Natural Resources Council, promoting the Clam River Reserve in Sandisfield, asked The Times to print their new map of the reserve and its trails, even this winter. We will reprint the map in early summer in what will probably be better hiking weather. In snow season, the trails may be accessible with snowshoes. The trails are marked by tree signs.

A lot of work and many hands went into the building of the three trails through the reserve: volunteers, Greenagers, Appalachian Mountain Club

The newest trail, the Hammertown Loop, allows for a loop option from the Hammertown Road kiosk, passing old foundations along the existing woods road, cutting gradually downslope on new single-track trail, and then following the river upstream before reconnecting with Hammertown Road and a short walk back to the kiosk.

The Clam River Loop Trail, starting at the Town Hall Annex, was completed in 2014. It runs along the Clam River and winds hikers through tall cathedral pines.

The Clam River Trail connects the two loops with moderate elevation gains from south to north.

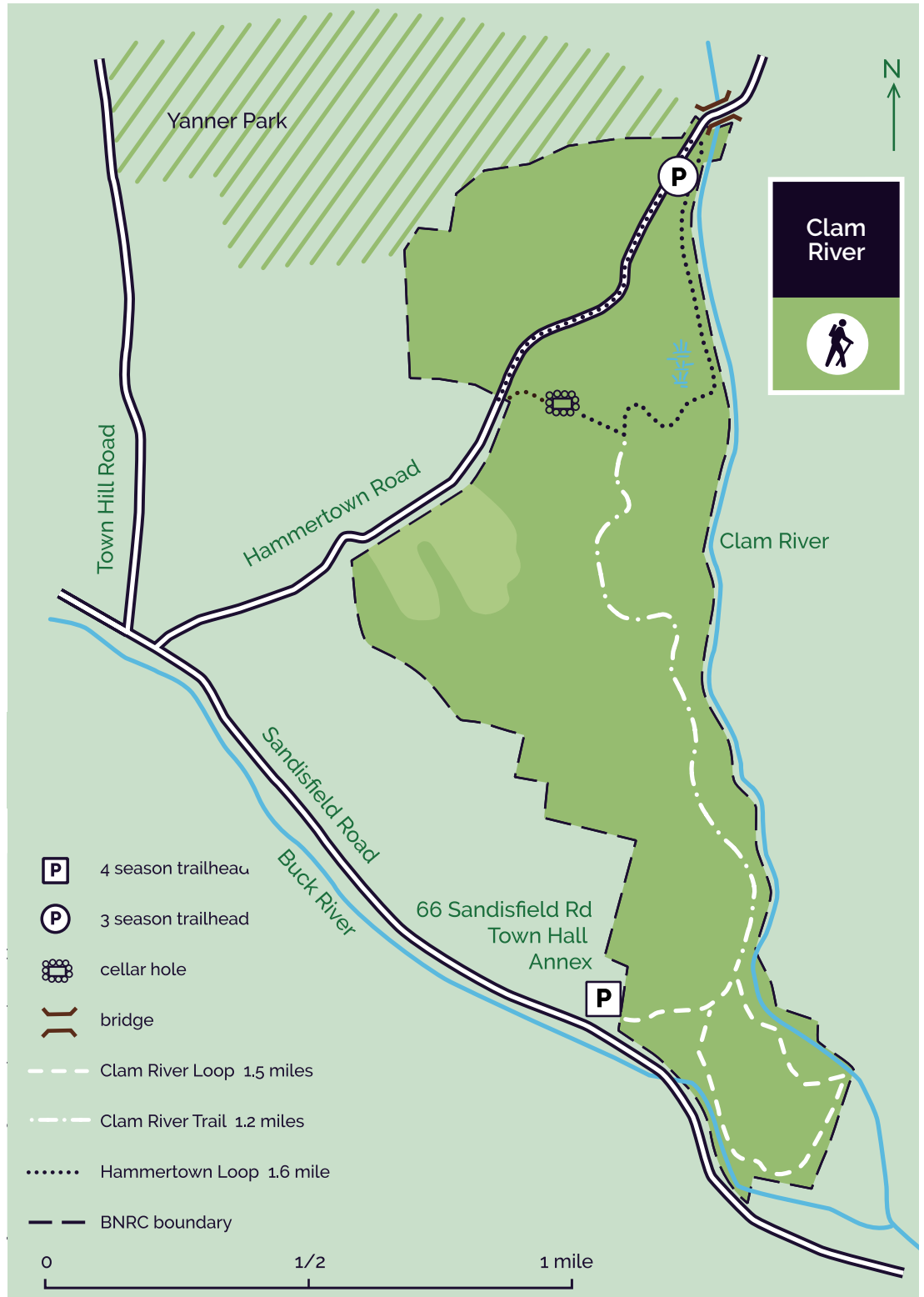
From the south, access the trails via the Town Hall Annex. From the north, access the trails via Hammertown Road (basically a 3-season trailhead, occasionally inaccessible in winter).

