

Congratulations on Vol. X, #5! See pages 10-11

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



Plebis

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume X, Number 5

August 2019

There's A Bear Over There

By Ron Bernard

The evening of Monday, July 8, was just another lovely summer evening for most of us.

But South Beech Plain Road cattle raiser Vic Hryckvich is not likely to forget that day and his harrowing experience with an aggressive black bear. "Cows have been my whole life," he told the Times. "I never expected to see a bear ambush my cows."

It happened at about dusk, the time every day when Vic and his daughter, Nicole, 21, gather their herd of some 40 head and escort them back to their safe pasture for the night.

Nicole said, "I was sitting in the truck watching the cows across the field when I saw him at the edge of the woods, several hundred yards away. He was big. At first I thought nothing of it, just another bear passing by from a safe distance."

Vic picked up the story from there. "I saw him move toward the herd along the perimeter of the woods, getting closer, stalking, when he crouched down. The cows became alarmed and agitated and they scattered. Then he charged."

What happened next is amazing. Vic said, "Four or five of them turned and stood their ground. I couldn't tell whether they were cows or bulls."

It was an improbable if not bizarre face-off between two not normally aggressive species. Vic and Nicole, positioned well away, were helpless to intervene.

The bear retreated but Vic and Nicole,

shaken, had to round up their cows now hither and yon. It took the better part of two hours to get them all.

Vic said, "One calf came up limping probably from the run. He's okay now. We were lucky."

At this business for more than fifty years, Vic has seen just about every predator at the farm and has pictures of some on his phone to prove it. Coyotes, bobcats (and perhaps cats even bigger) and bears are regular visitors. Vic says that the number of bears he's seen lately is much greater than in the past.

In 2016 a similar bear-cow situation near the same spot played out, but without confrontation. Vic caught that drama on his phone. Coincidentally, a few days later he found two small calves dead from an attack.

This time Vic phoned state wildlife officials who were sympathetic but unconcerned. "We get a lot of calls," to paraphrase the response. He was reminded that bears cannot be shot unless they are actually attacking.

Kim Spring, Sandisfield Animal Warden, related much the same. She told the Times, "Bears are everywhere now. It is the worst I have seen it in thirty years. I got three calls last week alone. One entered a barn. Another got into a chicken coop near Sandisfield Center. It's a problem in the whole area. One of my colleagues in Stockbridge, a retired animal control officer who raises




A black bear surveying grazing cows. Note the bull doing his job warily watching the bear, 2016.

Photo: Vic Hryckvich

sheep, told me that he cannot let his sheep out of the barn anymore because he has lost some to the bears."

It is hard to know what is driving this behavior but Kim wonders if bears, who are territorial, are over populated and might be under stress. She said that there seems to be a baby boom of sorts with reports of mothers with two or three cubs.

At this point the only thing to do is be "bear aware" as the National Park Service likes to tell campers. Kim recommends that residents take down bird feeders and keep a close eye on pets. Livestock like goats are especially vulnerable right now and need protection, she said. 

30th Annual Firemen Steak Roast

Don't miss the Sandisfield Volunteer Firemen Steak Roast

Saturday, August 10

Firehouse #2 on Sandisfield Road, Rt. 57.

The steaks will be served from 5 to 7 p.m., dancing to a live band from 6 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased from any volunteer or call A&M Auto, 258-3381.

Tickets not available at the door. "We need to know how many steaks to buy," said one of the volunteers.

Town Continues to Negotiate With Charter

LICENSING AGREEMENT READY BUT NOT SIGNED

By Tim Brooks (with contributions from Times reporters)

The application for a Broadband license, known as “Form 100,” and the License Agreement were presented to the Town by Charter Communications at a meeting July 16, but it appears that crucial details still need to be worked out. The Board had proposed minor changes to the agreement template submitted by Charter, changes that were to be negotiated with Charter through the Broadband Committee chairman, Jeff Bye.

Earlier, a July 9 Select Board working session gave the Town’s Broadband Committee an opportunity to report on the steps it had taken leading to the licensing agreement and for the Board to ask questions. Broadband Committee members are Jeff Bye, Bill Haines, and John Skrip.

According to Jeff, the Board had completed required earlier steps and now needed only to review and approve the application for a license. This was the agreement for which signing has been postponed.

SERVING ALMOST ALL OF THE TOWN

The Broadband Committee reported they had reviewed the application, much of which was the template used by the town of New Marlborough in its agreement with Charter. After deducting the number of homes in Otis Wood Lands which Charter is unable to serve due to the lack of poles or conduit in the private community, the percentage of Sandisfield premises expected to be served was approximately 96 percent. Based on some town boundaries, it’s possible that some Sandisfield homes will be connected to an adjacent town’s service.

Regarding the building of the infrastructure, it was pointed out that fiber optic cables would be put in place throughout the town, using the town’s existing telephone poles.

PROTECTING THE TOWNS’ INTERESTS

Noting that the Town will be entering a 15-year/\$1,000,000 contract with Charter Communications, Selectman George Riley was a strong advocate for protecting Sandisfield’s interest and felt there should be specific commitments made by Charter – with guarantees that 100 percent of households would have state-of-the-art fiber connections. He added that in 15 years he wants town residents to be able to look back and see that Town leaders had negotiated the best contract possible, and that the needs and interests of residents were represented in all legally binding agreements and contracts related to bringing Broadband services to Sandisfield.

Riley was particularly concerned that because of vague language in its description of network

infrastructure, Charter would have the flexibility to use coaxial cable to connect between their fiber optic network nodes and people’s homes (commonly called a “drop”). Riley advocated for language that would guarantee FTTP (Fiber to the Premise).

A member of the Broadband Committee said that there may be places where the network architecture (to be built by Charter) would not support the highest speeds, and that the contract language needed to be flexible to allow for those variances. Jeff Bye said he could amend the wording in the contract to state the Town’s preferences, while allowing for the exceptions that will no doubt arise once work begins.

