THE SANDISFIELD TIMES







RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume IX, Number 7

October 2018



Photo: Jean Atwater-Williams

And They're Off! First Annual Sandisfield 5K Run a Winner

By Ron Bernard

On a beautiful early fall Sunday morning runners and walkers aged 7 to 73 – in various shapes and sizes (including one dog and at least one occupied stroller) – set out on newly-regraded Cold Spring Road for fun and exercise in Sandisfield's first annual 5K run. Five kilometers is not that long, 3.1 miles, but it was fun to run or walk along Cold Spring and hang out with other people who like to be outdoors in the early fall.

A heavy, rolling autumn mist that had shrouded nearby Spectacle Pond all morning lifted and a sunny blue sky appeared just in time for the starter's signal.

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The group was composed of competitive runners as well as joggers and brisk and slow walkers, all with one thing in mind: make it to the finish line as best they could, which they did. Forty-four participants pre-registered, six registered on race day, and about a dozen of the walkers did not register, just walked.

Sandisfield emergency responders were on hand, just-in-case, but there was no need for services. Our local police department provided road and event security.

Net proceeds from event fees will benefit the Sandisfield Community Center and the Library, the organizations which planned the run. The Berkshire Running Center of Pittsfield helped organize the event. Event planners were Billie Jean Pachulski, Terry Spohnholz, Chrissy O'Brien, and Roger Kohler.

Runners received a "goodie bag" courtesy of A&M Auto, MJ Tuckers and Villa Mia restaurants, Rose Nelson at Sunny Rose Farm, Joanne Olson, the Sandisfield Arts Center, and Berkshire Bank. Villa Mia reported that about ten families accepted their invitation of 10 percent off the cost of their supper.

Following the event, participants gathered at the Sandisfield Arts Center for an awards ceremony and refreshments.

Everyone – participants, onlookers, family members, and workers – had a lot of fun. And some won medals. Other pluses were that our

planners gained valuable experience for an even bigger event next year and many out-of-towners may have learned exactly where Sandisfield is.



(For more photos see page 11)

Photo: Eric Palchulski

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Call for Grant Applications

DEADLINE: OCTOBER 15

The Sandisfield Cultural Council invites artists, artisans, educators, and performers from Massachusetts to apply for state and town funding for cultural programs that will benefit Sandisfield residents in 2019. Our mission is to provide access, education, and diversity in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sciences for adults, teens, and children in our community.

Applications must be submitted online. Go to www. mass-culture.org, click on the "Applicants" button and follow the instructions.

Applications must be submitted NO LATER THAN MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2018.

For more information, send email inquiries to culturalco.sandisfield@gmail.com. Or leave a message at (907) 244-6466 for Theresa Spohnholz, chair.

Bring Your Kids to Playgroup

By Nina Carr

A quick reminder that the two playgroups in the area, sponsored by Southern Berkshire Kids, are continuing to meet on a regular basis.

On Mondays we meet at the Sandisfield Library from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m.. On Tuesdays we meet in the gym at the Otis Town Hall from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

No pre-registration is necessary for either group. The program is appropriate for children from birth to five years, and their caregivers. We enjoy free play, art projects, and story time together. Come join us. Caregivers have as much fun as the kids!



Special Town Meeting, October 16

A special town meeting will be held at Old Town Hall on Tuesday, October 16, at 7:00 p.m. General purposes will be:

- 1. To vote on the method to be used to pay for part of the Rugg Bridge repair. The funds are allocated, but the Select Board is seeking changes in how the funds will be appropriated.
- 2. To authorize purchase of a CPR System for the Fire/Ambulance Services.
- 3. To move funds into the Yanner Park account.
- 4. To make zoning bylaw changes to accommodate state regulations and others to update the solar field bylaw to accommodate the Green Community designation.

The official warrant has been issued. It is available at Town Hall and on the town's website at www. sandisfieldma.gov.

State-Wide Election, November

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK

Dolores Harasyko, Town Clerk Pauline Bakunis, Asst. Town Clerk

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Dolores or Pauline at 258-4711, ext. 2.

The State Election will be held November 6, 2018, at Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The last day to register to vote if you are not already registered is October 17, 2018. You can call us any time to confirm your voter registration status.

As always, if you cannot make it to Old Town Hall on Nov. 6 to vote you have options. You can request an absentee ballot for three specific reasons:

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

To get an absentee ballot, you will need to fill out an absentee ballot application. The applications are available now. This is especially helpful if you have students away at school. A family member can come to Town Hall and fill out the application for the student. We will mail the ballot to their school address. Absentee ballots are usually available three weeks before the election. The last day to vote absentee is November 5, 2018, 12:00 noon.

We also have Early Voting for state and federal elections. You can come to the office of the Town Clerk and vote in person before the election. This process does not involve applications or reasons – it is simply a convenience for you to get out and vote. After voting, you will seal your ballot in an envelope which is then locked up until election day. Early Voting is in the Town Clerk's office at Town Hall Annex, 66 Sandisfield Road.

The schedule for Early Voting is as follows:

- Monday, October 22, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 23, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and 6 to 8 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 24, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Thursday, October 25, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and 6 to 8 p.m.
- Friday, October 26, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Monday, October 29, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 30, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and 6 to 8 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 31, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Thursday, November 1, also 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Friday, November 2, also from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. 🕡

Tax Allocation Hearing

The Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing to determine the allocation of the local property tax levy among the four classes of Real Property for the Fiscal Year 2019. The Board of Assessors will discuss and present alternatives for allocation of the tax among the four classes of property. Interested parties are asked to attend. October 9, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall Annex.

DPW Superintendent on Administrative Leave

DECISION DELAYED UNTIL OCTOBER 10

By Brigitte Ruthman and Simon Winchester

A terse statement from the town's Select Board the night of Tuesday, October 2, delayed developments in what has been a puzzling new relationship with its highway superintendent, Robert "Bobby" O'Brien.

On Tuesday, October 2, a day the three-member board was to have met in executive session to decide how to move forward with information that, in theory, would then have been available to them, the decision was instead to delay action following submission of another employee's resignation.

"The Select Board has received the resignation of Dawn Odell-Lemon from her positions of Town Accountant, DPW Superintendent Secretary, Finance Committee Consultant, Planning Board Secretary, and Website Administrator, effective October 16, 2018," the statement said.

The planned executive session was delayed until October 10.