Visit BNRC.org for more information about this and other properties.

trail crews, BNRC interns and staff – all with varying trail building experience but equivalent heart and determination.

The trails are the Clam River Loop, the Clam River Trail, and the new Hammertown Loop Trail.

The proximity of the trails to the Clam River makes for what the BNRC describes as incredibly scenic walks.



Fire/EMS/ Police Logs



POLICE:

911 Calls by Sandisfield Residents
Submitted by Michael Morrison, Chief
South Main is Rt. 8 south of Tolland Road;
North Main is Rt. 8 north of Tolland Road.

POLICE, October, 2017

- Oct. 1 Disabled motor vehicle, Sandy Brook Turnpike
- Oct. 1 Bicycle accident, South Beech Plain Road
- Oct. 1 Disabled motor vehicle, South Main
- Oct. 6 Section 12, Sandisfield Road
- Oct. 7 Well-being check, Tannery Road
- Oct. 8 Medical, North Beech Plain Road
- Oct. 8 CO alarm, Perry Road
- Oct. 9 Medical, North Beech Plain Road
- Oct. 9 Burglar alarm, Sandisfield Road
- Oct. 9 Tree down, South Main
- Oct. 10 Motor vehicle accident, South Main
- Oct. 10 Motor vehicle accident, Otis
- Oct. 11 Shots fired, Cronk Road
- Oct. 12 Medical, Otis Woodlands
- Oct. 13 Medical, Tolland
- Oct. 13 House fire, West Street
- Oct. 16 Medical, Sandisfield Road
- Oct. 19 Medical, Tolland
- Oct. 20 Erratic operation, motor vehicle, South Main
- Oct. 20 Serve legal papers, Dodd Road
- Oct. 21 Citizen assistance, Otis Woodlands
- Oct. 23 Medical, Tolland
- Oct. 23 Medical, Tolland
- Oct. 23 Medical, Otis
- Oct. 24 Domestic incident, Dodd Road
- Oct. 29 Burglar alarm, Sandisfield Road
- Oct. 30 Burglar alarm, Sandisfield Road
- Oct. 30 Burglar alarm, Sandisfield Road
- Oct. 30 Wires down, South Sandisfield Road
- Oct. 30 Domestic incident, West Hubbard Street

POLICE, November, 2017

- Nov. 1 Pipeline protest, Cold Spring Road
- Nov. 2 Medical, Sandisfield Road
- Nov. 3 Motor vehicle accident, North Main

- Nov. 3 Assist state police, Beech Plain Road
- Nov. 5 Medical, Slater Lane
- Nov. 7 Burglar alarm, Otis Woodlands
- Nov. 10 Serve legal papers, Dodd Road
- Nov. 12 Medical, Sandisfield Road
- Nov. 16 Domestic incident, West Hubbard Road
- Nov. 17 Fire alarm, Beech Plain Road
- Nov. 17 Tree on wires, Sandisfield Road
- Nov. 19 Tree on wires, Cold Spring Road
- Nov. 20 911 call, hang up, Town Hill Road
- Nov. 21 Medical, Sandisfield Road
- Nov. 21 Disabled motor vehicle, River Road
- Nov. 21 Medical, Sandy Brook Turnpike
- Nov. 23 Medical, North Main
- Nov. 24 Well-being check, Sandisfield Road
- Nov. 25 Domestic incident, Dodd Road
- Nov. 25 Medical, Dodd Road
- Nov. 30 Medical, Tolland

POLICE, December, 2017

- Dec. 1 Erratic operation, motor vehicle, South Main
- Dec. 1 Noise complaint, Sandisfield Road
- Dec. 2 CO alarm, Lake Shore Drive
- Dec. 9 Medical, Tolland Road
- Dec. 10 Fire, DPW Garage, Silverbrook Road
- Dec. 13 Motor vehicle accident, Sandy Brook Turnpike
- Dec. 15 Disabled motor vehicle, Sears Road
- Dec. 17 Fire alarm, Tamarack Trail
- Dec. 19 Medical, East Hubbard Road
- Dec. 24 Motor vehicle accident, Prock Hill Road
- Dec. 25 Burglary, Sandy Brook Turnpike
- Dec. 28 Medical, Sandisfield Road
- Dec. 30 Noise complaint, Sandisfield Road