The contract did state that different levels of service would be offered, and customers would be able to choose from the highest speeds (100 or 200 mbps) a medium speed (60 mbps) or a low speed (30 mbps) – with corresponding monthly charges. Low-income households that qualify for Social Security disability or hot lunch programs would be able to receive the lower-speed service for a monthly charge of \$14.99 per month. The Select Board requested that the chairman ask Charter if the criteria for low income households could be expanded as the current categories would only apply to a very small number of residents.

ASK, BUT YOU MAY NOT GET


A Design Review – another part of the process – was discussed. This would help the Town and residents know in advance which homes would not be eligible for the fiber optic service but would be offered a coaxial option only. The Board and Committee members agreed that Charter should provide justification for any variance to fiber installations, noting that it is the wish of the Town to bring the highest speed service options to as many homes as possible.

When this idea was discussed further, one committee member noted that the Town can demand as much as it wants, but that in the final agreement Charter may only be willing to promise so much – and if the town didn’t accept that, Charter might not feel obligated to continue negotiating and could ultimately discontinue altogether. Since the Town has been working for well over a decade on some aspect of bringing high-speed internet service to Sandisfield, no one wanted to lose the ground that has been gained with Charter Communications.

Riley again made the point that Charter is receiving substantial public funds in exchange for building Sandisfield’s network and that the Town should have some input into its design. (Charter will receive the original \$1.2 million grant earmarked for the

town, plus an additional \$550,000 from the state. In addition, the town will later be obligated to provide \$826,000 to Charter, bringing the total taxpayer contribution to Charter to over \$2.5 million.)

Once the license application is signed, several steps will still remain before the contract is finalized with Charter. It will be a number of months before work gets underway.

It is undetermined at this point whether a Town meeting will be required so that residents can vote on appropriating the money for the project or whether the final contract can be signed at a Select Board meeting. 

A Veteran of Many Fields


Photo and story by Bill Price

Its work finished, the tractor now sits in Ron Ferron’s front yard in New Boston, facing South Main Street (Rt. 8, south of the bridge), a For Sale sign propped on the iron front wheel.



Once the biggest and strongest piece of equipment in a hardworking New England farmer’s barn, this still proud, enormous machine may soon have a new life as an *objet d’art* on the lawn of some summer home or as a “conversation piece” out back in the garden.

Ron found the 1937 Model M International Harvester tractor at a farm in Granby about three decades ago. The farmer-owner, who was selling out after the recent death of his wife, said he’d deliver it. When the farmer pulled into Ron’s place in New Boston, he had two tractors on the truck. “Thought you may as well have this one, too,” he said, and helped Ron unload not only the ’37 Harvester but a companion 1939 Model 4 International tractor. The ’39 International still sits on a rise near Ron’s pottery studio behind his house. It’s not for sale. Yet.

But now you can be the new owner of the ’37 Harvester. \$2,000. Stop and look at the wheels, which alone are worth maybe \$1,500 each. But who would separate the pieces of this old veteran, selling a wheel here, a tractor seat there, when, thanks to Ron Ferron, it is still in one piece. 

Local Responder Honored

CHRIS JOYCE RAN TOWARD DANGER

By Bill Price



Chris Joyce, originally from Sheffield, is a self-employed building contractor with many years' experience doing most things necessary for the maintenance of a Berkshire home. He and his partner, Cassie Brancato, and their children have lived on Sandisfield Road the last three years.

Photo: Bill Price

Last month The Times reported on the frightening fire that destroyed a loaded ambulance on Sandisfield Road near the intersection with Town Hill Road.

But we didn't know the name of the Sandisfield resident who ran from his nearby home to provide assistance to the EMTs in saving their patient and fighting the fire. He has since been identified as Chris Joyce, a self-employed contractor who just happened to be home that day and who was willing to run down Rt. 57 to help people in need.

The ambulance, from Alert Ambulance Service, Chicopee, was transporting a patient from Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington to the Berkshire Rehabilitation Center in New Boston when the two EMTs on board smelled smoke and realized their vehicle was on fire and all systems had failed. Bringing the vehicle to a rolling stop, EMTs Christopher Moccio and Justine Hanselman quickly unloaded the patient – a Vietnam veteran – and Justine pushed him several hundred yards away while Christopher attempted to deal with the smoking vehicle which soon burst into flames.

The two men, EMT Moccio and resident Joyce, began removing small oxygen tanks which would soon have exploded in the fire. As the fire began to engulf the ambulance, they worked together to remove a 100-pound oxygen tank that was strapped and bolted to the vehicle. They stacked the 100 lb. tank and the smaller ones on the roadside away from the fire and stood back to await the arrival of the Sandisfield Fire Department, which was soon on site.

Resident Joyce and the EMTs Moccio and Hanselman were honored at a ceremony July 23 at Town Hall Annex. Representatives from the Governor's office, the state legislature, officials from Alert Ambulance Service, and the EMT union leadership gathered with family and friends to honor the three individuals, who each received three plaques honoring their outstanding service and devotion to duty, along with other thank-you gifts. Select Board Chairman Mark Newman and Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko attended the ceremony.

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Lightening Up to Light Up

Answering questions often tops an editor's chore list. What about the pot proposal?

Cannabis-related tax windfalls are landing in the laps of Berkshire town boards that early on embraced pot farms, pot shops, and – potentially – pot-related bakeries. It remains to be seen what will be the result of over-potulation. But for now, it's a pot rush.

Last month the Times reported on the efforts of Jennifer Pilbin of South Carolina to buy property for a pot-growing facility on Town Hill Road. She has since given up there because of initial resistance by abutters, but in an interview with The Berkshire Eagle and later with The Sandisfield Times she said she is looking at another property in a different location in Town.

She said, "I've heard there is a lot of support for the effort. Everything seems to be coming together, but everything takes more time than anybody thinks." She acknowledged that even after she takes title to the property lengthy state and local ordinances will take even more time. She plans to move to Sandisfield and to live on the property that, she said, would be totally secluded and extremely secure.

Questions for next month? One for September: Why did the Highway Department pay \$90 an hour for two weeks for an outside grader? If you have questions, write to us. If we can answer in print, we will.