Appointed in December of 2015, and given raises which put his salary at over \$68,000 plus benefits, Mr. O'Brien was placed on paid administrative leave with pay and compelled to surrender his keys and official vehicle on the morning of September 24. There was no further explanation offered when the question of his whereabouts at a September 24 Select Board meeting came up. A clearly discomfited Board Chairman Mark Newman had nothing more to say.

O'Brien's absence from the September 24 meeting was conspicuous. Normally, highway matters take precedence on the weekly agenda, and the highway superintendent is there to elaborate on matters.

Rugg Bridge Closing Again

SPAN CLOSED FIVE DAYS FOR REPAIR

By Seth Kershner

Town officials hope that a five-day closure will finally resolve problems with Rugg Bridge.

Installed earlier this year by J.H. Maxymillian, Inc., the bridge deck's expansion joints—which are designed to expand and contract with temperature—have been expanding more than engineers anticipated. "If they don't fix it correctly," Highway Superintendent Bobby O'Brien said at a Board of Selectmen meeting in late August, "our plows will start peeling more of that off the deck in the winter. It's in Maxymillian's best interest to take care of it now."

And take care of it they will during the week of October 8-12. For those five days of repairs, traffic along Route 57 will again be routed through River Road. As this issue of the Times goes to press, the Town is in negotiations with Maxymillian to cover the cost of bringing in a temporary stoplight to make conditions safer for residents of River Road.

A strict 'no comment' stance at Town Hall since then has failed to offer even a hint as to what aspect of Mr. O'Brien's superintendency is the subject of an investigation.

The news sent a shudder of apprehension through a town where highway issues—most especially in the coming winter—are of paramount importance. Rumors of an impending move involving an as then-unnamed town official had begun to swirl some ten days previously when the Selectmen announced that they would be holding a closed door-session, in keeping with municipal open-meeting rules, to discuss personnel and a possible criminal matter.

There was no confirmation that this discussion involved O'Brien.

Reached at his home, O'Brien said, "No comment. Not at this time."



Bobby O'Brien, DPW Superintendent, during the garage fire, December 2017. Photo: Simon Winchester

Town officials, speaking privately, said the matters such as they were investigating could be dealt with in two ways: either administratively, meaning that a public official found to have committed some malfeasance might be demoted, reassigned, or dismissed; or criminally, in which case the details would be sent to the local police in the expectation of the issuing of an arrest warrant.

Hammertown Road Wash Out

Photo and report by Ron Bernard

Hammertown (and other roads) suffered severe erosion late September after thunderstorms dumped almost 5 inches of rain on the town. Laid out in the 18th century, Hammertown has been improved since then but is still an adventure to drive. Since the town was organized, it has



been an important connector between Montville and the Beech Plain section.

Contributing to the current problem was little annual repair/regrading this spring followed by the very wet summer. Pipeline construction in 2017 and major logging by the State and the Town since mid-summer and clogged culverts are also significant factors.

The DPW has attempted to repair the road by hauling so many loads of gravel up there they've lost count and worked on it all day October 2. It is passable, but still an adventure to drive and is best attempted in a heavy-duty vehicle.

In the meantime, Sullivan Road is underwater from a washed out beaver dam, Silverbrook Road needs help again in the sandy section and up the hill, and other roads are demanding attention. And winter is coming. Hammertown, at least, receives no winter maintenance.

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My Coyote, Wolf

By Brigitte Ruthman

Ahab had his Moby Dick. I have my coyote, Wolf.

Her cold eyes reflect light just inside the hedgerow, waiting on the right moment to slip in under darkness. On another day, she is waiting on the other side when a stray hen is lost in the pursuit of grasshoppers within reach after flying over the electric fence.

Wolf lunges only after the cars in the driveway have been counted to be sure no one sees. A pile of feathers is all she leaves.

She is the alpha female of a small pack that has split into two in the state forest and is hungry now as the few surviving fawns – mostly male – are quick enough to avoid her. She teaches her pups caution, knowing the reach of the gun and its dependence on daylight, and maintains an odd balance in that way. At night, they make good work of the abundant and destructive gnawing mice and moles.

Occasionally, the lure of a blood feast will pull a young one within range. But their numbers seem to swell no matter how many are shot in the act of stealing.

Wolf's sinewy form is sometimes visible in the half light, in a trot that seems to swim through the orchard then melt into it. Hers is a toughness and intelligence few predators roaming New England forests can rival.

Bobcats, fishers, and bears leave room for the canids to prey on rabbits, small game, and especially the young fawns, though the foxes are moved off. The deer population, which swelled in the late 1900s when the coyotes were returning to the East Coast, has in some places been decimated as the balance swings hard in the coyotes favor.

Like here. Hardly a fawn is seen these days, and

once in a while a doe that has lost one.

The coyotes, confirmed through DNA to have crossbred with wolves and even feral dogs as they pushed eastward through Michigan, have reclaimed territory left by the extirpation of wolves a couple of hundred years ago. The pretty yellow-brown coyote coats have mingled with the darker wolves. Their heads are thicker and these animals are known to hunt in packs, unlike coyotes.

One morning in August I awoke to the muffled cry of my morning rooster call. I sleep lightly, at the ready for anything amiss.

The rooster, a sweet big Buff Orphington named George, would rise every morning by snapping his wings and crowed on cue from Spring through Fall when I returned him to winter quarters in the henhouse. His routine at daybreak was to visit the hens behind a protective screen in the Amish chicken tractor.

But his cry this morning was of danger. I looked out in time to see Wolf closing in on George. Like an F-16 swooping down, she grabbed the rooster's tail. I yelled. George was free for ten yards, then the jaws clamped shut around him. Wolf was oblivious to my frantic voice.

I grabbed the gun. I needed eight seconds, and had just seven before both were gone. A pile of feathers was left of George.

I hear their voices in the early morning hours, usually when they have a kill to share. It is a cold, purely wild, and haunting sound.

I think of Ahab, and nature's calm impersonal strength that beat his obsession for revenge. The whale wins, and so does Wolf. Maybe I want it that way.



Select Board Report

Sometimes it seems like we're dealing with the same issues month after month. While progress is being made, it's usually much slower than we'd all like. Old issues, like the York Lake bathrooms, were finally resolved to our satisfaction. And the new budget process has been ironed out, though it still needs a bylaw change.

