

The Times Turns Eight!

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



Plebis

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Volume IX Number 1

April 2018

Off to the Races

By Bill Price

As the only candidates for a while, it seemed that John Skrip would walk into a second 3-year term and that Charles A. Pease would finish out Alice Boyd's unfinished term. But by the deadline on March 22, three other residents had stepped up to the starting line, which will make two horse races come the May 14 election. And the possibility still exists of more candidates being nominated at the May 5 Town Caucus.

For the 1-year seat:

Charles A. Pease, born and raised in Sandisfield, works at M T Cavanaugh in Sheffield. He lives on Rt. 8 south of New Boston.

George Riley, who recently retired from a profession as a fundraiser and executive with nonprofit organizations, has lived on Cronk Road for 20 years.

For the 3-year seat:

Jeff Gray previously served as Selectman from 2010 until last year. Jeff works in maintenance at Farmington River Regional School and is co-owner of Red Barn Alpacas on Stump Road.

Brian O'Rourke, a candidate for Select Board in 2015, owns a construction and carpentry firm. A resident of West Street for two decades, he is currently chairman of the newly formed DPW Committee.

John Skrip, running for a second term on the Select Board, was first elected in 2015. A retired educator, John has lived more than 20 years on Rt. 8 north of New Boston. 🍷

"Meet the Candidates" at COA at noon, May 2.

Our Wounded DPW

PART NEWS REPORT, PART OUT ON A LIMB

By Bogart Muller and Bill Price

TROUBLE RIGHT HERE IN RIVER CITY.

Highway Superintendent Bobby O'Brien bought a new truck in February to replace the brand-new Western Star lost in the garage fire in December. The new truck, an all-season Freightliner, has a few more accessories than the lost truck and cost a little more, \$190,000, but the insurance company said OK, this is to replace the lost truck.

The chairman of the newly formed Department of Public Works Committee, Brian O'Rourke, took exception to Bobby not having informed the committee of the purchase and not following the appropriate steps. He felt that the money had been spent without proper authorization.

A committee meeting, held March 20 with Select Board Chairman John Skrip in attendance, to outline the parameters of the committee and what it was supposed to do, did not go well.

John Skrip acknowledged a lack of communication between the DPW, the Select Board, and the DPW Committee.

But after a bit more back and forth, Bobby O'Brien, a member of the five-man committee, walked out of the meeting, followed by committee member Selectman Mark Newman. That left Chairman O'Rourke with the two other committee members, Joe Gelinas and Tom Jacobs, plus John Skrip.



The meeting soon adjourned, to be reconvened at a later date. The following day, member Joe Gelinas resigned.

Chairman O'Rourke said that the committee "acknowledged that the truck and accessories had been the right purchase but that it was purchased with the wrong process." He added, "The committee had agreed earlier to buy only two new trucks and not replace the Western Star. The insurance company had offered to cut us a check for the truck we didn't replace."

Member Mark Newman said, "The committee has had four meetings. Maybe we'll all cool down and be able to move on. We have an estimate for a new and larger town garage at the same site. We need to replace what we lost at no expense to the Town. The insurers want us to move forward and so do I. As far as I'm concerned, Bobby and I are still members, and we'll be at future meetings."

Cont'd p.6

Offices for Election and Calendar of Events

OFFICES UP FOR ELECTION THIS YEAR:

Office	Term	Currently held by
Moderator	1 year	Simon Winchester
Selectman	3 years	John Skrip
Selectman	1 year	Vacant
Board of Assessors	3 years	Kathi Burrows
School Committee	3 years	Billie Anderson Pachulski
Board of Health	3 years	Roger Kohler
Planning Board	5 years	Willard R. Platt

The following have filed to run for election:

Kathi Burrows	Board of Assessors	3 years
Billie Anderson Pachulski	School Committee	3 years
Roger Kohler	Board of Health	3 years
Jeff Gray	Selectman	3 years
John Skrip	Selectman	3 years
Brian O'Rourke	Selectman	3 years
Charles A. Pease	Selectman	1 year
George Riley	Selectman	1 year

There is still an opportunity to be nominated for office at the Town Caucus, April 5. **The Town Election is May 14.**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 5	Town Caucus – Old Town Hall, 7:00 p.m.
April 10	Last day to object or withdraw nomination papers.
April 24	Last day to register to vote for the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Election. Registering will be held at the Town Hall Annex from 2:00-4:00 p.m. and 7:00-8:00 p.m.
May 12	Annual Town Meeting, Fire Station #2, Rt. 57 at 10:00 a.m.
May 14	Annual Town Election, Old Town Hall, 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.

Sign-up to Receive Town Announcements

Following is an announcement sent too many times during the month of March to recipients listed on the Town's email system:

ALL TOWN OFFICES CLOSED Today

HAPPY WINTER!!!!!!

Due to the storm, all town offices will be CLOSED today, March 13, 2018. Please drive with caution and be safe! Let's hope this is the last one for the season and Spring is only a few weeks away!!

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Local Scholarships Available

By Laura Rogers-Castro

The Sandisfield Scholarship Committee has announced that applications are being accepted from high school seniors planning to attend two or four-year colleges this fall.

Funds provided through the scholarship can be used for any college expenses during the second semester of the student's freshman year.

The deadline for submitted applications is April 20.

To be eligible for the scholarship, you must have been a Sandisfield resident for at least one year and be currently living in Sandisfield. Each student applicant must provide a copy of their academic record and three letters of reference, along with a formal letter of application stating the student's objectives and plans for achieving these goals.

The Sandisfield Scholarship Fund Committee raises funds primarily through the Penny Auction held during the Historical Society's Holiday Fair in early December and an Ice Cream Sale offered at the Sandisfield Fireman's annual Steak Roast in August.

The Committee welcomes other ideas and assistance from community members at any time. If you would like to assist with fundraising efforts, make a donation to the fund, or receive a 2018 Scholarship Application, please contact me at 258-4688 or laurarogerscastro107@msn.com. 🇺🇸



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Guns Are Us

I come from a gun family, have a few of my own at my former home in Washington State, and have hunted deer and rabbits and other creatures with modest success.

I've also taken a political science class.

If you ask gun enthusiasts to recite the Second Amendment, many will mumble ... mumble ... before reciting "the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

The Second Amendment, only one sentence, reads: "A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed."

What gun enthusiasts often don't remember – or seem to understand – is that pesky preliminary phrase, the part about a "well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state ..."

What is it about a "well regulated militia" that is hard to understand?

It doesn't sound to me like the government abrogated its responsibility for regulations. I don't think those old Founding Fathers were thinking of modern assault weapons in the hands of deer and rabbit hunters when they wrote the Second Amendment. They were thinking of flintlocks and blunderbusses. Assault weapons belong in the hands of the military, not hunters or other civilians.

As I write this, people around the country and the world are marching for sensible gun legislation. The march is led by young students who survived an assault with an AK-47 at their high school in Florida. They organized the march, in part to honor the 17 people in their school who weren't able to march, who were murdered in their classrooms.

These young people organized the march to change gun regulations and make schools and our communities safer for all. They say adults failed to protect them. We did. Maybe they can do better.

– Bill Price
West New Boston

Last Tuesday

Last Tuesday, twenty one days into Lent,

*(You remember Lent,
The marble statues near the altar
Dressed in purple gowns.)*

Last Tuesday I killed a beautiful duck
Who was minding her own business on Route 8.
She was sitting there,

I thought she was made of white marble
With an ebony edge on her wings.
And I came along, all two tons of me
In my old Toyota,

And I saw her for just a second,
This perfect animal
And I felt the bump ...
I looked back,

She did not rise again.