*Bill Price
West New Boston*

Anthony Suffriti, vice president of operations for Alert Ambulance Service, said that Christopher and Chris helped prevent "a very dangerous explosion."

Speaking of Chris Joyce, he said, "It was very courageous of a bystander to put himself in harm's way. One tank of 100 lbs. of oxygen makes a pretty impressive bomb. Mr. Joyce knew the oxygen would explode and worked with Chris Moccio to get it safely out of the ambulance, engulfed in flames.

"The situation was handled beyond professionalism by our employees and Mr. Joyce. They kept in mind both the veteran on board and the safety of the community. They didn't know how large the explosion would have been or the damage the town would have suffered as a result of it, but they knew it would be significant. By their courage, they eliminated the danger."



From left, Chris Joyce; State Representative Smitty Pignatelli; Governor's Office representative Patrick Carnevale; EMT Christopher Moccio; EMT Justine Hanselman; and President Jeremy Morris of the International Association of EMTs and Paramedics, Local 369.

Photo: Rep. Pignatelli's Office

Town Hires Public Safety Officer

JOHNSON ONLY APPLICANT INTERVIEWED

By Seth Kershner

After a two-month search yielding only a single qualified applicant, a part-time Sandisfield police officer and volunteer EMT has been hired to fill the full-time, newly created position of Public Safety Officer.

Michael Johnson, who has served the Town for the last two-and-a-half years, was interviewed by the Select Board on July 18. The unique, hybrid role will have Johnson serving simultaneously as firefighter, EMT, and police officer. Sandisfield is apparently the first community in Massachusetts to have such an employee.

"I want Sandisfield to become role model for how small towns can provide critical services," Johnson said during his interview, pointing to the example of New York State, where municipalities often have a single employee cross-certified as firefighter and paramedic.

Johnson, a native of Charlemont who served in the U.S. Navy for five years after high school, has more than 37 years of EMS experience under his belt. Formerly a resident of Colrain, where he served as a fire safety education officer in the local schools, he began his law enforcement career in the Franklin County community of Buckland, where he served for several years. From 2009 to 2017 he was on the police force in Monterey, eventually rising to the rank of sergeant.

When his contract there was not renewed, Johnson filed a federal lawsuit against the Town of Monterey and its Select Board, alleging civil rights violations and retaliation. The lawsuit is still pending.

In an email to the Times, selectman George Riley said he was "not aware" of any attempts by the Select Board to contact Johnson's former



PSO Mike Johnson Photo: Bill Price

employers before hiring Johnson. "However, his situation in Monterey is well known and reported in the Monterey News on several occasions."

While selectman Brian O'Rourke noted that Johnson "checked all the boxes" with regard to his qualifications for the position, he asked Johnson to respond to complaints from some residents about his manner of dealing with the public. "Some have said that you can be overzealous in your response to traffic stops or other public contacts," O'Rourke stated. "People feel like they are getting yelled at rather than talked to."

"Some stops are different from others," Johnson replied. "As a police officer you have to be in control – that's how we're trained at the police academy. I believe in education of the motoring

public. I know not everyone agrees with my approach," he added, "but I can only speak to particular cases."

After the interview, the Select Board asked those in attendance to leave the room so they could meet privately. After about 10 minutes, the selectmen reconvened to announce that they would hire Johnson on a probationary basis.

His continued employment with the Town would depend on the outcome of a performance review scheduled for January 15, 2020. When told about the proposal to hire him on a probationary basis, Johnson sought assurance that he would still have a job after January 15. To which the Select Board's unanimous reply was: "Yes, of course!"

No Roadmap for New Hires

TOWN MAY ASK FOR REFERENCES ... OR NOT

By Seth Kershner

With one full-time job search recently completed and another – for Town Administrator – possibly on the way, the Times has learned that there is no consistent protocol for hiring new Town employees.

A phone call to the Town Hall in mid-July confirmed that there are no Town bylaws pertaining to hiring Town employees. A look at two recent hires gives a sense of how that plays out.

When Sandisfield sought to fill the position of Public Works Director late last year, the job posting directed applicants to send resumes and three written references to the Town Administrator. By contrast, the job posting for the Public Safety Officer made no mention of references and asked for resumes to be sent directly to the Police Chief, bypassing the Select Board.

The process of hiring for the Public Safety Officer position also generated a relatively small amount of publicity. Besides a notice on the Town website, the Town paid to have a print ad run in the weekly Berkshire Record.

In hiring the Public Works Director, the Town paid for advertising not only in local media, but also on the website of the Massachusetts Municipal Association, an organization that represents executive boards across the commonwealth.

Massachusetts municipal law allows towns to adopt a personnel ordinance or bylaw, upon the recommendation of the Town Administrator or other chief executive officer, by a majority vote of the Select Board and after conducting a public hearing on the matter. Any such bylaw must address the recruitment of candidates in a manner which assures open competition and the selection of candidates solely on the basis of job-related criteria.

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School Budget Passes

SANDISFIELD/OTIS PARENTS BREATHE EASIER

By Bill Price

Sandisfield (and Otis) kids can head off to school this fall confident in the knowledge that the money to teach and house them will be there.

After the late spring drama of the school budget being voted down at the Annual Town Meeting for the first time in memory, a Special Town Meeting on July 15 reversed the vote. The original vote was 30-21 in opposition of the proposed budget; in July the revote saw maybe a dozen voters in opposition out of the 58 registered voters in attendance. The budget passed by a clear majority vote.

One attendee told The Times, "I knew it would pass, once the parents started showing up."

Indeed, probably a dozen Sandisfield and Otis students attended – all nonvoters, but their parents were right there beside them, and they voted.

At a previous meeting in June, the School Committee and the Select Board agreed to work more closely and more openly in the coming year so that Fiscal Year 2021 would not see the same contretemps and disputes. The Finance Committee would have to be involved in the negotiations, as well.

This time the Select Board and Finance Committee had still voted in opposition to the budget, but Selectman George Riley changed his vote in favor, stating that while revised budget numbers were part of the reason, the commitment by the School Committee to work more closely with the Board in the future was even more important.