We recently learned that the Assessors' office has been struggling with inadequate computer speeds and inability to interface with the tax collection and accounting data. In addition, a lack of off-site backup for our data is a security issue. We're working to resolve this.

Other issues are more stubborn: the Rugg Bridge, now nearly done, has involved extensive meetings and negotiations to try to resolve a problem with the decking joints. We want a solution that we can feel confident will last 15 years or more; the contractor prefers a quick fix.

Illegal campers remain a problem, and the solution is cumbersome. And Cold Spring Road, which was scheduled for chip sealing in August, is still not done. Hot weather—needed to settle the new surface—is now becoming scarce.

Probably the most frustrating long-term issue has been, and continues to be, getting broadband internet into Sandisfield. At this point the Broadband Committee has only one provider in mind, and that situation has been stalled for months. Meanwhile the towns around us are getting connected. Clearly we need a different approach.

On the other hand, the new DPW building is moving right along. Concrete is being poured.

A lot of details are being dealt with in order to have the special town meeting on Oct. 16, 2018. This meeting will concern itself with several bylaw changes: some are "housekeeping" items, and two are new bylaws needed to enable the Town to be eligible for grants. There are also, as is often the case, special requests for funding.

Mark Newman Brian O'Rourke George Riley



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Magic at Hillside Garden Inn

OWNERS SAY IT HAS "Exceeded Expectations"

By Seth Kershner

Being an innkeeper is hard work, but offers lasting benefits unique to the hospitality business. This, at least, has been the experience of Steve and Rosanne Hoekstra, a couple originally from northern New Jersey who have lived in town since 2004. For the past five years, they have been running Hillside Garden Inn, located at the junction of routes 8 and 57 in New Boston.

"This is a place where people can arrive as guests and leave as friends," Rosanne said over a cup of coffee in her kitchen. Many of their guests stay in touch long after they check out. A couple that stayed at the inn over the summer recently invited the Hoekstras to spend time together at their home on the shore.

That is part of the magic of running a B&B. Which is not to say that there are no challenges.

"It used to be that there was a two-night minimum for B&Bs," Rosanne added. "Now you have to be more flexible because travelers are so accustomed to staying at an Airbnb."

Rosanne has noticed other changes, as well, perhaps attributable to the online rent-a-room giant. "People used to call and make reservations well in advance. Now they just appear at the door."

While Rosanne understands that Airbnb can be a great help to those wanting to

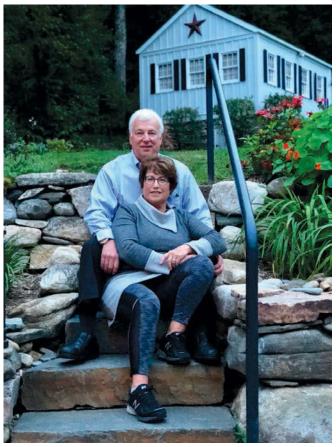
earn a little extra money, she believes those who rent their properties through the site should be regulated just like other inns and pay for a business license with the town. (Airbnb regulations have been a matter of dispute in Lenox, where a number of small innkeepers complain of losing business to the site).

Hillside Garden Inn remains competitive by offering things most Airbnbs don't (or can't). Take, for instance, their multi-course organic breakfast, featuring homemade granola and fresh fruit. All lovingly prepared by Rosanne, of course, a ServSafe-certified chef who loves to cook.

Then there is the caché of staying in an historic home.

Rosanne and her husband care for the property first built in 1784 by Elijah Twining. As Ron Bernard notes in Sandisfield Then and Now, the Twining house has changed hands several times. It was first used as an inn early in the 20th century. Back then, it went by the name Hillside Cottage and touted "First-class Board, by Day or Week."

While Hillside Garden Inn is open yearround, most of its business comes during the summer months. Guests are typically Connecticut or New York residents taking in some of the area's attractions. Steady business comes particularly from parents of children staying at Camp Kinderland



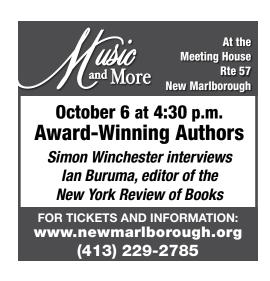
Steve and Rosanne Hoekstra, exceeding expectations.

Photo: Setsuko Winchester

or folks who are attending the Timber Trails summer dance festival (both in Tolland).

The inn features two guest rooms with a common area ideal for families traveling together. Breakfast is served on the patio looking out onto an immaculately kept garden, close to the site of a natural spring that fed neighboring mills during the Twining era.

After nearly five years, the business has "exceeded our expectations," Rosanne said. "And how often in life do you get to say that?"





Offering gracious, warm hospitality and charming, immaculate accommodations in the historic c. 1784 Elijah Twining house.



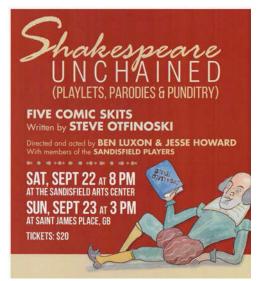
- * Five-Star Trip Advisor® Rating
- Sumptuous, Multiple-Course Homemade Breakfast
- Screened-In Patio Overlooking Tranquil, Park-like Grounds and Beautiful Lush Gardens
- Welcoming Wraparound Porch Overlooking the Farmington River
- Easy Access Flexible Check-In/Out Times



Sandisfield, Mass. 413.258.4968 www.hillsidegardeninn.com Page 6 The Sandisfield Times

Shakespeare Unchained

Photos by Cindy Ragusa



In their best comedic presentation to date, The Sandisfield Players, co-directed by Ben Luxon and Jesse Howard, on September 22 and 23 at the Arts Center and St. James Place (Great Barrington), respectively, delighted near-capacity audiences with two hilarious performances of "Shakespeare Unchained," a series of Monty Python-esque parodies by Steve Otfinoski. Judging from enthusiastic audience reaction and glowing feedback, the hope is for reprisals and new skits.



I am a Shakespeare buff and always catch at least one (affordable) live performance of something Shakespeare when in London. But I despise most of the "updated" attempts and prefer my Shakespeare in the raw. So, my expectations were in check when I entered the charming Sandisfield Playhouse for a performance of Steven Otfinoski's five mini-skits of his "Shakespeare Unchained."