Val Coleman
West New Boston



Starting Over with Broadband

COMMITTEE MEETING MARCH 27

By Tom Christopher

Sandisfield had high hopes that by now, after much hard work from the Select Board and the Broadband Committee, Frontier Communications would be stringing cable along our roads to enable residents to connect to broadband internet service.

That contract, however, was dependent on Sandisfield signing as part of a four-town consortium. When Monterey dropped out of the consortium to seek another solution, followed by New Marlborough, Frontier seemed to decide that the surviving two towns, Sandisfield and Tolland, were not consortium enough. In February, when it became clear that Frontier was stringing the last two towns along rather than hanging cable, Sandisfield told Frontier that the town would have to entertain other proposals. At the beginning of March, Frontier announced its decision to terminate negotiations.

Another solution existed.

Last October, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, the state agency in charge of bringing affordable internet service to communities throughout Massachusetts, had, as part of its Flexible Grants Program, called for internet providers to propose solutions for the remaining unserved towns. Although at the time Sandisfield considered it was on track with Frontier, it still qualified as unserved.

Six providers had responded to the MBI announcement. Three of the companies included plans on how they would install and structure service to unserved towns: Crocker Communications of Greenfield and Springfield, Matrix Design Group of Vermont and New Jersey, and Whip City Fiber of Westfield Gas and Electric.

Broadband Committee chairman Jeff Bye wrote in an email that the committee is now assessing those three proposals and that the committee will provide the Select Board with its recommendation soon.

"John Skrip and Mark Newman will then need to make a decision quickly," he added. "Once John and Mark have made their decision the Select Board will meet with MBI and the company selected to draft and finalize an agreement. Then work can begin!"

The Broadband Committee was scheduled to meet at Town Hall Annex, March 27, too late for this issue of *The Times*. The meeting agenda included detailed assessments and comparison of the proposals and the formulation of a recommendation to be provided to the Select Board.

This work is being tackled on a priority basis, with two hopes:

One, that a plan will again be in place within a month or two and a start can be made on working with MBI and the new provider to begin the installation process;

And two, since none of the new plans on offer would provide internet service at the low rate proposed by Frontier Communications, that if phone service is combined with broadband residents will still find the service affordable.



Your Electric Bill

By Tom Christopher

You may not have noticed the difference in your monthly electric bill, but unless you deliberately opted out of Sandisfield's electrical aggregation program, you are paying less. The differential is modest: Colonial Power Group, the town's aggregator and its power supplier, Verde Energy charges \$.0997 per kilowatt hour (kWh) whereas the local utility company, Eversource, charges \$.10503.

Members of the aggregation program had been paying \$.08563 per kWh, but the rates changed as of January of this year. The rate currently charged by Colonial Power Group is guaranteed for a full year; that is, until January of next year. Eversource changes its rates every six months, and is due to reset rates on July 1, 2018.

Eversource had won approval in November from the Department of Public Utilities to increase its billing in western Massachusetts by \$24.8 million per year, but announced in early January that it would reduce that figure to reflect savings in corporate tax under the new tax laws of \$8.3 million annually. What the outcome for individual consumers will be is not clear.

Town administrator Fred Ventresco notes that Sandisfield came late to the bargaining table with Colonial Power Group and Verde Energy last year because of the loss of its town administrator at the beginning of July, and the fact that he did not join the town government until October. Fred will begin negotiations in May and is hopeful that he can nail down a more favorable rate for 2019.

Town Administrator Fred Ventresco notes that Sandisfield came late to the bargaining table with Colonial Power Group and Verde Energy last year because of the departure of the former Town Administrator last July and his own arrival in October. Fred will begin negotiations in May and is hopeful that he can nail down a more favorable rate for 2019.

On its website, Colonial Power announces that if you received a notification letter, you do not need to take any action to participate in the program. All basic service consumers who did not opt out were enrolled in the program. If you did not receive a notification letter, your account was ineligible at the time of the mailing and you were not automatically enrolled.

To opt out or in, go online to www.colonialpowergroup.com/sandisfield/, or call Colonial Power Group at 508-485-5858.

Council on Aging Getting Some Things Done



By Nina Carr

March was a tough month for all of us here in Sandisfield. The Council on Aging even had to cancel one of our weekly meetings because of the snow. We did get a few things done, though.

Ann Wald and Linda Riiska attended and completed the Safe Serve Certification. Linda and Nina also attended a very informative meeting at the Great Barrington COA. The state is really trying to help seniors "age in place." There are many challenges, among them transportation, appropriate housing, and ambulance service.

Also, we got a promise from Representative Smitty Pignatelli that he would work hard to fully reopen the facilities at York Lake.

In addition to our normal COA activities, we have several new items scheduled for April.

On April 3, a Tuesday, COA members are invited to a "Pie Social" at Berkshire Rehabilitation at 1:30 p.m.

Also on April 3, a foot clinic. Call Linda Riiska for an appointment. 258-4816.

On April 6, a Friday, the "Matter of Balance" classes will begin at the Monterey Community Center. The classes will run for eight weeks on Fridays from 1 to 3 p.m.

On April 16, a Monday, Ann Clark will teach a workshop on weaving "Carolina Snowflakes." The class will start at 2 p.m. at the COA in the Town Hall Annex basement. If you are interested, please call Linda at 258-4816 so we have enough materials for all.

On April 23, the following Monday, at 12 noon, we are invited to attend lunch and a movie at the Gilson Theater in Winsted. The movie will be "Murder on the Orient Express."

And Qi Gong will begin again in April, dates to be determined.

If you would like to attend any of these events, need more information, or sign up for Qi Gong, please call Linda at 258-4816 or Nina at 258-3314.

We will continue to meet every Wednesday at the COA for a potluck lunch as always.

Welcome, Spring! 🍀

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From Your Select Board

By John Skrip, Chairman

Good News

Town Administrator Fred Ventresco received an e-mail informing him that Sandisfield has been awarded a Complete Streets Award of \$50,750 by MassDOT. The money is intended for bike racks, traffic amenities, and traffic-calming solar speed signs. The racks are proposed for the Sandisfield Free Library, Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, and Wilbur Park. Solar signs will be placed on Routes 57 and 183.

I recently received a call from Attorney James E. Vallee, representing Kinder Morgan, who asked for a meeting with the Sandisfield Select Board, the Town Administrator, the Department of Public Works Supervisor, and the president of Kinder Morgan's East Region Natural Gas Pipeline, Kimberly Watson. At the meeting, Ms. Watson, on behalf of Kinder Morgan, informed the group that "Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company (TGP) is pleased to contribute \$50,000 to the town of Sandisfield, that will be used to help purchase needed town equipment. The company is dedicated to being a safe operator and good neighbor to the Sandisfield community." The check should arrive by press time. The gift was great news for our town, and we appreciate it. We can use the money.

Broadband

As all of you are aware, Frontier is no longer a viable option for our town. Jeff Bye, on behalf of the Broadband Committee, and I have been in negotiations with three other companies and are awaiting written proposals. We will not be seeking attorney input until we have a formal proposal.

Concerns

The Select Board is planning to meet with representatives from the police department, the Conservation

Commission, the health department, and town inspectors for clarification of town laws regarding the problems of trailers, houses with no CO (certificate of occupancy), blighted property, driveways without permits, and other concerns that have been identified by town residents. We will attempt to come up with action plans to address these issues. We will contact our attorneys for advice if we cannot arrive on acceptable procedures to follow.