According to a July 18 Country Journal article by reporter Michael Ballway, new School Committee member Jennifer Hibbins responded to a voter's complaint that the committee had made no operational cuts. Proposed cuts were discussed, she said, but "each came with unacceptable risks. Reducing the food service staff would leave the school with just one cafeteria worker, she said. Trying to save money on busing would lead to longer bus rides – already, some children are on the bus for an hour – or force kids to walk further distances to get to a bus stop, a safety concern on unlit country roads with no sidewalks."

The narrowness of the vote at the Annual Town Meeting – the school budget failed by only 9 votes – shows the importance of showing up, taking part, making decisions, and being an active participant in the Town's governance. 🍷

New Landowner Facing Pipeline Aftermath

THAT SINKING FEELING

By Ron Bernard

The Tennessee Gas Pipeline crews and their armada of equipment that ripped out thousands of trees, unearthed countless boulders, and gouged out a five-foot deep, four-mile trench for a third pipeline in Sandisfield, are long gone.

But residents who endured four years of contention and disruption and the inevitable result keep being reminded of the ordeal by problems emerging in its aftermath.

The latest snafu concerns the odd appearance of a series of holes or cave-ins in a supposedly restored section of pipeline right-of-way (ROW). It happens to be on land belonging to Leslie Desmond, a resident of Lee who purchased the property just last month.

A horse enthusiast, she told The Times that the Hammertown Road parcel seemed ideal as a place to keep and exercise her horses. She is a friend of the previous owner who introduced the area to her years ago, and she's had an eye on Sandisfield for some time.



One of the series of sinkholes that have appeared near the pipeline.

Photos: Sandisfield Times

New to the game but determined to get the facts, Ms. Desmond contacted environmental groups who had battled the project, several neighbors who were directly concerned, and the Company.

She has received a lot of advice from seasoned environmental groups. Fellow ROW abutters wonder if they should check their own land for possible holes. From the company she has



Leslie Desmond at the ROW on her land.

Those plans were put on hold upon discovery of a number of so far relatively small sink holes that dot an area of approximately 200 sq. feet on part of the ROW. Leslie found out about this the old fashioned way: by falling into one while surveying her property.

"I've counted ten holes so far. The area is so unstable. If it won't support my weight, surely it is unsafe for a horse or a vehicle and is therefore useless," she said. She fears that the problem could get much worse.

received equivocation and finger pointing at subcontractors, the former landowner, or others.

Besides the apparent poor remediation of the land, Desmond has an additional complaint, a concern which is also shared by at least one other landowner: the matter of huge boulders inappropriately left behind, often in ugly piles or strung out in rows mimicking what had been old farmer's walls before the construction. Historians and preservationists consider walls like that to be important heritage in New England. 🍷



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, 10:00 a.m.-1 p.m. Phone: 258-4966.

Those golden days when the familiar sounds of summer—birdsong, crickets and the river tumbling by—are all interspersed with grandchildren laughing, screaming in delight. “Are you watching me, Nana?” “This is like the beach!” All the while, water sloshes over the pool sides and onto the deck. “I have my eyeball on you!” I reply. Glancing at the water antics to ensure no one drowns, I continue my own summer fun of being engrossed in a book, staying dry all the while.

HAPPENINGS AT THE LIBRARY

Summer Reading Program – The library kicked off the summer reading program on June 24th. The theme this year is “Reading is Out of this world.” The library has several new books on space, the solar system and rockets.

Saturday, August 3 at 1:00 p.m., Davis Bates returns to the library for “**A Universe of Songs and Stories.**” This is an award-winning, parent-approved, and participatory program. Please join us for fun and laughter. Ice cream social to follow.

Saturday, August 10th from 1 to 2:30 pm is **Arts and Crafts with Kids** (every second Saturday of the month). In keeping with the theme of this year’s Summer Reading Program, the arts and crafts will center around space and the stars! 🚀

Saturday August 24, **Ed the Wizard** helps us conclude the Summer Reading Program with “Alien Balloon Twisting.” The program begins at 1:00 pm. Light snacks and refreshments after the program.

NEW BOOKS

Window on the Bay by Debbie Macomber – A single mom becomes an empty nester, spreads her wings to rediscover herself and her passions.

Under Currents by Nora Roberts – The famed author’s latest novel explores how family has the power to harm and to heal. Set in North Carolina’s Blue Ridge Mountains.

Sophia, Princess Among Beasts by James Patterson with Emily Raymond – a fabulous story with adventure, princesses, beasts, and a stunning mystery.

The New Girl by Daniel Silva – Once again, Allon Gabriel, the legendary chief of Israeli intelligence, is battling terrorists. A thrilling page-turning tale and sophisticated study of political alliances and great-power rivalries in a dangerous world.

AND OTHER THINGS

The library has family passes for various museums around the area, including Berkshire Museum, the Clark, and more. Stop by the library to inquire.

Please note that we do not take donations of books, magazines or games. We appreciate your wishing to donate to our small library but we simply do not have the room. Meanwhile find a cozy spot in the sun this summer, get your pile of adventures in book form and indulge yourself! I know I am ... 📖



Do You Love Sandisfield?

Can you spare a few hours a month? Volunteers are needed to sit on the Town’s five-person Finance Committee, to advise the Select Board on how best to spend our tax revenues. No formal experience necessary, though an interest in money management would be a distinct advantage. Must be a registered Sandisfield voter. No compensation, other than the comfort of knowing that you would be performing a noble civic duty. Please drop a line to Town Moderator Simon Winchester, Sandisfield MA 01255. 📧

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Recreation Commission: Kathy Carroll, Bill Dyer, Dana Pustinger, Jen Catolane
Program Supervisor, Patricia Richard



The Big Snow Plow Painting Project

Photo and text by Bogart Muller

As you turn up Silverbrook Road and pass our new town garage with its flashy new fleet of trucks, you may notice something that hasn't changed much over the past decade or so. Or maybe you've seen it for so long it doesn't even register on your corneas anymore.

It's that old V-type snowplow that is quintessential to any small-town garage.

Our's is old-school steel. It helped us through many tough winters attached to the front of some very large, heavy-duty piece of equipment. Being a little bit worse for wear, our old snowplow hasn't seen a facelift or TLC in some time. Well, that is about to change.