FIRE:



FIRE, November, 2017

- Nov. 11 Fire alarm activation

FIRE, December, 2017

- Dec. 2 CO detector activation
- Dec. 10 Structure fire, DPW Garage
- Dec. 13 Fire alarm activation
- Dec. 13 Motor vehicle accident
- Dec. 17 Fire alarm activation

EMS:



EMS, November, 2017

- Nov. 12 Medical, Otis ambulance responded, Mutual Aid
- Nov. 21 Medical, Otis and Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance responded, mutual aid
- Nov. 21 Medical, transport to Fairview Hospital
- Nov. 23 Medical, transport to Fairview Hospital
- Nov. 25 Medical, transport to Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Torrington
- Nov. 30 Mutual aid to Tolland, Granville call

EMS, December, 2017

- Dec. 9 Medical, transport to Winsted Health Center
- Dec. 10 Standby at structure fire, DPW Garage, Silverbrook Road
- Dec. 11 Medical, transport to Charlotte Hungerford, Torrington
- Dec. 12 Medical, Otis and Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance responded, mutual aid
- Dec. 13 Motor vehicle accident, no transport
- Dec. 14 Medical, transported to hospital
- Dec. 17 Medical, transport to Fairview Hospital
- Dec. 19 Medical, transport to Fairview Hospital
- Dec. 24 Medical, transport to Berkshire Medical Center, Pittsfield
- Dec. 27 Medical, Otis, transported to hospital
- Dec. 28 Medical, transported to Fairview
- Dec. 29 Medical, transported to Charlotte Hungerford, Torrington



Advance Ordering for *Soil and Shul in the Berkshires*

Pre-publication orders are being accepted for *Soil and Shul in the Berkshires: The Untold Story of Sandisfield's Jewish Farm Colony*.

Written by author and local historian Lorraine German, the book will cover the period of Jewish presence in Sandisfield from the early 1900s, beginning with the establishment of the "colony" of immigrant-settlers sponsored by the Baron DeHirsch Society.

Using detailed and original research, Lorraine has arranged the book into chapters on immigration, social, economic, religious life, and more. The book will include separate chapters for family histories, with many early photographs, including the Albert, Baranoff, Cohen, Jensky, Kaplan, Linder, Pinsky, and Pollack families. "Local color" will include entertaining anecdotal stories.

Publication is planned for this summer. The book, about 250 pages, will be a limited edition, with one printing only. Thanks to financial support from the community the price of the book will be only \$22. To reserve your copy now, see order form, right.

For more information contact Ron Bernard at 413-269-0012 or Ronbernard@aol.com.