Senior Housing

I have met with a representative from Construct, Inc., to discuss the potential for senior housing in Sandisfield. This consulting group has been working with towns in the southern Berkshires since 1969 and are committed to helping to provide affordable housing for everyone. Our Town Administrator will follow up with Construct and report at future Select Board meetings. There are many aspects to this endeavor, and I will keep you informed as they unfold.

Town Budgets

The budget process will be completed by the time this report is published. While the new method of review was not well received by all committees, the Select Board and Finance Committee believes it will improve the transparency of all departments. The new procedure has allowed the Finance Committee, Select Board members, and the Town Administrator to identify areas of redundancy and enabled committee chairs and department heads to relook at items and expenses in a thorough manner.

Next year's budget process should offer a more clear picture of all spending as each department reviews requests, dollars spent, and more accurately accounts for their budgets. This process will increase the efficiency and accuracy of town expenditures. I think the Annual Town Meeting will bring the budget process forward and give residents an opportunity to address issues. The ultimate decisions rest with the voters.

Rugg Bridge

The Rugg Bridge reconstruction is not only presently on time but we have received notice it is coming in under budget. Mark Newman and Bobby O'Brien are dealing with the contractor to establish how much under budget the bridge is expected to be and approximately how much longer before completion. We sincerely and gratefully thank our Sandisfield residents for their patience with the detour all winter. We especially thank the residents of River Road for putting up with the traffic, noise, and inconvenience.

Department of Public Works

Regarding the fire that destroyed our DPW building, trucks, and equipment, we have had several meetings with the insurance company and are still waiting for a formal cause of the fire to be established. The insurance company has made it clear to us that this determination does not affect our compensation. We have received basic replacement quotes for a building and town public works equipment.

A committee is looking at the best way to proceed with rebuilding a DPW garage and restoring lost equipment. The committee will also take a look at the other DPW tasks and how it works.

I miscommunicated with Bobby O'Brien regarding the purchase of the replacement truck, which I am sure you have seen plowing and sanding the roads. Our insurance company was offering us cash or a replacement truck, and I quickly saw the value of the much needed truck. I have to acknowledge, however, that I didn't follow correct procedures but before you knew it, we had a new truck. We are establishing policies and procedures for all departments and committees to follow and I, myself, did not follow what we have worked so hard to set up. Mea culpa.

Please feel free to contact me or any board member with your suggestions and support. Contact information: 258-4788 or 203-233-0518 or johnskripjr@gmail.com. 🇺🇸

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Our Wounded DPW

Cont'd. from page 1.

O'Brien said the newly purchased Freightliner was a replacement and not a new expense to the Town, that the Town insures its equipment on a "replacement basis." He added, "With a newly built garage and three new trucks, paid for by the replacement insurance, the DPW will not be the expensive burden on the town that it is now."

O'Rourke sees the committee's role as coming up with different options for the DPW and presenting them to the Select Board for decision. He said, "The committee will determine its parameters at its next meeting or resign itself to Town history."

The Select Board has an estimate for a replacement building on the same site as the destroyed garage. Betnr Engineering & Construction of Hinsdale proposed a metal building at a cost of \$404,000, with the Town providing its own septic system and blacktopping at a reduced cost.

The Old Garage Still There, Just Ashes Now

Meanwhile, anyone driving past the pile of charred bones of our former Town Garage realizes nothing

has happened there since late last year, when the fire was put out.

Scrap metal is still piled where it burned, along with tools, fixtures, and all that remains black tinted rust. A mismatched fleet of donated trucks – plus one shining new Freightliner – are scattered about, some applicable for our roads, some not. Tools like chainsaws and jump boxes lay on the floor of Old Town Hall next to the Board of Health desk while hand tools, paperwork, and uniforms find home on top of meeting tables. Everything else must sit outside in the toxic environment of the salt shed.

Monday thru Friday, four tireless men pull up to work – three fulltime and one part-time. Their headlights pass by the unsightly, fenced in wreckage.

Now, it's time to lay cardboard on the ground and fix the U-joint on the Needham truck. (It's not so bad when you lay more cardboard on the side to block the wind, just be sure you park where the rainwater isn't a problem). The phone rings. A friendly voice answers with, "Well, the truck will be ready soon. Just let my guys thaw out inside for a minute. They are almost done."

This everyday life of the Sandisfield DPW is a

battle. If it isn't some loaned truck in a constant state of repair, it's a state official in a white vehicle, necktie, and a badge saying something is not up to snuff. Dealing with a fallen tree on South Sandisfield Road and a washout on the far end of Cronk Road. Try juggling that before 9 a.m. on a snowy Monday.

Yes, folks, the job isn't easy. In fact, it's becoming a borderline nightmare.

Uncertainty about the future makes it even worse. Imagine for half a second, having to keep your sanity while laying in the mud fixing that frozen U-joint and looking at that pile of rubbish. At this rate, these men will be working outside for the next year if we can't do something about their demoralizing work scenario.

We can.

The DPW committee – working with the highway department and the Select Board – has started work, if they can agree on their assignment and come up with a plan. A plan will not be without hang ups. One hang up is time. Building a new facility, money or no money, still takes considerable time. If we can start this spring maybe, just maybe this crew will have a weather-tight shell to work out of by next fall.

Remember, equipment life span shortens considerably when left outside.

A drawing of a proposed metal building is already on file at the Town Hall Annex. Stop in to see it. Form an opinion. It is accompanied by a rough cost analysis of building the thing. The beginning of a plan.

And hope.

So, pitch in and help. Attend a Select Board meeting and lend your ideas, thoughts, expertise, concerns, and opinions. Anything to help move this project forward. Anything to expedite the process. Anything to make this now wounded but once strong department bounce back stronger than it ever was.

We need this project started now, not tomorrow, not after breakfast ... NOW!

Everyone involved is all ears. There are no dumb questions, answers, or ideas. As a small town, we are accustomed to saying "Our." Our Post Office. Our Town Hall. Our Route 57. We used to say Our Store.

Well, this is "our DPW." Without them, we could not drive anywhere in our town, on our roads. This is not some government/finance uppity thing where you have no say. You are a homeowner, a taxpayer and a voter. This is your small town. You have say. Come say it. 🗳️

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SANDY'S PAGE

Memories of Sandy

Charles Cocoran, Boston

Sandy: civilized, talented, gracious, intelligent, interesting, courteous, charming, always. We miss him greatly. We are in disbelief.

Peter Rothschild, Boston

Sandy was a special inspiration for me. We first met in a professional context nearly 50 years ago while planning new towns throughout America. I knew from the start this was someone I wanted to know better.

I revered his loyalty as a friend and collaborator: he repeatedly promoted and defended my professional efforts; I enjoyed his indefatigable sense of humor; I admired his non-judgmental appreciation of others when he let others take credit for his accomplishments in order to "get the job done." Sandy's seminal role in creating and improving public open spaces in Connecticut's largest cities provides lasting testament to his talents and perseverance.

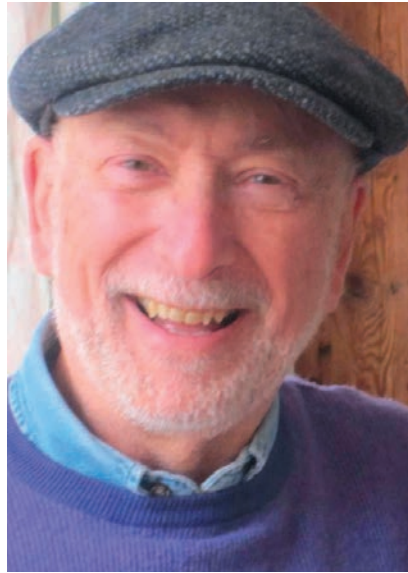
Erich Fromm speaks of the "theory" and "practice" of loving. Sandy knew the art of loving in both senses and seemed to effortlessly apply them consistently as a husband, a father, a workmate, an employer, and as a friend. He provides us with an iconic model of a loving man.