I was almost immediately put at ease by the good acoustics and the quality of the individual performances. Some skits reminded me of the

"Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead" performance I saw in London this February.

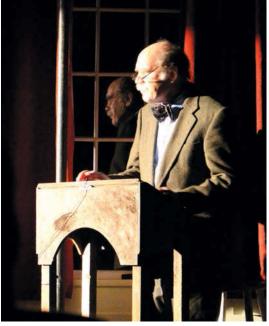
I'm not the sort who bursts out laughing, but each of the skits kept me hanging on every word. The comedy was of an extremely high caliber, and I was struck by how clever the writing was. The near-capacity crowd was clearly pleased, and there were often groups of folks laughing uproariously at different points throughout the hour.

If that show would come to West Hartford, I'd return to see it again!

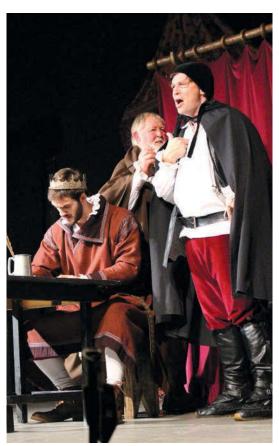
Wayne Leghorn West Hartford, Conn.



In Waiting on Will, Reid plays "Jeremy," a waiter and an aspiring actor. He exasperates diners Shakespeare (Adam) and the actor Richard Burbage (Ben) by annoyingly working in the names of Shakespeare's plays while serving.



Connecticut-based playwright, and new Sandisfield resident, Steve Otfinoski, appeared as droll "Professor Dry" who introduced each skit to his "class." Mr. Otfinoski is well known regionally for short plays and has written some 200 books for young adults. He reviews theater in the Berkshires for the New England Theater Journal.

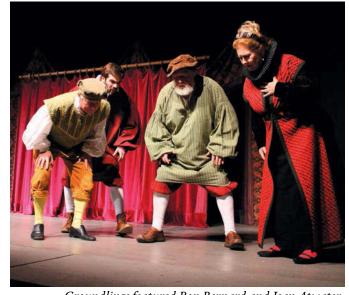


Mac and the Murderers with Reid Sinclair as Macbeth, and Ben and Jesse as bumbling murderers for hire.



A Horse! A Horse! Jesse Howard is the desperate King Richard III while Ben Luxon appears as opportunistic "Sam Smedley, dealer of new and previously-owned horses."





Groundlings featured Ron Bernard and Jean Atwater-Williams as hapless Globe Theater goers, "Harry" and "Gertrude." They were tormented by "ruffians" played by Ben and Ried. Adam Manacher, playing a student of the theater, balanced their boorishness with thoughtful asides.



It's a Tragedy is about time-traveling William Shakespeare (Ben) and Jesse as fast-talking American producer, "Bill Zaney" who audaciously attempts to get

The Bard to "improve" Hamlet.



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Council on Aging

From COA Newsletter

Welcome to Fall. We had several fun times over the summer. August 8 was a perfect day for our annual York Lake Networking Picnic. July 18, a dozen people enjoyed a hot but wonderful day/ lunch on the Essex train, followed by a trip up the Connecticut River on the Becky Thatcher steamboat.

Farmer's Market coupons have been distributed. If you are interested for next year, please contact us in order to apply during the month of June.

OCTOBER EVENTS:

October 3, 10 a.m., COA business meeting. Public welcome

October 6, we will be baking apple pies of the Historical Society's Applefest the next day, the 6th.

October 17, pizza and cards at high noon.

October 24, Blood pressure clinic, 11:00-12:00.

Also October 24, a visit from the Shine Counselor at 11:30 a.m. Bring your insurance questions and stay for lunch.

And, and, and:

November 6, get out and vote.

Except for voting in the statewide election, all events are at COA, downstairs at Town Hall Annex.

Sometimes It Just Doesn't Work

THE SILVERBROOK ON THE BLOCK AGAIN

By Bill Price

The Silverbrook Café, known far and wide as "The Best Little Honky Tonk West of the Clam River," is for sale yet again.

In late August, Connie D'Andrea announced that she and her family had re-bought her former bar and country store from TD Bank, which foreclosed on the property in 2016. Living as she did just up Silverbrook Road, Connie had to drive past the fading building nearly every day. She told The Times, "We couldn't stand it anymore with the place looking so sad. We decided to fix it up."

The building, which has seen better days, has witnessed nearly two centuries of Sandisfield's coming and going. Built as a shingle mill in the 1850s, turned into a creamery in the early 1900s, the building was refashioned as a tavern in 1935. Many town residents remember exciting evenings and dancing to very good musicians there. The building even played a starring role two years ago in a film directed by Hollywood actress and Berkshire resident Karen Allen.

Connie, who first bought the building in 2008 and operated it as a tavern/café then café/store, said in September that after the repurchase she didn't know exactly what they would do with the building, maybe a bar or store or lease it out.

She and her father started cleaning, painting the inside, shampooing rugs, painting the front and side of the building, making restorations where they could.



The Silverbrook in 2016

Connie installed a suggestion box on the front porch where town residents could leave ideas of what they wanted to see in the restored building. She retrieved five notes from the box: (1) Rolling Rock on tap, (2) a bar, (3) coffee, (4) I want a country store and breakfast, and (5) I want to purchase the Silverbrook sign. The suggestion box is closed.

Not long after last month's announcement of the restoration, Connie and her father realized, "We just can't do it." She told The Times that there was "much more to take on than we remembered."

So the Silverbrook Café is once again on the block. This time for \$119,900. Connie said they were looking for someone to make an offer. She reports that three parties are interested, and she hopes the place can be up and running again soon.

HARVEST DINNER

%Sat., Oct. 27 Firehouse #2

All the fixin's – turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, cranberry sauce, rolls, desserts. The works.

5-7 p.m. Tickets at the door and takeouts available. \$12 adults \$5 for 12 and under.

Sponsored by the New Boston Congregational Church.

Sandisfield EMS Asks for CPR Machine

DEVICE DESIGNED TO SAVE LIVES, AID EMTS

By Tim Brooks

It's a long drive from Sandisfield to one of the closest medical trauma centers. Waterbury, Pittsfield and Springfield are all a 45- to 75-minute drive away. Delivering CPR to a patient for that length of time is medically necessary in some cases, but physically taxing for the first responder. Ralph Morrison, Sandisfield's Fire and EMS Chief, may have found a solution in the form of a device that would make such harrowing journeys to the hospital a little easier.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR, is an emergency

procedure that combines chest compressions with artificial ventilation in an effort to manually preserve intact brain function until further measures are taken to restore spontaneous blood circulation and breathing in a person who is in cardiac arrest.