PRE-PUBLICATION ORDER FORM

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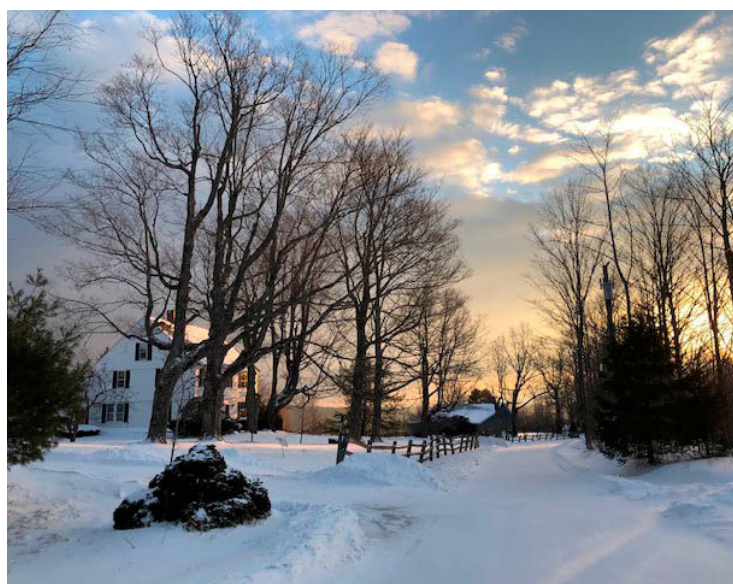
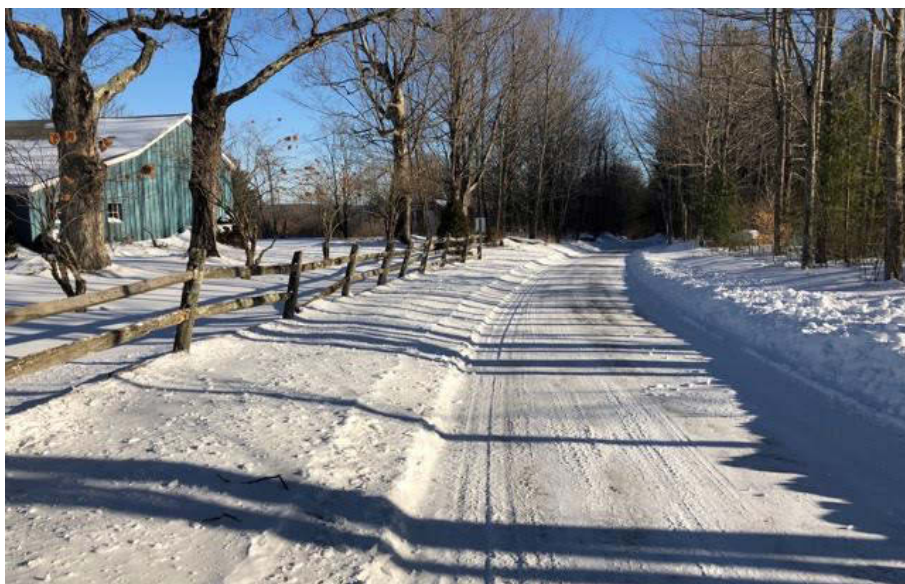
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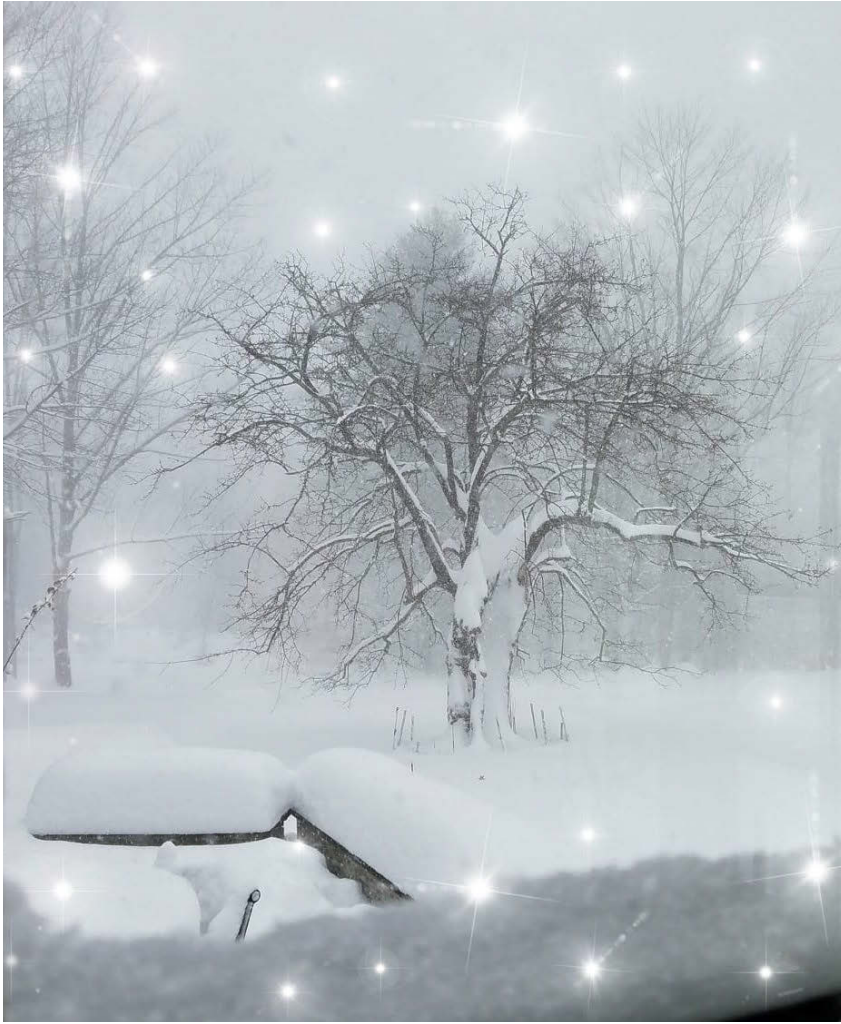
Winter 2018

Extremes. Deep freeze, bursting water pipes. Then the beauty of heavy snow. Then rain flooding rivers and roads. Eight inches of snow disappears in a day. Then more cold, making it tough for critters and plants that depend on the snow cover to survive the season. Then snow again.

On this page, Setsuko Winchester caught winter's beauty and ferocity. The Clam River in flood (left) and the early morning tranquility of upper Silverbrook Road.