Historic Hartford Facebook page

Sandy Parisky – a visionary who did so much for the Bushnell Park Foundation and the Ancient Burying Ground Association – was a force for civic good in Hartford through the '80s and early '00s. We worked on the \$1 million restoration of the Ancient Burying Ground in the '80s. Nothing like it on that scale had been done anywhere in the U.S. It was Sandy's keen insight that if we wanted to make a graveyard full of mostly forgotten people from the colonial era relevant that we had to teach and inspire. We created a youth training/tour program that still goes on – involving Hartford youth at tour guides. Thank you, Sandy, for a life devoted to civic betterment.

Liana Toscanini, New Marlborough


Sandy Parisky was many things – a successful businessman, a talented artist, a committed volunteer, a leader of volunteers, a thoughtful friend, a wonderful husband and father, a team player, a dapper dresser, a man of taste, a generous donor, a skilled delegator, a world traveler AND ... a crafty fundraiser.



Sandy Parisky, 1940-2018

In February 2003, Richard and I met Sandy and Flora in Vieques, Puerto Rico. As we sat on the beach, Sandy sketched Richard playing his guitar with palm trees swaying in the background. He framed the colorful watercolor portrait and put it up for auction at a Sandisfield Arts Center fundraiser a few months later, knowing full well that either Richard or I would have to bid on it as a wonderful memory of our vacation. Sandy set the minimum bid at \$100!



We've told this story many times as a delightful example of clever fundraising and again now, as a testament to a friend and neighbor who will be greatly missed for many qualities, among them his sense of humor. 


Remembering Sandy

AN INVITATION FROM THE SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER

On Sunday, April 29 at 1 p.m., we will come together at the Arts Center to remember and honor our friend Sandy, who died on February 19 in Boston.

Sandy was a part of the Sandisfield Arts Center almost from its very beginning. He participated in the planning and execution of the early renovations, he helped with the programming, he found and identified talent, and he climbed onto the stage himself as a member of the Sandisfield Players.

He was a willing volunteer whose good humor, warmth, and openness was always present to welcome people into the Arts Center community. This past year he was co-president with Susie Crofut.

With song and singing, stories, tears and laughter we will celebrate this exceptional friend. We hope you can come. 



Sandy in "Under Milk Wood"

Sandy

When I first got up here,
It seems a thousand years ago,
There was this specially wise and kind man,
A sensible fella who bloomed with ideas and plans,
Lit up the joint with the sweet sweep of his smile
And suffered fools like me as he dressed our stage
And poured good practical wine into our thoughts.
We are a motley crew of orphans now,
We've lost a father,
Everything,
On a solemn Monday afternoon in almost Spring.

*Val Coleman
West New Boston*





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.

Springtime is the Land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn....

– Lewis Gizzard

Snow piles are still chiding me as I consider the calendar date – yup, officially Spring but not quite looking it. Potato seedlings, tulip bulbs, and outside container boxes await the sunshine and warmth I know is coming, albeit very slowly it seems. Outside temperatures of 30 degrees do not scream sundresses and sunhats or even venturing outside without hat and gloves. So, instead I reopen gardening books and dream of spring to come ... By the way, the library has several great gardening books!

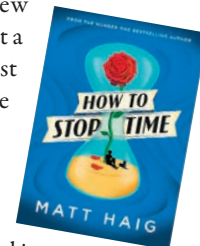
And so as the sun basks those pesky snow piles that glisten and sparkle, I shall bury my head in a few books and wait it out for spring that includes, glorious flowers, chirping birds, and no snow piles.

NEW BOOKS

Death of an Honest Man by M.C. Beaton. Sergeant Hamish Macbeth – Scotland’s most quick-witted but unambitious policeman – returns Beaton's new mystery in her New York Times best-selling series.

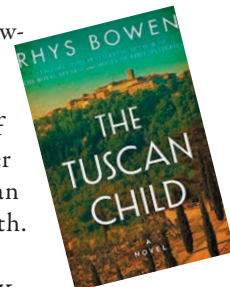
Nobody loves an honest man, or that was what police sergeant Hamish Macbeth tried to tell newcomer Paul English

How to Stop Time by Matt Haig. Haig’s new novel isn't exactly about time travel – it’s about a slow-aging man who travels through time just by staying alive for centuries. And yes, he meets Shakespeare (who has bad breath).



The Sixth Day by Catherine Coulter. Special agents Nicholas Drummond and Michaela Caine take on a ruthless mastermind in the fifth highly anticipated thriller in the *A Brit in the FBI* series.

The Tuscan Child by Rhys Bowen. Bowen's new novel fits as firmly in its genre niche as an Italian nonna might in the hamlet of San Salvatore, where most of the action takes place. An RAF officer survives a crash nearby; a local woman finds him and nurses him back to health.



HAPPENINGS AT THE LIBRARY


Every Monday morning from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. **Community Play Group** in the Sandisfield Community Center (below the library). Free play and table top activities and trip upstairs for storytime.

April 14. **Arts and Crafts with Lynn Rubenstein.** It’s always clever and fun for ages 2-12.

April 18, 2-4 p.m. **Wacky Wednesday in the Library.** Bored during spring break? Come to the Library/Community Center and get really **BOARD** with games. The Community Center Committee sponsors board games and snacks for kids ages 2- 12 downstairs in the community center. Sneaky Squirrel, Yatzee, Pictionary, Monopoly, and more ...

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, May 12 at 11:00 p.m. Celebrate spring, reading, and the diverse heritage of the New England region at the Library. The program “**Under One Sky**” will involve the audience in a variety of cultural traditions with storyteller Davis Bates. Sing-alongs, playing music with spoons and folk tales. Project is supported by the Sandisfield Cultural Council.

Saturday, June 30 at 1:30 p.m. Ed the Wizard returns for his **Rocket Building Workshop**. Learn the basics of flight and test your skills. Workshop is geared for Grades 1 and up, limited to 30 patrons; please contact the library for more information: 258-4966. 



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March Nor'easters on Cold Spring Road

Photos by Ron Bernard

Winter Snowfall and Extreme Temperature 2017-2018 To Date

Snow measured/estimated at a Beech Plain back-yard weather station, as of March 21, 2018

Nov 2017 2.0 inches

Dec 12.0

Jan 2018 15.5

Feb 13.5

Mar 2 5.0 Nor'easter

Mar 5 1.0

Mar 8 18.0 'Nuther Nor'easter

Mar 10 1.0

Mar 13-15 18.5 And another one!

March to date 43.5

Season to date 86.5 inches

Season low temperature: -16 degrees on Jan 7

Season high temperature: 73 degrees on Feb 21



March 8 and Again March 15



Waiting to Fall



Waiting for Spring





PRE-PUBLICATION ORDER FORM

SOIL and SHUL IN the BERKSHIRES

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ST - APRIL 18

Lou Stone, the Winsted Liar

AN EXCERPT FROM *SOIL AND SHUL IN THE BERKSHIRES* BY LORRAINE GERMAN

Louis T. Stone was a newspaper reporter and editor in Winsted, Connecticut, who spent his entire career working at the Winsted Evening Citizen. Not satisfied with reporting the mundane facts and goings-on of life, Lou decided early on to write outlandish tales about rural life, which were syndicated in papers from New York to Alaska.