Once CPR is started, it must be continued until a patient is transferred to the care of a receiving hospital. Providing continual CPR to a patient in the back of a moving ambulance can be extremely difficult and unsafe for an EMT while he or she is using both hands to administer CPR.

The Stryker Chest Compression System can deliver accurate CPR while an EMT monitors vital signs, and operates the intermittent breathing device. "This device will increase our chances of saving lives in critical situations, and provide for crew safety" said Chief Morrison.

Thanks to a special negotiation in the State Legislature, the unit is available at a discounted rate of \$15,000. The Chest Compression System will be on a Warrant at the Special Town Meeting on October 16 for town residents to approve.



Gun Owners, At Ease

By Bill Price

The Times made a mistake in Rita Kasky's Out on a Limb memoir about her trip to Newtown in support of March for Our Lives/Road to Change rally in Newtown, Connecticut.

We wrote that she and Flora met friends from Sandisfield in the Villa Mia parking lot, an editing error we regret. Instead, they met friends by coincidence in a parking lot near the Newtown rally. We corrected our error in the online edition, but the paper edition included the error.

Another possible error was our choice of headline: "Town Residents Push for Gun Control." Putting that phrase at the top of a story in The Sandisfield Times was like lighting a match in a California forest. There may be more gun owners per capita in Sandisfield than in Wyoming.

We heard right away from two individuals who said we didn't get it. One said the article presented no ideas on what regulations were being proposed. Another reader said, "I'll never read that paper again."

In answer to the first individual, we print the list of proposed regulations below. Rita had enclosed them with her memoir, but we had not printed them out of concern for starting arguments back and forth. Since we've been asked, we'll include them below.

And our headline could have caused opinions to be formed at first sight. While Rita does support the regulations proposed at the rally, her piece was a memoir of her journey, not an argument for gun control. We could have headlined the memoir with something other than that lighted match.

What those at the rally were and are asking for seems reasonable, important, and does not take away Second Amendment Rights from gun owners. Here's what they want our congressional leaders to do:

- Ban semi-automatic weapons that fire high velocity rounds;
- Ban accessories that simulate automatic weapons;

- Establish a database of gun sales and universal background checks;
- Change privacy laws to allow mental health professionals to communicate with law enforcement;
- Close gun show and second-hand sales loopholes;
- Allow the Center for Disease Control to make recommendations for gun reform (i.e. conduct research on the dangers of gun violence);
- Raise the firearms purchase age to 21;
- Dedicate more funds to mental health research;
- Increase funding for school security.

Note: Since the campaign began fifty new gun laws restricting access to guns ranging from banning bump stocks to allowing authorities to temporarily disarm potentially violent people have been enacted. One of the states that passed the most restrictive laws is Vermont, which is not only full of hunters but has a Republican governor who supported the new regulations.

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

Broadband?

By Bill Price

The Broadband Committee was instructed at the October 1 Select Board meeting to return to the next board meeting, October 8, to present a plan of action regarding its choice of Crocker Communications and alternative plans in case the efforts with Crocker fail.

Jeff Bye, committee chairman, reported that the plan now was to wait for Crocker to either win or be denied a USDA grant, which could take months, and then for the town to decide whether or not to proceed with Crocker. Meanwhile, Tolland has agreed to move ahead with Crocker with or without the grant and is already a few months ahead of our town.

Selectman George Riley suggested that if the committee pursues its current course, "we could be the last town in Massachusetts to get broadband." Jeff replied that distributors did not want to serve Sandisfield because of our low density (we have only about eight houses per mile) and the fact that we are most spread out township in Berkshire County.

A detailed discussion ensued, ending with the request that the committee revisit the Select Board at its next meeting with an outline for either/or plans for moving ahead.

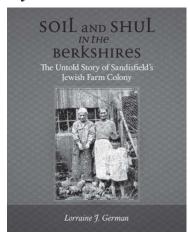




Page 10 The Sandisfield Times

Soil and Shul Is Launched

By Ron Bernard



Three years after a committee formed to plan, research, and write the story of displaced eastern European Jews from New York who settled in and around Sandisfield at the turn of the 20th century, Soil and Shul in the Berkshires: The Untold Story of Sandisfield's Jewish Farm Colony has been published.

A rare sold-out audience filled the Arts Center on September 29 to hear a presentation by the book's author, Lorraine German, who is related by marriage to later Jewish settlers. After the program Lorraine signed copies to buyers of her book, several of whom were descendants of the original farm colony. Lively entertainment was provided by Paul Green and his trio, Klezmer East.

The project was fiscally sponsored by the Sandisfield Arts Center and supported by grants from Jewish cultural organizations, the Sandisfield and Otis Cultural Councils, and individual donations.

Soil and Shul, a limited edition of 259 pages, is available through the Arts Center online at

SandisfieldArtsCenter.org/giftshop or by check to Sandisfield Arts Center, PO Box 31, Sandisfield, MA 01255. Copies are \$22. Add \$3 each if postal service required.

Read Soil and Shul

The story of the migration of Jews from the 19th century pogroms of Eastern Europe to America and finally the town of Sandisfield is a moving account of a beautiful if painful journey in Lorraine German's *Soil and Shul in the Berkshires*. Beautifully written and scrupulously researched, Ms. German shoulders her way through the anti-Semitic and anti-immigration canards, and her book emerges as a touching and gentle reminder of the ultimate decency and humanity of our town's – and our country's – formation.

Val Coleman Playwright and author of *Sandisfield Stories*

End of the Ordeal?

Photos and report by Ron Bernard

After months of unexplained delays and nearing the seasonal time limit, Kinder Morgan's contractor, All States Asphalt, has resurfaced approximately four miles of Cold Spring Road and a small section of Town Hill Road in West Otis that had been chewed up during pipeline construction the last couple years.

The major work is aimed for completion by October 6. The project took one month vs. the original estimate of two-weeks. Inclement weather throughout



September does not appear to have hampered the work but chip sealing in warm summer conditions is preferred from a quality standpoint.