Facing page. An ancient apple tree seen through a window by Jean Atwater-Williams. A very cold chickadee fluffing its wings, caught by Cindy Ragusa. And Ron Bernard captured the ice falls along Rt. 8 near the Colebrook Reservoir.







Letters to the Editor

MADE HOLIDAYS BRIGHTER

I would personally like to thank Chief Ralph Morrison and the Sandisfield Fire Department and all who volunteered to decorate our "town entryway."

From the lights on the bridge, to the tree, Santa and carolers lit up on the green. It was a wonderful way to start my holiday spirit and I hope it spread to all. Thanks to your efforts, the Holidays are now "a little brighter."

Happy holidays to all & God bless.

Connie D'Andrea, D'Andrea Gun Leather

A PLEASURE

I have never been to Sandisfield, but in a world of abysmal "journalism" it is always a pleasure to read your newspaper. Keep up the good work.

Jim and Amy Wilson, Salado, Texas

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Now Hear This!

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

JANUARY/FEBRUARY EVENTS

Latin Dancersize Classes on Thursdays from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. ongoing at the Monterey Community Center, on the corner of Route 23 and New Marlborough Road. The classes, taught by Barbara Cohen, are free but donations to the Community Center are appreciated. For more information, call 413-528-3600.

Snowshoe Sundays during January and February from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Bartholomew's Cobble in Sheffield. Members, \$5; non-member adults, \$10.

Winter Snowshoe Walk/Wildlife Tracking/Birding at Housatonic Flats in Great Barrington on Saturday, January 27, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. If weather permits, bring your own snowshoes or rent a pair from Berkshire Bike & Board, 413-528-5555. Directions: From the Great Barrington Price Chopper, head north on Route 7 for less than half a mile. Parking for Housatonic Flats will be on the left. Please pre-register at info@gbtrails.org or 413-499-0596. Free.

Food Safety Class. No Charge. A public service of the Sandisfield Board of Health on Tuesday, February 13 at 9 a.m., in the Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road. The class is designed for anyone

who serves food to the public. To ensure enough books/materials, all attendees should pre-register with Roger Kohler by calling or texting 413-258-0080 or emailing rkohler.sandisfield@gmail.com before February 1.

Art from Nature on Saturday and Sundays from February 18 through 25 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Bartholomew's Cobble in Sheffield. Members, free; non-member, \$5.

Free Community Open House for all South County communities on Sunday, February 25 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Berkshire South Regional Community Center in Great Barrington. Residents within the region can try out the Center for free after showing proof of residency. Go for a swim, break a sweat on the cardio machines or hike a trail. Free.

SAVE THE DATE

The next **Church Service** is scheduled for Sunday, April 8, at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. Mark your calendars and think Spring!

A SCHOOL VISIT AND SANTA WITH A SAX *December Traditions Continue*

Holiday events at the Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center included two special visits.

On December 20, sixth graders from Farmington River Regional School district visited the Center with holiday cards and cookies for the residents. The students spread holiday cheer and sang carols for the pleasure of residents and staff alike.

Earlier, on December 8, the Center held its Annual Open House. Residents, families, and friends enjoyed refreshments, entertainment, and a penny auction table created by the center staff.

Performances included guitarist Peter Poirier and our very own saxophone-playing Santa. Visitors Barbara Spring, Donna Dugel, John Lilly, and Eileen Schmidt from the Bantam, Connecticut American Legion Post 44 were on hand with filled stockings for all 57 residents, which has been a yearly tradition. Bud Atwood from Veterans Outreach Center in Torrington also donated stockings for all residents. Tom Soules and Sally Bushey, present from the AM Vets Post 77, graciously donated festive holiday wreathes for the exterior of the building.

We would like to thank the Sandisfield American Legion Post 456, Wildwood Women of Tolland, First Congregational Church in Great Barrington, and Unico from Connecticut for the generous donations and support this holiday season. 🍷

*Submitted by Cindy Faggioni
Director of Admissions/Marketing*

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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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Diner, Otis Poultry Farm, Otis Woodlands (May-September), and the Laundromat. Locations in Monterey include the Library and the Roadside Cafe. Available also at the Southfield Store in New Marlborough. Back issues are available for purchase.

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Editorial Staff

Editor: Bill Price

email: w.billprice@gmail.com or cell 413.429.7179

Advertising/Subscriptions: Ron Bernard

Graphic Design: Tina Sotis

Website: Jean Atwater-Williams

Now Hear This!: Laura Rogers-Castro

Founding Editor: Simon Winchester

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