His preposterous stories quickly earned him the nickname of "The Winsted Liar." One of his best known was the hoax of the Winsted Wildman, a story he invented in the summer of 1895 and kept alive in one form or another for years afterward, much to the delight of his fans. Many of Lou's tall tales revolved around members of the animal kingdom: a fox hopping a ride on the mail stage, a big mouth bass with false teeth, a cat that whistled "Yankee Doodle Dandy."

In the early part of the 20th century, however, Lou turned his attention to the Jewish farmers across the state line in Sandisfield.

The following story appeared in The New York World in August 1906 and was reprinted by The Berkshire Courier. The Courier was well aware of Lou's penchant for exaggeration and admitted his account of the colonists' farming methods should be taken with a grain of salt, but he went on to say the stories were characteristic of some of the members of the Sandisfield colony.

Reports have been received from Sandisfield, Lee and Becket in the Berkshire Hills, where hundreds of immigrants have acquired farms. One man said he could make lots of money on maple syrup, but he had to stop and plug the holes in his trees because the haying must be done.

Another is credited with having the profits of the crops on a ten-acre lot figured down fine. At present the land is covered with a crop of hard hack. Still another says he sees lots of profit, but doesn't have time to do his farming, as he has so much work.

Lou Stone was probably responsible for a good many of the comical stories about the Sandisfield colony that appeared in newspapers during those early years. He spent a lifetime entertaining his readers with tales of life in and around Winsted, and when he died in 1933 newspapers across the country mourned the passing of the man one editor called "the most beloved liar of modern times." 

* * * * *

Soil and Shul in the Berkshires: The Untold Story of Sandisfield's Jewish Farm Colony by Lorraine German and sponsored by the Sandisfield Arts Center will be available this summer as a limited edition. Pre-publication orders are being accepted. Reserve your copy today! Please see order form at left or online at sandisfieldartscenter.org, and click on the "Gift Shop" button.



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Cabin at Yanner Park Demolished

**INDIFFERENCE?
LACK OF IMAGINATION?**

By Ron Bernard

It was probably inevitable and has finally happened – the charming little cabin, a sentry at this property on Town Hill Road for more than 80 years – is no more. Last December an excavator and its companion dumpster made short work of the one-room building.

Although it had not been used for decades, we can imagine that its walls still held memories and faint echoes of long ago happy family gatherings. These too were discarded into the big red casket along with the splintered remains of wood clapboards, flooring, and doors to be added to a giant trash pile somewhere. Another bit of Sandisfield heritage, a witness and reminder of a different time, gone.

The land was originally part of the late-18th century Henry Deming farm. In 1919, it was acquired by Albert Cornish of the Bronx, New York, who owned it until 1947. A longtime neighborhood resident, the late George Marres, said in a 2011 interview for *Sandisfield Then and Now* that he'd helped the Cornishes build the cabin around 1935.



Yanner cabin, 1961 (Sandisfield Historical Society)

The next owners in 1950, the Yanners, were horse enthusiasts from Connecticut who had previously summered in town. They enjoyed their more than 200 forested acres for many years. In 1995, the family donated everything to the Town with the stipulation that it be used “as parkland in memory of John, Mary, and Jack Yanner.”

Twenty-two years later the cabin is gone and the land remains unimproved with no apparent interest at Town Hall to develop it for public enjoyment as the Yanners envisioned. The family continues to require that the property be used as a park.

A non-profit organization called Friends of Yanner Park formed for this purpose in 2004. A residents’ survey revealed strong support for a 5-acre park here including a playground, ballfield, pavilion, ice skating rink, butterfly garden, walking trails, and picnic and parking areas. The enthusiastic committee raised at least \$12,000. But there was little interest in saving the cabin. Lacking a project champion, prospects for a park also withered.

A resident aptly summed up the situation this way: “Unfortunately, a habitable building was left to rot until it became a safety hazard and had to be torn down.” One less thing to care for and worry about, we suppose.

The Yanners had requested that the town install a monument with a plaque naming them as benefactors. A handsome stone wall and marker was erected, which has weathered badly. Perhaps the disrepair is a fitting metaphor for Sandisfield’s fortunes and low aspirations these days.

The money raised with a lot of effort by volunteers in 2004 should still be available in a town account. It is intended for “Yanner Park.” Let’s at least hope that the gorgeous fieldstone fireplace and stack will be left standing. A new building of a roughly similar design to the old cabin could rise on the old footprint and be the focus of a park to come. ♡

Out on a Limb: an op-ed

Subjects should be interesting to most of us and have a strong link to Sandisfield, written by and for Town residents. Address either PO Box 584, Sandisfield, or email editor@sandisfieldtimes.org



Yanner cabin, 2011 (Sandisfield Then and Now)



The surviving fieldstone fireplace, January 2018 (Ron Bernard)

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LOCAL EMS EMERGENCY CONTINUES

By *Brigitte Ruthman*

In a small town where small numbers make a difference, the Town's medical services' crisis has been bandaged – at least temporarily – by three new recruits.

EMS and Fire Chief Ralph Morisson reports that three emergency medical technician candidates are currently in training to alleviate what has been a critical shortage of volunteer staffing.

The three, who include a husband and wife on Town Hill Road and a local part-time police officer, were tending toward community service, but took the plunge to embark on a lengthy training course in Stockbridge after learning how much their services were needed.



They hope to graduate and begin responding "immediately" in June.

At a recent Select Board meeting, Chairman John Skrip said nothing productive has come of recent discussions to join with New Marlborough to form a regional EMS response effort. The towns of Sandisfield and Tolland already share EMS resources.

Morrison said the Commonwealth's Office of Emergency Medical Services in Boston may mean well, but has done nothing to alleviate

a critical shortage of volunteer responders. A proposal by State Rep. Smitty Pagnatelli to seek grant funding to further study the dilemma won't help much either, he said

In a recent letter to The Berkshire Eagle, Becket Fire Chief Mark Hanford wrote that no fact-finding studies have focused on how regionalization would work, adding that no "organization or planning commission has spent any time at all using a commonsense approach to regionalizing emergency services in Berkshire County." He echoed Morrison's opinion that Boston has done nothing but lip service to help Berkshire County towns.

Like other small towns out here, Sandisfield has been increasingly unable to muster enough man (and woman) power to answer a half-dozen calls a month with a staff of ten – and a core staff of just a few – drawn from Tolland and Sandisfield. The response area includes a busy Route 8 corridor and a local nursing home.


In the wings is a commercial ambulance service eager to take up quarters at least during daytime hours to supplement volunteers and charge for their services – adding to costly local budgetary needs.

To be certified, an EMT must pass a course which involves hundreds of hours of classroom and practical training and a state practical and written exam. Their duty is to stabilize patients for further care either at a hospital or by a paramedic intercept – which in Sandisfield can involve more than the critical "golden hour" of response, care, and ambulance travel time.

A few other potential EMT candidates have called to pledge involvement, but haven't followed up, Morrison said.

Massachusetts has been stepping up requirements for training and recertification at a time when many volunteers are seeking to retire or need more time for work and families. One new young family – the very lifeblood of community service – recently moved out of town because of the distance they needed to travel for basic amenities including child care, said Morrison, who also had a conversation with a new resident in the Sandisfield section of Otis Woodlands with health issues who was stunned to learn of the EMS dilemma.

EMTs here are paid \$50 for a 24-hour shift taken on an elective basis on weekends. All other calls are answered by a minimum of two EMTs who happen to be available. If none are, the call is delayed until a mutual response can arrive from a neighboring town.

"We are still looking for volunteers," Morrison said. 