The Sandisfield Arts Center – with the blessing of the Select Board and the Highway Superintendent – has come up with a contest to see who can give this permanent structure an artistic twist.



The unit will be prepped and coated to accept two paintings, one on each side. A winter scene and a summer scene. The contest will be open to any artist willing to leave their legacy here in Sandisfield. RSE, LLC will provide the prep work and first initial coating of paint to ensure your work stays on for the next 100 years or so.

Details will be in next month's Times. And as information develops, it will be posted on the Facebook pages for Connect Sandisfield and the Sandisfield Arts Center.

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Learn How to Live Longer, Better

By Ellen Crobier

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIVE LONGER, BETTER?

A day-long conference, Changing the Culture of Aging in the Berkshires and Beyond, will take place at the Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield, Thursday, August 15. Open to all ages, the conference is co-sponsored by Age Friendly Berkshires and Community Networks for Aging in Place.

I've been volunteering at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the Community College, which is sponsoring the conference.

Katherine Kidd, chair of OLLI's conference committee, said, "The longer, healthier lives we are living today is one of the great successes of the 20th century. Our conference will bring us cutting edge ideas about how to take advantage of our extra years, about how institutions can be reshaped to serve older adults better, and about how elders can continue to contribute to their communities."

Presentations will include internationally known speakers and breakout sessions will consist of moderated panels led by other distinguished speakers.

Registration, \$40 for OLLI members and \$55 for the public, includes morning coffee, refreshments, and lunch. The deadline to register is Monday, August 7. For more information and to register, call 413-236-2190 or visit berkshireolli.org.

Cultural Council Cultural Council Offers Funding Opportunities

The local chapter of the Massachusetts Cultural Council will soon be accepting applications for grants to be awarded in January 2020.

When considering applications, the Sandisfield Cultural Council prioritizes programming that reaches a large group in the community; school-children, and activities related to learning; and local presenters dealing with the arts, humanities and science.

Applications and more information about the Local Cultural Council Program are available online at www.mass-culture.org. Applications will be available as of September 1. They must be submitted online by October 15, 2019.

In addition, the Council is asking residents to complete a Community Input Survey in order to better understand what our community is looking to fund. The surveys can be picked up at the Library and at the Post Office. An envelope is available at both sites for you to drop off your survey. We are looking forward to your responses.

Currently the Council draws on the talents and active participation of the following local members: Rosanne Carinci-Hoekstra, Rosanne Skrip, Connie Canty, Billie Pachulski, Jennifer Salzano-Hibbard, Ellen Crobier, and John Skrip.

Sandisfield Historical Society



Preserving Your History, and Your Children's, Too

By Ann Wald, President

We had to cancel our flea market scheduled last month, due to a lack of vendors. Our thanks to the volunteers to offered to help and to all the potential buyers we had to turn away.

At our next meeting, August 10, we will discuss the repair of our roof and proceed with plans for the rest of the year. We have some very exciting projects to look forward to.

We are finalizing our Annual Christmas Fair coming up December 7. There are a lot of wonderful crafters in our community and many will have their work on display and for sale at the Fair. If you want to turn your passion into income, or if you know someone who would like to take part, please let us know. We want to invite anyone local to join us at the Fair.

We are moving forward on our bathroom, but we've had to divert some of the money collected for bathroom construction to repair the roof. We will be asking for your help again in the coming months.

Please join us at our monthly meetings every second Saturday at 11 a.m., followed by a pot-luck lunch, at the Meeting House, Rt. 187 at South Sandisfield Road.

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September at the Rec Committee

FUN EVENTS COMING FOR ALL AGES!

September 15 – Touch a Truck Sunday. In coordination with Sandisfield’s Police, Fire, and DPW departments, the Recreation Committee is once again offering residents a chance to reach out and touch and maybe climb on those big, bad trucks and vehicles. At the American Legion Pavilion in Hamilton Grove from 1-3 p.m. Special treats for the youngsters, a visit from Smokey the Bear and, unless it is needed elsewhere, the LIFE STAR critical care helicopter will land and be on view.

September 29 – Sandisfield’s 2nd Annual 5K Run. It was so much fun last year, so dust off your running shoes (or those old sneakers) and get ready for FUN 5K. Medals for the top finishers. Race start time is 10:30 a.m. Refreshments offered by the Sandisfield Fire Department immediately following the race. Sign up online by September 1 at berkshirerunningcenter.com and get your free “Where in the 5K is Sandisfield?” commemorative T-shirt.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS:

October 5 – Foxwoods Casino Bus Trip. Must be 21 years or older.

October 31 – Trunk or Treat/ Monster Bash event at the VFW Pavilion.

Current Members of the Recreation Committee: Billie Anderson-Pachulski, Chair; Theresa Spohnholz, Secretary; Roger Kohler; Christina O’Brien; and Megan Smigel.

The Great Xword Contest

On a Saturday morning in July, puzzle lovers gathered at the Arts Center to share their love of crosswords and measure their skills. After a brief discussion about the history and evolution of the game by Michelle Arnot, local puzzle pro, the contest began. First, solvers were challenged to complete a 1935 contest puzzle from the NY Herald Tribune, which had been completed in under four minutes by the original contest winner back in the day. It seemed antiquated and baffled the participants who were more comfortable with the second puzzle, which was constructed for the 2012 American Crossword Puzzle Tournament. The two top solvers: Lorraine German and Kyle Lawrence.



Winner Kyle Lawrence and his wife, Kim Morganegg, put their heads together to solve the puzzle.

Photo: Michelle Arnot

How to Spend \$128K

TOWN’S GREEN COMMITTEE CAN DO IT

By Larry Dwyer

Last December, by being designated a “Green Community” by the state Department of Energy Resources, Sandisfield was awarded an energy savings grant of \$128,805 with the goal of reducing the Town’s energy consumption by 20 percent over five years.

The projects that have been selected so far involve mostly improvements to the Town Hall Annex, including insulation, retrofitting the Annex and Library lighting with LEDs, and replacing windows and installing heat pumps paired with a solar array at the Annex.