The Sandisfield DPW and the Select Boards the last two years advocated unsuccessfully for asphalt but the pipeline company, required only to return the road to "original condition," insisted on chip sealing which saved them only about \$180,000. Asphalt lasts for about 15 years while the useful life of chip sealing is around five. Then what?

Editor's note: Next month we'll provide a fuller explanation of what chip sealing a road really means. We ran out of room this month.

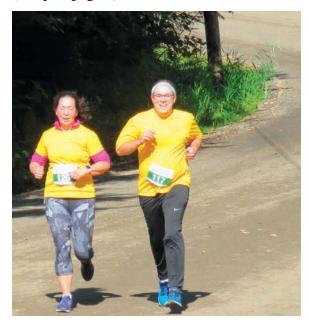


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5K RACE PHOTOS

Photos by Jean Atwater-Williams and Eric Pachulski

(Story on page 1.)











RACE RESULTS ~



Male

Nicholas Curelop 18:38:55 10.0 mph
Dillon Radasci 20:19.65
Dan Radasci 22:17.71
Female
Rebecca Hein 23:39.47
Ashley Scherben 23:43.43
Kathie Penna 25:50.81



Winning Female Rebecca Heins, 12, won with a time of 23:39. She is daughter of Dr. Katherine Heins of Viets Road and Boston.

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SPECIAL LETTER TO THE EDITOR SOLAR FIELDS

By David Hubbard

The September Sandisfield Times mentioned solar fields in the Around Town column.

The article noted that two solar panel installation firms had recently expressed interest in Townowned land, but "once the companies learned they would have to install three-phase electrical connection from the sites (which requires about \$1 million per mile to build) their applications were withdrawn."

None of that is true.

I know because I sourced and presented both proposals to the town. I measured the distance the three-phase power had to extend so that the cost could be baked into the offers. The solar firms did not withdraw. Rather, the Board of Selectman never responded to the offers.

On numerous occasions, the firms offered to attend a public hearing and answer any and all questions. Those offers were rejected. The Select Board was presented with a fully drafted lease and they refused to send it to the Town Attorney for review, refused to present it for discussion at a Select Board meeting and would not even respond to the firms to acknowledge receipt of the lease proposal.

Obtaining solar field income is totally within the control and power of the Select Board. Here is how:

- Subdivide two 20+/- acre lots out of 265-acre Yanner Park. One with an entrance and address on Town Hall Road and the other entrance and address on Hammertown Road. Subdivide two 20+/- acre lots out of 65-acre cemetery land, one with entrance and address on Route 57 and the other with an entrance and address on Silverbrook Road.
- This positions Sandisfield to qualify for four subsidies (one for each lot), which is financially important. Four subsidies and four 20-acre developments provide scale to support all infrastructure and development costs. It positions Sandisfield to achieve up to \$450,000/ year under current subsidies.
- Pass all necessary by-laws and regulations now so the solar companies can be assured of quick, certain permitting.
- Clear-cut log all 4 lots now and use the logging income to convert the lots into meadows.

Accomplishing these steps will create an economically compelling project that will attract multiple offers when presented.

The only thing preventing Sandisfield from obtaining up to \$450,000 per year in solar income is the Select Board's failure to do the necessary work.

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SELECT BOARD MEMBER REPLIES

By George Riley

The Town is NOT about to ban solar from Yanner Park. Read the Warrant for the Special Town Meeting on October 16, and you'll see that the Town wants to CREATE a special district, where solar installations are allowed "By-Right," meaning that in this district, solar installations do not need a Special Permit. Yanner Park is not included in this district, which only means that a solar installation there would need a special permit, as it would anywhere else in town.

Your article to the Times also contains numerous inaccuracies. I cannot attest to what may or may not have happened with previous Select Boards, but I know for a fact that we had a solar company contact us in August of this year asking for a meeting to discuss solar fields on Town-owned land, which we gladly agreed to. However, prior to the date of the scheduled meeting, the company called to cancel it, saying that their engineers had looked at the sites and rejected them due to the unavailability of nearby three-phase power. That is a fact, which was reported accurately by The Times.

You urge in your letter that the Select Board should "Pass all necessary by-laws and regulations now so the solar companies can be assured of quick, certain permitting." That is precisely what the Board is proposing with this bylaw.

A REPLY TO THE REPLY

By David Hubbard

I want to make clear that my recitation of facts regarding the two solar offers I brought to town is completely accurate and the drafted lease that was offered is available to all to see. The fact that a third group came to town and left due to the cost of three-phase power simply proves my point. We will not get solar income unless we subdivide the land, permit the land, clear the land, and proactively market the large scale project. Is the select board going to take these simple steps?

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By the end of September, the concrete foundations had been dug and poured and the steel framework erected. The new garage is a bit larger, with bays on the side rather than the end of the building. BETNR Construction of Pittsfield expects to finish their work in about two months.

Photo: Bill Price

Yanner Park Moving Forward

By Adam Brown, Committee Chairman

The first two meetings of the Yanner Park Committee focused on examining new and old suggestions for recreational improvements on the property while getting some basic improvements in place before moving on to larger projects. Committee members are Jess Cofrin, Kathy Jacobs, Roger Kohler, Sue Tarasuk, Bob Tarasuk, and Alex Tinari.

A warrant item at the Special Town Meeting on October 16 is a vote on moving funds into the Yanner Park account so we can pursue a few of those improvements. You may recall that the fund was created at this year's Annual Town Meeting

but the money from past fundraising efforts and from the ongoing timber harvest has not yet been moved into the account.

Initial plans include restoring the sign at the entrance on Town Hill Road, installing an informational kiosk, early planning for parking, and community events on site next spring and summer. Another opportunity to vote on moving additional funds into the Park's account will be at the Annual Town Meeting in May. By that time the committee hopes to have a more fully-developed plan for the property. The committee is excited that there is now momentum building - we hope that the community will be interested in seeing this project through and helping to create a great resource for all of Sandisfield to enjoy well into the future.

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The Past Made New in September

LOCAL LANDSCAPES AND PUMPKINS IN OCTOBER

By Hilde Weisert

September at the Sandisfield Arts Center brought old familiars (Lincoln, Shakespeare) to life through new eyes, and let us hear a fascinating part of our town's own history in a debut reading by Lorraine German of her book, Soil and Shul in the Berkshires, to the accompaniment of Paul Green's Klezmer East.