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My Father's Dented Cans and Other Stories

A review by Charles Fidler

"When once invited to join a police lineup, I didn't visualize the scurrilous group of dysfunctional miscreants that I would be alongside." You might guess Mickey Spillane wrote that opening line. Instead, it's the first sentence of "The Lineup," one of John Funchion's stories from his new collection, "My Father's Dented Cans and Other Stories."



John Funchion

Those of us who spot Funchion on his well-worn ambulations throughout the neighboring bucolic town of Norfolk or his visits to Sandisfield will immediately recognize him: upon approaching the bottom of the Battell Stoeckel estate hill, he swivels and walks back up the rise backwards!

Just so, this latest line up of thirty-six vignettes glance backward as if walking in reverse over an examined life, well-travelled.

A reader might expect John's remembrance of things past to be organized by a linear chronology. Do not be put off by the scattered sequence of these brilliant mosaics, each carved, illuminated, and polished in the tradition of the best story tellers. Rather, its organization is around an anthropology of emotion. The stories move among darkness, gentle humor, wonder, sex, and transcendence. The book may be opened at random and enjoyed from wherever a reader chooses to start.

As with the best writers, Funchion's strong, consistent "voice" is present. Not many people say what they think. If a quality of authenticity is a hallmark of a fine writer, Funchion excels at it.

His story, "The Ball," begins: "Someone once suggested that the dawn of knowledge is usually a false dawn." With that line worthy of Poe, we are thrust into the terror of a radioactive nasal probe's failure to burn open Funchion's sinus. Resorting to hammer and chisel Dr. O'Brien shapes the nose, with 'thunk, thunk' of breaking cartilage. Mixed with the doctor's smoke and phlegm, Funchion struggles to explain: "Yez dongctah I wsz stupid. No dongctah, I waz not rezponzible."

The title story, "My Father's Dented Cans," reveals survival lessons from the fringe taught by the mercurial, Dickensian head of a bulging household. This is not cheaper by the dozen. The father's alcoholism ultimately wrecks havoc on the family.

A vivid report, "The Brook 1," introduces a seminal event: the family's first-born, three-year old Ned, drowns in a nearby spring-swollen brook. The following story, "The Brook 2," transforms and re-envision the brook by children from a place of tragedy into a place of youthful, exuberant joy. Funchion seems to say, along with Walt Whitman, this soiled world is washed again and again.

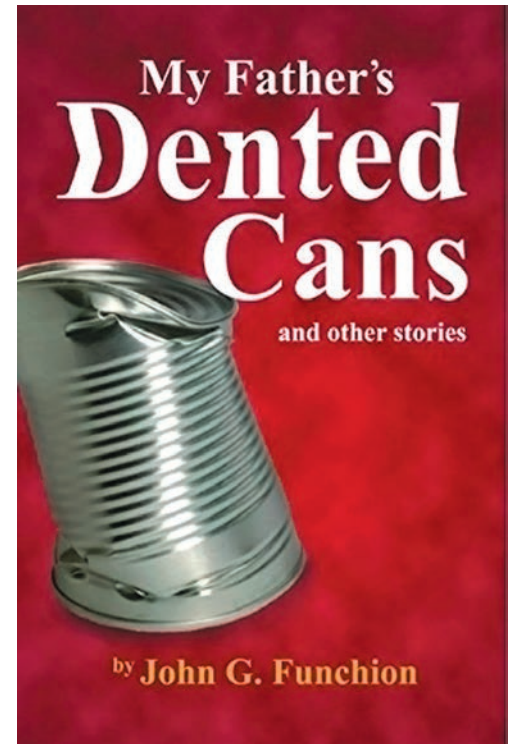
"The Bar" is an oblique attempt to come to grips with his father's allure of liquor. "From any barstool at your watering hole of choice, successes of the day and broken-down past dreams intermingle with one's solace or euphoria, depending upon each sip of booze lifting one away from his/her own reality." With a tour de force of mirrors, colored bottles and phantoms, John visits a world-wide plethora of watering holes – only Harry Hope's bar from Eugene O'Neill is missing.

How did Funchion surmount this inauspicious beginning to earn a B.A. in English, an M.A. in the Psychology of Reading, both from Temple University, and fulfill a distinguished teaching career in Connecticut? While the reminiscent "My Jobs" presents a virtual tutorial in the serpentine trajectory of success, "Test Tubes and the Little Milk Truck" provides a clue: "It is the universal challenge of survival that often fires up the human spirit to levels thought impossible ... and I endure."

More than one who endures, John Funchion is a keen observer who finds astonishing beauty in the commonplace. A winning literary strategy is to begin a story with a mundane statement of fact which expands into a fascinating discourse of details. Funchion excels at it. An appreciation of the sensual courses through the collection. His prose flows in long, undulating, strong strokes in the triffecta of "Swimming," "Floating," and "A Swimmer's Defiance of Time."

From "Floating:" "Like a lighthouse in the fog, floating is a beacon of awareness that flushes out the senses, leaving only the essential bareness of thought necessary for our existence. Time becomes meaningless; there is no space. You are alone with you innermost self, such as no other moment. You become part of that very sea from which you evolved."

In "The Kiss," John uses Rodin's marble sculpture of Francesca and Paolo as a key unlocking John's memory of his own first kiss.



Innocent, unsure, an awkward youth of sixteen, John finds himself on the beach in his reminiscence. "How and why I landed on that beach is a mystery to me," he writes. A campfire, lissome bodies, giggling, a suggestion of intimate exploration, and John drifts beyond the glow of the fire with a Greek girl: "tall, with long black, shiny hair, an aquiline nose and deep nutmeg brown eyes." Rodin's two sculptured figures play in counterpoint to John, enveloped in strong, amorous feelings: He "kept staring at this beautiful girl, the daughter of an undertaker."

Locked in time, Paolo and Francesca will never kiss and John will never again kiss the Greek girl. But you should hasten to acquire "My Father's Dented Cans and Other Stories." John Funchion's book is a delightful read. ♡

Order from fgilbert@snet.net. or send \$13.00 to John Funchion, 6 Grant Street, Box 12, Norfolk, CT 06058. Book also available on Amazon Kindle for \$8.99.

Editor's note: A resident of Norfolk, John Funchion, the author of My Father's Dented Cans and Other Stories, is an honorary Sandisfielder. He has been a member of the Sandisfield Players for years; many playgoers will recall his performance as the undertaker in "Our Town." Our reviewer, Charles Fidler, also of Norfolk and like John an honorary Sandisfielder, is a major musical talent, comedian, and tragedian who has served as Ben Luxon's right-hand man in Players' performances since 2013.

Berkshire Rehab News

CENTER RECEIVES FIVE STARS

The staff of the Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center on Rt. 57 in New Boston is proud of the care its staff provides to the 57 gentlemen who call the place home.

They are also proud that their Center was again awarded a five-star rating by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, based on health inspections, staffing, and eleven other quality measures. The CMS created the Five-Star Quality Rating System to help families and caregivers compare skilled nursing facilities. This is the sixth year the Center has maintained that same high rating.

On April 3, a Tuesday, Center residents and staff will hold a "Pie Social" for members of the Sandisfield Council on Aging.

On March 7, the Center held its second annual Valentine Pink Bakeoff Challenge. The staff baked a variety of cupcakes, all decorated with a wide range of pink frosting. Each entry was judged by residents and rated based on presentation and, more important, taste.

The Center celebrated Mardi Gras again in February with a "Fat Tuesday" Pancake Breakfast for residents and staff. After breakfast Afterwards everyone joined in a festive Mardi Gras celebration. One popular event was a treasure hunt held throughout the day. First-, second- and third-place winners won prizes. This activity has been a group favorite with the residents and staff for many years.