Sandisfield was also awarded an additional META 7 grant of \$12,500 for an engineering design of a heat pump and solar array system needed to meet the building’s heating and cooling requirements.

Requests for bids have been distributed, but few contractors responded, we assume due to the remoteness of Sandisfield and many contractors being overextended thanks to a booming economy. Bids have, however, been trickling in and the Town’s Green Committee hopes to award jobs for the insulation and lighting projects at its next meeting, August 5.

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Moreover..

The Times is Midway Through Volume X

By Simon Winchester

My! How the old place has changed.

It is eighteen years since I moved here, and back then people would say “You moved where, exactly,” and follow that with unkind jokes about pot-farms and the invention of the toothbrush and the likely existence of moonshine makers deep in the forest.

Did I say “pot farms?” In fact, pot farms may be making a comeback, legally this time. And maybe the moonshine makers have never left.

Now, though, the place we have chosen to live is described quite differently. The Berkshire Eagle calls us a proud, far-flung, and tight-knit community. The surrounding countryside, with its new

riverside trails, is universally acknowledged to be unspoiled and beautiful.

And the one word that seems to be most widely used to describe us, to differentiate us from Otis and Monterey and Becket and New Marlborough is that, well, we are real.

Sandisfield is an exemplar of the real country, of the real New England, branded as an organic, fair-trade version of the real America.

But what has really changed, in these 18 years?

On the surface things still don't look too good. Both commerce and gastronomy have failed us. There are fewer places to eat and drink than in '01: Daffers has gone, so too the SilverBrook Café and Villa Mia. There's been nowhere to shop since Pete's store got wiped out by a runaway asphalt truck. We drive miles for gasoline or bring our own. Tuckers clings on, as does the New Boston Inn, which though all too visibly in Sandisfield, is still somehow still not quite of the town. We are eager for that to change.

Technology has not been kind either. We now have a third unlovely iron pipe filled with natural gas coursing through town, but still nothing, nada, zip, by way of a decent internet connection to the outside world. And we worry that this lack

in particular might keep potential newcomers away, and push Sandisfield ever further out into the rural backwaters.

But – and here's one remarkable and rather wonderful thing – it seems not to have deterred newcomers at all. People are coming here like never before – young people, energetic people, people who appreciate something about the realness of our town.

New houses are being built – have you peered through the woods along Town Hill Road recently? Old ones are being spruced up. New families are arriving; a scattering of children are being born; attendance at school is burgeoning; the library is, if not exactly bustling, then becoming steadily more busy.

And most significant of all, during the last decade or so elected members of our town government seem to have become younger and possibly better at effecting change – and at the same time more visible, more accountable.

Time was when officials had to drag toppers away from their Keno games at the SilverBrook in order to make up a quorum for a public gathering. By contrast last month's special meeting was crowded with children and their parents, and even select board meetings, often gatherings of stultifying tedium, are nowadays busy with voters. Townsfolk seem finally to be interested in the ways their tax dollars are being spent, and by whom, and will at last argue and complain when they feel they are being ignored or short-changed.

And why? What has caused the difference? Is it possible that at least some of the reason is due to the existence of this monthly 20-page newspaper? At least, we'd like to think so.

We at The Sandisfield Times are about to celebrate our tenth birthday – no small achievement in a world where papers are tumbling all around. Thanks in great measure to you, our followers, we are still reporting on what I had hoped for when I wrote my first-ever commentary back in April 2010.

“All of us want this to be an amiable, pleasant and civilized place to live – a place with good and responsible government, with clean land and waters, with safe roads, an environment in which our children can grow without fear or worry, and where the rest of us can live amongst our abundant natural beauty in peace and serenity.”

And slowly, readers and townspeople, we seem to be getting there. 🍷

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Volume I, Number 1 April, 2010

ROUTE 8 HOUSES: A SOLUTION AT LAST?

Simon Winchester



The two fallen and much-dilapidated houses that flanked the Route 8 gateway into Sandisfield may shortly be torn down, and the river bank could be transformed later this year into a town-owned public park, filled with low-maintenance flowers.

A possible solution has finally been reached in the more than twenty-year-long battle that has raged over the twin properties. Voters will be asked at next month's town meeting formally to consider the cost of raising the houses and creating an empty plot in their place, which will later be planted. "It is an open question to the voters," said Donna Haskins, the Town Clerk. "There is a proposal on the table, at least."

If voters agree - and the Town acts to spend the demolition money - they will in all likelihood bring an end to an unending saga that began in July 1990 when the Sandisfield Board of Health first moved to declare the houses, numbers 93 and 95 South Main Street, a health hazard.

Neither property had at the time been inhabited for at least the previous decade, and neither had electricity, running water or septic systems. Moreover, over both houses were even then beginning to decay and sag dangerously over the bank of the Farmington River, it seemed likely they should be declared dangerous as well, since anyone stepping in them would risk injury.

But in the twenty years that followed little substantive changed - still some. Many repairs and excavations were put forward for what anyone seeing the houses would justly regard as an unconscionable delay - it took eighteen years, for instance, for the properties even to be formally condemned.

The principal reason, however, is simple: the owners of the two houses, though long absent, are still alive.

AVIAN NOTES
Margaret O'Clair

COMET THE BLACKBIRDS

For many of us the sight of robins hopping about the lawn in search of worms and insects is one of the first signs of the awakening spring. For others it is a wing, blacked as top of the robin, signaling his link back to a forest.

In fact, these two so-called "spring" birds have been with us all winter long. When the ground freezes over they form small flocks and head deep into the woods where they forage for insects in the leaf litter, in rotten wood and behind old tree trunks, and only reappear - months later, when the world thaws out.

LAMENT FOR A MYSTERY NEIGHBOR
Jerry Herman



If you need to window as down-up Route 7, about the big red barn with lots of windows picked out in white trim just past the cemetery. South of the Silverbrook Cafe, and on the same side of the road, was next to a big grey clapboard house. On some nights I would see activity with light blinding from all the windows, but I haven't seen that light or any activity in quite a while. And there's a reason - and one.