Especially moving to me was Val Coleman's talk on Abraham Lincoln. With vigorous, eloquent language, keen insights, and a historical sweep that took us through Lincoln's life in less than an hour, Coleman made us realize how alive and pertinent Lincoln's words are today. The First Inaugural Address, with "Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection ..." and with its summoning of "the better angels of our nature." The Second Inaugural's call to action, still necessary today: "With malice towards none; with charity for all ... let us strive on to finish the work we are in." Besides binding up the nation's wounds, that work included the Thirteenth Amendment, codifying the Emancipation Proclamation and

ending slavery in the United States "forever." Val's gift was to bring these familiar words and our 16th president vividly to life at a time when they could not be more relevant.

Also in September we were delighted to present a gallery show by J.D. Logan, the artist whose windswept tree graces the cover of our brochure, and to host the awards ceremony for the Sandisfield Community Center's September 30 5K "Where Is Sandisfield?" run.

October at the Arts Center will begin with a free gallery reception for Susie Crofut's beautiful local landscapes on October 6 at 2 p.m. (showing until the end of our season in December) and will wind up with a free family event, pumpkin decorating on Saturday, October 27, 2 to 4 p.m. In between, you can enjoy an evening of good-natured burlesque with Gypsy Layne Cabaret & Co., on October 13 at 8 p.m. and learn how the work of Berkshire County's Volunteers in Medicine is playing a vital part in providing quality health care for many of our fellow citizens, October 20, 10:30 a.m.

RALPH E. MORRISON

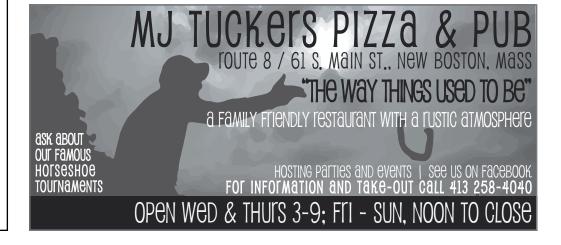
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A CHANCE MEETING IN MANTUA

By Christopher Bollen

Last month, the Italian city of Mantua held its 22nd annual Festivaletteratura. This weekend-long celebration of books brought more than 400 authors from all over the globe to talk, drink, and trade publishing war stories in the splendor of the city's Renaissance churches and piazzas.

Two of those 400 authors began their pilgrimages to the Northern Italian city on the evening of September 4, flying from New York's JFK to Venice's Marco Polo Airport. Those same two authors landed on the morning of September 5, clearing customs and baggage claim before being rounded up together to share a car for the hour-and-a-half drive to Mantua.

These two authors had never met, had never once set eyes on each other, despite the fact that they lived not only in the same country, but in the same state, the same region, the same county, and the same small town with a population of 915 – in fact, they lived no more than two miles apart or an estimated six-minute drive depending on the traffic patterns between South Beech Plain Road and Silverbrook Road. That's right, two Sandisfield strangers stood in the golden morning light of Venice, sizing each other up as worthwhile car-traveling companions.

The less famous author (me) broke the ice (for, of course, I knew of the neighborly existence of the more famous author in my town): "Ahh, you're Simon Winchester!" I exclaimed with the sort of madness that can only be attributed to actually consuming the industrially reheated boxed breakfast meal served right before landing. "You're never going to believe where I live!"

The renowned historical writer narrowed his eyes on the sweaty, twitchy, jet-lagged novelist. "Don't tell me you live in Western Massachusetts."

Over the next four days, Winchester and I regaled all of Mantua (and thus, all the world, thanks to the other distinguished guests at the festival) about the coincidence of two men



Photo © Leonardo Céndamo

from Sandisfield having to go all the way to Mantua to meet each other.

Simon was in Mantua to present a talk on his best-selling *The Professor and the Madman*. I was there to help promote the Italian edition of my suspense novel, *Orient*, published this spring by Bollati Boringhieri.

While it remains to be seen if we actually will cross paths in Sandisfield, at press time we've both promised to keep in touch and visit each other's homes, weather and travel conditions on local roads permitting.



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A Call for Building Supplies

By Anna Wald, President

Our September meeting was great. We had a lovely lunch and, of course, delicious desserts.

We discussed the Apple Festival, one of our fundraisers, that will be held Saturday, October 6, at our building on Rt. 183 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. The ladies from the Council on Aging will be selling their wonderful apple pies.

We will have all new items for our Tag Sale at the Apple Fest. We wish to thank a local family and the Colebrook COA and Community Center for their donations of a wide range of tag sale items.

On November 10, in honor of Veteran's Day, Ron Bernard will talk about Sandisfield's famous native son, Revolutionary War hero Col. John Brown. His presentation will be followed by our Annual Wine and Cheese Social.

December 1 will be our annual Christmas Fair to be held at Firehouse #2 on Rt. 57. We look forward to seeing you all there.

The Society building is in need of a new roof and to have water and sewer connected to the building. Please come out and help us reach our goals by supporting us.

We are grateful for the pedestal sink that has been donated for our future bathroom by the Colebrook COA and Community Center.

All you builders out there, you may have items from kitchen and bathroom remodels that you would be willing to donate for our own building remodeling. The Society is looking for the following household items: kitchen and bathroom sinks, toilet, a few cabinets, and whatever plumbing and electrical items that might be needed. We can also use 2x4's, plywood, and a wide door so we can become handicap accessible.

We would appreciate anything that you may have that you are willing to part with. Please contact me at 258-4415. Or at annaw2@verizon.net. Thank You.



PUR FRIENDSAND NEIGHBORS

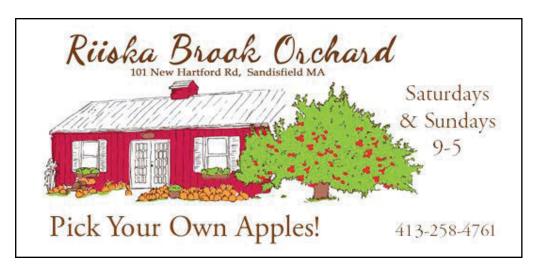
RAISING FUNDS

Watch for a roadblock on Rt. 8, at Fire House #1. The Sandisfield Fire Department and EMS teams will block Rt. 8 from 10 in the morning to 5 in the evening over the Columbus Day weekend to ask drivers and their passengers for donations the keep our firemen putting out fires and EMTs helping you and your neighbors. If you're going north or south on Rt. 8, just north of Villa Mia, that weekend, give generously.