Sandisfield Historical Society



Events May-July Save the Dates

By Ann Wald, President

Following is a schedule of our plans for this spring and summer.

May 5. Appraisal Day. Bring your antiques to find out what they are and how much they're worth. 10 a.m.-around 4 p.m. At the Old Meeting House on Rt. 183 at South Sandisfield Road. David LeBeau will be the appraiser.

July 7. Flea Market, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at Firehouse #2 on Rt. 57. This event has been growing and the hall now fills with vendors. We'll make room for you if you'd like to be a vendor. Call me or send an e-mail.

Contact me if you want to be a vendor at the Flea Market, with ideas on what the Society might present or do this summer, and how you would be willing to help us. I'm at 258-4415 or annaw2@verizon.net.

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Winter on Silverbrook Road

Winter, or at least snow, didn't want to leave Sandisfield (or elsewhere in the Berkshires). But it finally has. Here is a sweet reminder of what it looked like when so much of it was here.

Photos: Setsuko Winchester



Police/Fire/EMS Logs



POLICE:

January 2018 Incidents

- Jan. 1 Fire/mutual aid Granville
- Jan. 1 Heat alarm, Lake Shore Drive, Otis Woodlands
- Jan. 2 Well-being check, Beech Plain Road
- Jan. 3 Medical, ambulance response
- Jan. 4 Disabled motor vehicle, West Street
- Jan. 5 Medical, Sandisfield Road
- Jan. 6 Motor vehicle accident, Fox Road
- Jan. 8 Fire alarm, Sandisfield Road
- Jan. 8 Motor vehicle accident, Tolland
- Jan. 10 Abandoned motor vehicle, West Street
- Jan. 11 Medical, Rood Hill Road
- Jan. 11 House alarm, Gremler Road
- Jan. 12 Medical, Sandisfield Road
- Jan. 12 Medical, Section 12, Sandisfield Road
- Jan. 12 Medical, Deer Run, Otis Woodlands
- Jan. 13 Complaint on road condition, rocks removed
- Jan. 13 Disturbance, West Street, criminal complaint
- Jan. 14 Medical, Tolland
- Jan. 15 Motor vehicle accident, North Main Street
- Jan. 16 Erratic operator, South Main Street
- Jan. 18 Motor vehicle accident, North Main Street
- Jan. 20 Medical, Sandisfield Road
- Jan. 21 Dog bites, Colebrook Reservoir
- Jan. 21 Tree on electrical wires, South Main Street
- Jan. 22 Medical, Tolland
- Jan. 23 Road condition, Cold Spring Road
- Jan. 23 Motor vehicle accident, Sandy Brook Turnpike
- Jan. 24 Lock-out, Beech Plain Road
- Jan. 25 Medical, Tolland
- Jan. 25 Suspicious activity, Silverbrook Road
- Jan. 25 Served court papers, Dodd Road
- Jan. 26 CO detector, Sandisfield Road
- Jan. 27 Burglar alarm, Gremler Road

- Jan. 27 Medical, Tolland
- Jan. 29 Burglar alarm, Gremler Road
- Jan. 29 Medical, Section 12, Sandisfield Road
- Jan. 29 Noise complaint, Town Hill Road

February 2018 Incidents

- Feb. 1 Motor vehicle accident, Sandisfield Road, towed
- Feb. 2 Wires down, Sandisfield Road
- Feb. 3 Mutual aid, fire, to Granville
- Feb. 4 Motor vehicle accident, North Main Street, towed
- Feb. 11 Breaking & Entering, Silverbrook Road, subject detained
- Feb. 11 Vehicle off road, Silverbrook Road, towed
- Feb. 12 Medical call, Sandisfield Road, transported
- Feb. 13 Medical call, Sandisfield Road, transported
- Feb. 17 Motor vehicle accident, North Main Street, aid rendered
- Feb. 21 Burglar alarm, Otis Woodlands, secure
- Feb. 22 Suspicious vehicle, South Main Street, unfounded
- Feb. 25 Fire alarm, South Beech Plain Road, false alarm
- Feb. 27 Vandalism, Silverbrook Road, responded



FIRE:

January 2018 Incidents

- Jan. 1 Standby at Tolland Fire Station, Tolland mutual aid to Granville
- Jan. 8 Fire alarm activation, investigate. No fire.
- Jan. 18 Motor vehicle rollover
- Jan. 27 Carbon monoxide detector activation, investigate

February 2018 Incidents

- Feb. 2 Power lines down
- Feb. 3 Mutual aid w/ tanker, Granville, structure fire
- Feb. 4 Motor vehicle accident, assist
- Feb. 17 Motor vehicle accident, assist
- Feb. 25 Mutual aid, Tolland, chimney fire assist



EMS:

January 2018 Incidents

- Jan. 2 Medical call, patient transported to hospital
- Jan. 3 Medical call, one Sandisfield EMT and one New Marlborough EMT, patient transported to Berkshire Medical Center, Pittsfield
- Jan. 5 Medical call, patient transported to Fairview Hospital, Great Barrington
- Jan. 8 Motor vehicle rollover, mutual aid to Tolland
- Jan. 11 Medical call, New Marlborough and Southern Berkshire Volunteer Ambulance Squad responded
- Jan. 12 Medical call, Otis Ambulance responded
- Jan. 14 Medical call, mutual aid to Tolland, patient transported to Noble Hospital in Westfield
- Jan. 18 Motor vehicle rollover, Otis responded
- Jan. 20 Medical call, patient transported to Fairview Hospital
- Jan. 21 Medical call at Colebrook Reservoir, no transport
- Jan. 22 Medical call, mutual aid to Tolland, transport to Noble Hospital
- Jan. 25 Medical call, mutual aid to Tolland, transport to Noble Hospital
- Jan. 27 Medical call, mutual aid to Tolland, transport to Noble Hospital
- Jan. 28 Medical call, patient transported to Berkshire Medical Center

February 2018 Incidents

- Feb. 4 Motor vehicle accident, transport to Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Tolland
- Feb. 12 Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital
- Feb. 13 Medical call, transport to Berkshire Medical Center
- Feb. 17 Motor vehicle accident, transport to Charlotte Hungerford
- Feb. 18 Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital



The Arts Center, 2018

VIBRANT PROGRAMS AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

By Hilde Weisert

Through the generosity, hard work, and imagination of this community – audience and friends, our many volunteers, wonderful Board members and past presidents -- our “gem in the woods” Sandisfield Arts Center has grown to be one of Berkshire County’s significant arts organizations. Our programs are varied and inclusive, from pumpkin carving and free film nights to full stage productions and concerts. Our beautiful historic building has been strengthened and refurbished, and our audience grows each season. We have grown up.

But how do we keep that momentum and growth and position ourselves for the future? In 2016, co-presidents Sandy Parisky and Susie Crofut charged a Board Development Committee to examine our internal workings and help us move from the kitchen-table phase to a structure that will keep the spirit and energy alive and flourishing for decades to come.

With that mission in mind, Board members Ed Brozman, Sheila Liberman, Barb Penn, Rosanne Skrip, and I set to work – with input from Susie, Sandy, committee chairs, and others – to document good practices, committee guidelines, and other procedures so that future leaders wouldn’t have to reinvent the wheel.

2018 will be an important transitional year. With March the scheduled end of Susie and Sandy’s terms as co-president, the Center faced an immediate leadership gap. To fill it, the Board has adopted an innovative interim leadership model.