At 45 Sandisfield Road, this was the Cam Metal Products factory. But "Cam" became the factory to now out of business. They closed down without most of us really knowing when they were did. So I tried to find out. Through several telephone calls to Paul Campagna, the town's President, went unanswered, there was information available from other sources. When the company was operating was probably around and was incorporated - before or on one Sandisfield under "Space Products" units and parts. Highly-skilled machinists working in what looked like a big and huge barn in fact constructed small but vital pieces of metal that went into aircraft and space vehicles.

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Volume III, Number 5 August 2012

250TH NOW PART OF OUR HISTORY



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THE SANDISFIELD TIMES
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Volume X, Number 4 July 2019

A New Pot Proposal? A LONG PERMIT PROCESS YET TO START

By Bill Price

Katie Murray of lower Town Hill Road was home Wednesday, May 29, when a stranger pulled into the yard. They stood talking outside.

After introducing herself as Jennifer Pihlis, without saying who she represented, she orange said she was here "to let you know about an existing proposal for the property adjoining your place just to the north." Katie listened politely as the woman explained about the planned "family farm" that was to be built on 70 acres currently owned by Jeffrey Marra.

The land would be used to grow marijuana in a large grow facility.

Katie said she felt the lady was a public relations contractor trying to connect about ten that the marijuana farmers would be good neighbors. Katie said that the word "organic" was used. But when she asked questions that the woman didn't seem able to answer, she woman reached into her briefcase and pulled out an informational sheet that "might answer most of your questions."

There was no kneecap or identifying marks on the informational sheet, other than the woman's phone number. The sheet stated that the proposed family farm would be, initially, a 12,000 square foot grow facility with security. Marijuana, or cannabis, would be grown in 100 percent compliance with the Massachusetts Cannabis Commission and state regulations.

A timber buffer would be planted to shield the building from the road. A family-owned company, not a corporation. Start small and expand. Be part of the community. Be a good neighbor. Produce oils for cancer and other conditions. Environmentally friendly. Discrete transport of product from facility. And more.

4th of July, 1840s

In honor of Independence Day, we've pictured here a 26-star flag that represents the flag that flew over America in the 1840s, the decade in which the home of George and Michelle Wheeler was built on Sandisfield Road in West New Boston.

If you have an older house, or even if you have a new one, you may be interested to learn about the history of Old Glory and maybe even how to obtain a desirable nylon historic flag like this one with the appropriate number of stars for your place. We recommend a visit to the website of U.S. Flag Depot, Inc. at www.usflagdepot.com

Nearly two dozen houses in Sandisfield could legitimately fly a flag with only 13 stars, and maybe ten or so with 15 (until 1828). A list of Sandisfield historic homes and buildings, and their estimated build dates, assembled by the Sandisfield Historical Commission, is on our website at www.SandisfieldTimes.org. Follow the link to the file.

Photo: George Wheeler. Text: Ron Bernard


Celebrating Our Xth Volume

In April 2020, The Sandisfield Times will reach the beautiful age of ten.

With this issue, we are halfway through our tenth volume. We're at Vol. X, No. 5. We do eleven issues a year (combining January and February).

We're not lighting candles yet, but we are starting to celebrate. Ten years in, and counting.

We'll have other little reminders for our readers through the rest of Vol. X, and we'll all celebrate for sure April 2020, during our birthday month.

In the meantime, here are three of our front pages over the last decade to remind us of how far we've all come together. 

Bill Price and Seth Kershner, Editors

Ten Years

If you figure things by tens
I'm in my 8th decade so I'm almost dead.
And climate change figures
To boil the world around 2050.
And my mother got the vote
In 1920, bless her white skirt
And that frosty smile.

While you're at it remember
Queen Victoria raising her frail arm
In 1900 to start the Boer War.
Or in 1930 my Great Uncle Sam
Bouncing a rubber check off Wall Street.
And himself.

And remember Abraham Lincoln.
In 1860, about to sweep the nation clean:
"All men are created equal"
He reminded us.
Finally, in 1960 hearing Lincoln's
Better angels, the children of CORE
Sat-in at the Woolworth lunch counters.
We would be free.

And then there was
A bunch of us: a scrubby, anxious lot
In Simon's living room in 2010
Creating this paper
Until who knows when?

Val Coleman
West New Boston

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The Baranoffs of Montville

A FAMILY MEMOIR

By Michael Barrie

In a family of short men, my grandfather Abe Baranoff was the shortest. He was of mild disposition, with a sly sense of humor and a foxy grin. He spoke with a thick Yiddish accent. He liked to vacation in "Lakevud" (Lakewood, New Jersey), and also at the "Rendl" (the Randall Hotel in South Beach, Florida).



*The Baranoff family, 1921. Abe, Willie, George, Milt, and Sonia.
Photos: The Barrie family.*

From 1922 to 1933 he and Sonia and their three boys lived in the Berkshires, in a small town he called "Montvl."

"Montvl" was Montville, one of the unincorporated sections that then made up the town of Sandisfield. The Baranoffs left Brownsville, Brooklyn, as part of the Jewish efforts to move families out of crowded tenements into inexpensive farming country.

The boys – Milt, 4, Willie, 8, and George, 10 – are all gone now, but Willie and Milt took notes, so I'll let them tell you about growing up here back then.

"There was a big settlement of immigrants," said Willie, "from Pop's home area in Russia [Ukraine],



Sonia at the family store in Montville.

relatives and landmen. Montville was an area that was totally Christian and where they never had a Jew before this group came in," he said. Here, they recreated shtetl life, minus the marauding Cossacks.

"We all moved into one-room at the Harry & Gussie Lipshitz house on Main Road," said Willie, "and lived there for a year. The fresh air was very good for me as I had been suffering from anemia. I learned to swim that year in West New Boston – in the river across the road."

"We used to watch workers drill a hole in a maple tree," said Milt, "push in a quill and hang a pail, and the sap would drip. They collected it, then placed a big 8-foot-by-12-foot pan over a fire outside, and the sap would dry into maple syrup & sugar."