In September, **Seth Kershner** and **Alex Tinari** of Sandisfield and their friend **Sarah Thornton** of New Jersey joined 400 other swimmers who participated in the Provincetown Harbor Swim for Life & Paddler Flotilla. They braved two-foot swells for 1.4 miles as they swam in honor of **Sylvie Potashner**, Kershner's long-time partner who recently died of cancer. Together, "**Team Sylvie**" raised more than \$2,000 for women's health and community organizations, sponsored by the Provincetown Community Compact.



A Mother and Baby A doe and her fawn grazing on grass at Center Cemetery the first week in September. Photo: Ron Pachulski





Comings & Joings



Walter Melchior Rodman

Born September 5, 2018, and 10:08 p.m., at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. Young Walter weighed 6 lbs., 13 oz.

In the family photo: big sister Myrna Louise Rodman, father Calvin Rodman, mother Emily Melchior, and Walter near their home on Fox Road.





READING AT THE POST OFFICE

Seven-year-old Ethan Cooper Lemon, a second grader at Farmington River Elementary School, is astounded as he opens the September Sandisfield Times at the post office.

Photo: A passerby



At the Colebrook Fair

Luca and Craig Maiolo dig deep as they propel their Swamp Patrol toward the finish line during the annual Cardboard Boat Regatta at the Colebrook Fair on September 1. The team had a winning time of 1:04:06 for the one-adult/one-child competition.

Photo: Kathryn Boughton

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A scene along the Clam River.

Nina Carr shows beautiful "Earth Star" fungi to the group.

Walking the Clam River

SELECTMAN EXPLORES TOWN'S "CROWN JEWEL"

By George Riley

On a Sunday in late September, a group of about 20 intrepid souls from all over the Northeast gathered to explore Berkshire Natural Resources Council's "crown jewel," the Clam River Reserve. This was part of a series of about 70 "Heritage Walks" held annually over four September weekends. Each walk is guided by an expert historian or naturalist, and on this occasion our guide and interpreter was the BNRC's Mariah Auman. We were also fortunate to have Nina Carr walking with us; she shared her wealth of local history as we explored ruins of farmhouses and mills located along the trail.

Much to my frustration, the brochure listed the walk's location as New Marlborough. But after I cleared this up with a quick quiz of the group—"Does anyone know what town we're in?"—we walked the mile-long northern loop of the trail, traipsing through a stunning river gorge with rushing water and amazing trees, plants and mushrooms.

At the end we all agreed with the BNRC, which calls this trail "the most beautiful river walk in the Berkshires." We can't wait to walk the rest of it!



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Bureks and Baklava

Dia Klenja takes a break from serving up delicious meals at Villa Mia to prepare for the Annual Albanian Festival in Waterbury.
Over a weekend in early September, Dia and other volunteers with Women's Auxiliary of the Albanian American Community Center put in long hours cooking traditional dishes like burek (baked stuffed pastries) and baklava (a rich dessert made of layered filo dough, nuts and honey). Readers should know that they can order Klenja's famous baklava whenever they visit Villa Mia

Now Hear This!

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

OCTOBER

Playgroup on Mondays from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. at the Sandisfield Library Community Room (below the library). No pre-registration is necessary. The playgroup features a story time in the library. Led by Nina Carr. Free!

Opening Reception: Susan Crofut on Saturday, October 6, at 2:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center located on 5 Hammertown Road, off Route 57 in Sandisfield. Paintings inspired by the artist's love of gardening, animals, and the beautiful landscape of western Massachusetts. The Gallery will also be open by appointment (susiecrofut@ gmail.com) and during performances through December 9.

New Boston Church Service on Sunday, October 7 at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. All are welcome.

Crafts with Lynn at the Library on Saturday, October 13, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Join Lynn for a Halloween-themed fun Saturday morning. Please call the library (258-4966) for more information.

Gypsy Layne Cabaret & Company on Saturday, October 13, at 8:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center located on 5 Hammertown Road, off Route 57 in Sandisfield. Classic burlesque entertainment with bawdy humor, live singing, dynamic dance, and cheeky sex appeal. For more information or tickets, visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org. \$20.

VIM (Volunteers in Medicine) in Action on Saturday, October 20, at 10:30 a.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Ilana Steinhauer, Executive Director, will speak about the challenges facing VIM as it manages health care for the various populations it serves. \$10.

Pumpkin Decorating Event on Saturday, October 27, at 2:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. All decorating supplies will be provided. Free pumpkins to the first 20 children. Lynn Rubenstein and Terry Spohnholz will provide tips for the decora-

Harvest Dinner on Saturday, October 27, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Firehouse #2 on Route 57. Turkey and all the fixins'! Tickets at the door and take-out available. \$12 adults, \$6 under 12. Sponsored by New Boston Congregational Church.

Trunk or Treat on Wednesday, October 31 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the American Legion Field on Route 8. Sponsored by the Sandisfield Recreational Committee. Bring your little goblins, ghosts, princesses, and pirates to the field where neighbors and friends will be parked with decorated cars and candy! If you would like to decorate your car and give out goodies, please call Billie at 413-258-4025 or email sandisfieldreccommittee@gmail.com.

OTHER EVENTS IN **SURROUNDING TOWNS**

Mandala Magic Workshop on Wednesdays, October 31 and November 28 from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. with Susan Cain at the Monterey Community Center. Participants should bring Bristol paper (available at any art store) and a coloring medium of choice such as gel pens, colored pencils, or markers. All other supplies will be provided free of charge. Please register at center@ccmonterey.org or call 413-528-3600. Free.

Trunk or Treat!

REC COMMITTEE PRESENTS HALLOWEEN EVENT

On Wednesday, October 31 from 5:30 until 7:00 p.m., the Sandisfield Recreational Committee will sponsor a Trunk or Treat at the American Legion Field on Route 8. Bring your little goblins, ghosts, princesses and pirates to the field where neighbors and friends will be parked with decorated cars and plenty of candy.

Joining us for fun and treats will be the Sandisfield Fire Department as well as the Library's Cat in the Hat car.

If you would like to decorate your own car and give out goodies to Sandisfield's kids please call Billie at 413 258 4025 or email sandisfieldreccommittee@gmail.com.

SUSAN CROFUT Watercolors

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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

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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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