For now, Ed, Sheila, Barb, Rosanne, and I will serve as co-presidents, working with the Board of Directors and volunteers, to present an exciting season of programs and gallery shows. Our goal is to make all we that we do sustainable. This year we’ll add missing pieces, such as an official volunteer program and a modern website. Susie Crofut will serve as “consultant/mentor” to our team.

Look for more on our 2018 season and plans in next month’s Times. You can learn more about the Board of Directors and the co-president team at sandisfieldartscenter.org/board-of-directors.

And please join us on Saturday, April 28 at 2 p.m., when our 2018 season kicks off with a free opening reception for “April in the Gallery” of paintings by Erika Crofut. 

SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER



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Sandisfield, MA
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SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG

APRIL

In the Gallery

APRIL 28 - MAY 27

Erika Crofut

RECEPTION: SAT, APRIL 28, 2 - 4 PM

MAY

SAT, MAY 5 6 PM \$88

Annual Spring Dinner & Auction!

This year the theme for this annual event is **The Piano and the Building That Houses It**. The color scheme will be black and white.

Enjoy cocktails at 6, followed by a delicious dinner prepared by our very own chef, Adam Manacher.

To benefit the Sandisfield Arts Center (reservations required)

SAT, MAY 12 4 PM \$10

Sarah Jackson on Age and Beauty

SAT, MAY 19 7 PM \$15
children under 12 - \$5

Family Cabaret with Anni Crofut

Featuring acts by performing artists from the Berkshires. All proceeds support the Arts Center 2018 season of programs.



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

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Letters to the Editor

Support the DPW Committee

Thanks to David Hubbard for his article "Before We Build a New Garage" in the March Times. He's exactly right that the tragedy of losing our highway garage is also a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Leaving out the school expense, maintaining our roads and bridges consumes most of our town budget, and we need to be assured that our money is wisely and effectively spent. Too often this has been the "elephant in the room" that nearly everyone complains about privately but seldom is deeply dealt with in public.

Mr. Hubbard's questions need to be addressed, even though the answers may not be simple. The new Highway Department Committee is a great place to start. I urge all of us to support this committee in every way we can - contact the chair Brian O'Rourke, join, attend meetings, ask questions: these are big and expensive issues that affect each of us every day, and their decisions may shape our town for decades to come.

- George Riley
Cronk Road



Yanner Park

Thank you to Bob Tarasuk and Adam Brown for shining a spotlight on Yanner Park, in the March issue of the Sandisfield Times. ("Harvesting Yanner Park: And The Income Goes Where?")

I have often wondered why the land Jack Yanner gave to the Town for recreational purposes has never been developed? Thanks to the reporting by Tarasuk and Brown, I can stop wondering. They report that the timber on the land is being 'harvested' and that money generated from its sale is going into the Town's general fund.

Now when I drive past Yanner Park, I won't wonder whatever happened to Yanner Park? Instead, I'll ask: *What would Jack Yanner say if he knew that his gift of land for recreational purposes had become the Town's cash cow?*

- Miriam Karmel
River Road

Welcome Back, Bears

By Connie Canty

April is here. The bears will be waking soon, if not already.

I have heard of a few bear sitings already, but many may have gone back to their dens after the false spring turned again to winter.

Learning how the bears interpret the world can help us to interact with them in a peaceful way. Our bears are black bears which are seldom known to be aggressive, unless provoked. Do not approach them, but they are actually shy and generally run away when they see a person.

The following websites are interesting, entertaining, and informative:

- Bearsmart.com
- Facebook:bearsmart
- Twitter/Instagram:@bearsmart
- You Tube: Get Bear Smart TV
bearsmart.com/live/program

"What is a man (or woman or child) without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, people would die from great loneliness of spirit, for whatever happens to the beasts also happens to us. All things are connected. This we know. Whatever befalls the Earth befalls we who are part of the Earth. People did not weave the web of life, we are merely strands of it. Whatever we do to the web we do to ourselves."

- Chief Seattle

(Some words were changed to make the above inclusive to all.)



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Now Hear This!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

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

APRIL

Playgroup on Mondays from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. ongoing at the Sandisfield Library Community Room (below the library). No pre-registration necessary. Suitable for children up to age 5 with their caregiver. The playgroup features a story time in the library. Led by Nina Carr.

Qi Gong begins in April. Contact Linda (258-4816) or Nina (258-3314) for more information.

Pie Social for COA members on Tuesday, April 3, at 1:30 p.m. at the Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center, Route 57.

New Boston Church Service on Sunday, April 8, at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57.

Crafts with Lynn at the Library on Saturday, April 14, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Crafts are designed for children ages 2-12. Story time in the library at 9:30 a.m. Please call the library, 258-4966, for more information.

Carolina Snowflakes Weaving Workshop with Ann Clark on Monday, April 16, at 2:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging, basement level of the Town Hall Annex, Route 57. Interested individuals should pre-register with Linda (258-4816) to ensure enough materials for the workshop are available for all.

Wacky Wednesday in the Library on Wednesday, April 18, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Bored during spring break? Come to the Library/Community Center and get really BOARD ... with games. This Community Center Committee-sponsored event will feature board games and snacks for children ages 2-12. Sneaky Squirrel, Yahtzee, Pictionary, Monopoly, more!

Lunch & a Movie! on Monday, April 23, at 12:00 p.m. at the Gilson Theater in Winsted. The movie will be "Murder on the Orient Express" sponsored by the Council on Aging. Please call Linda (258-4816) or Nina (258-3314) for more information.

Blood Pressure Clinic on Wednesday, April 25, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging meeting area, basement level at the Town Hall Annex, Route 57.

2018 Opening Reception. Works by Erika Crofut on Saturday, April 28 at 2:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center at 5 Hammertown Road off Rt. 57.

Celebration of the Life of Sandy Parisky on Sunday, April 29, at 1:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road, off Route

57 in Sandisfield. With song and singing, stories, tears, and laughter, the Sandisfield Arts Center and community members will celebrate this exceptional friend. All are welcome.

SAVE THE DATE!

Meet the Candidates on Saturday, May 2 at 12:00 noon at the Council on Aging meeting, Town Hall Annex basement, Rt. 57.

Under One Sky with Storyteller Davis Bates on Saturday, May 12, at 11:00 a.m. at the Sandisfield Library. Celebrate spring, reading, and the diverse heritage of New England with sing-alongs, music, and folk tales. The program is supported by the Sandisfield Cultural Council.

Hike the Historic Knox Trail on Thursday, May 10. Journey with Otis historian Tom Ragusa for a hike on the Knox Trail, back to the 18th century following in the footsteps of Patriot Surveyor Nathaniel Austin of Sheffield. Tom will unravel facts and misconceptions about the notorious 1764 road survey of the trail through Otis and Sandisfield. Meet at Otis Library and Museum. Further details in next month's Times or contact Tom at 413-269-7209 or by email at TomnCin14323@aol.com.

APRIL EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Matter of Balance Classes begin Friday, April 6, for 8 weeks from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Monterey Community Center at 468 Main Road.

Paint Your Home Workshop on Saturday, April 14, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Monterey Community Center at 468 Main Road. Monterey painter, Joe Baker, will engage and enrich beginning and experienced painters during this all-day workshop. Participants should bring sketches, paintings, and/or photos of their home and bring their own painting materials. Pre-registration is required (visit ccomonterey.org). \$50.



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Interested artists should contact Elizabeth Lombardi for a prospectus at elizabeth.mill.river@gmail.com or at 413-229-8972

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THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



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*The Times is grateful to readers
who have donated this month.*

Barbara Penn

Fred Newman

Ray Tryon



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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.

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

Diner, Otis Poultry Farm, Otis Woodlands (May-September), Knox Trail Inn, 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.

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

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

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