"George attended the old schoolhouse in Montville in the 1922-23 school year," said Willie. "And Milt started there at age 5, with teacher Emily Clark. She was a very pretty young lady, who used to come to school on a horse."

Their father Abe "acquired a two-family house — fourteen rooms — the Winship House — in the village of Montville. The house was a hundred-plus years old and was in original untouched condition. No heat or electricity. Kerosene lamps. There was a well outside

and on cold winter mornings we'd pump water into buckets by hand and bring it in and heat it up on the wood-burning stove. In the cold of the dark morning we'd milk and feed the cow and feed the chickens.

"Periodically, one of the families would have a cow butchered and the community of Jews would have meat divvied up among them. That first year in West New Boston I had the bad experience of watching my father and a rabbi butchering a calf at night in the cold."

Abe's father, Chaim Dovid, who he'd never see again after leaving for America, was a shochet, a kosher butcher. They corresponded in Yiddish until the late 1930s, when Soviet restrictions on Jews kept the old man from plying his trade.

Abe learned some of his father's skills but ran into restrictions of his own. In June, 1927, the Berkshire Evening Eagle reported he'd been fined \$20 for violating the slaughtering laws.

"Many people knew (Abe) only as 'Benny,'" said Milt. "Those people were of a different faith, and they couldn't see such a terrific guy with a biblical name."

"All the non-Jews, all the way up to the top politicians, loved him," said Willie. "And they called him 'Benny Barnroff.'"

"Pop's occupation was that of a painter and paperhanger," said Milt. "However, there wasn't any painting or papering, simply because there wasn't any money around [during the Depression]. So, Pop became one of the original entrepreneurs with a very creative mind.



Baranoff's Dance Hall, winter 1933.

"One of Pop's entrepreneurial moves was to open the only gas station within probably ten miles of the area. One problem – after a few weeks, he had to pay for gasoline and he didn't have the money. There was a big underground tank that Socony [Standard Oil Company of NY] dug to put it in and then they took it out!!!"

"Abe 'Benny' Baranoff built a dance hall and speakeasy," said Willie. "It was adjacent to his general store. All this was done on the strength, primarily, of being a bootlegger during the Prohibition years."

"It was a Saturday in the summer," said Milt, "and I was the only one around the house, when a couple of cars rushed up and about four, five or six uniformed state police jumped out. They searched all over the place and started to take large 100-pound burlap bags of sugar from the garage. This was Pop's inventory for

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Milt taking one on the chin from big brother, Willie, at Shade's camp.

the people around who were manufacturing bootleg booze, and he was the supplier of this important ingredient.

"Pop was driven to court in Pittsfield and that night did not show up at home. There weren't any telephones so we couldn't call anybody to find out what happened to him. My mother was frantic, but there wasn't anything to do but wait.

"Well, the following afternoon, the wandering hero comes driving up the road in a brand new Model T Ford. A hero's welcome, etcetera, and it seems like Pop was put in jail for the night, at least, until he was able to get help from a lawyer. The car was bought by Pop from Brown Motors, next to the jail, with the usual "mirrors" [as in smoke & mirrors] that he used!"

"Opening night of the Baranoff Dance Hall," said Willie, "was July 16, 1927, with brother George's pickup band from Great Barrington, Mass."

George was a natural musician who'd taught himself to play guitar, banjo, clarinet, saxophone and piano. Decades in the future, George Barrie, the owner and chief executive of Faberge, Inc., returned to music. He wrote songs with lyricist Sammy Cahn, two of which were nominated for Oscars.

"The natives demanded a country music band for square dancing. So, when available, the number one band was Sammy Spring," the noted fiddler and square dance caller from Otis.

It's hard to picture Milt hanging around for the dosey-does. A jazz fanatic who would one day hire the entire Stan Kenton orchestra to play for just him and his friends, Miltie was no doubt home, huddled by the radio.

"When I was very young in the Berkshires we used to listen to the remotes at night from all over," he said. "WBZ, KDKA, WLW, etc., and hear bands like Coon Sanders, George Olsen, Ben Bernie, etc. Later on, it was the Casa Loma, Benny Goodman..."

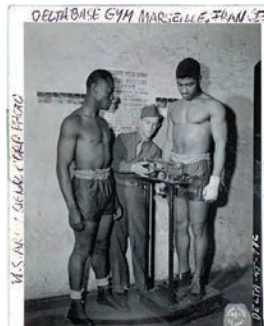
First-born George was the leader and achiever. Milt, the youngest, was charming and social. And Willie, the middle child, was hotly competitive just to be noticed.

Which brings us to prizefighter Dave Shade [Shade Road in Sandisfield is named for the fighter].

Sportswriter Wilbur Wood called Shade's loss to welterweight champ Mickey Walker in 1925 at Yankee Stadium, "One of the most atrocious decisions in the history of boxing in New York." "Sure I beat Mickey," Dave told the Berkshire Eagle in 1965. "All the newspapermen thought so, but those gamblers took care of that."

Recovering from typhoid fever in the '20s, Shade bought land in Sandisfield and set up a training camp.

"I boxed several times with Shade," said Willie, "as a student and sparring partner - both in Sandisfield & at Grupp's Gym on West 116th Street in New York."



Willie at an exhibition weigh-in, World War II.

Boxing was big with the Baranoff boys. They were always striking fighter poses and hanging out at Shade's camp. In North Africa and France during the Second World War, Willie staged prizefights in huge arenas for thousands of soldiers. And did double duty as ring announcer. A lifelong fight fan, he subscribed to The Ring magazine until the end of his life.

Prohibition ended in 1933, not so great if you owned a speakeasy. Baranoff's Dance Hall folded. The family moved back to New York, to the Bronx, and the boys' country childhood was over.

George, 21 by then, was ambitious, eager to get his life rolling. Fifteen-year old Milt braved culture shock at DeWitt Clinton High School. And Willie's nostalgia for their rustic Berkshires village - snug with neighbors, synagogue at the center, his dad a community leader - would never fade. ♡



1997, three Montville kids: George, Milt, and Willie, with Milt's son, Michael.

GETTING TO AMERICA

Born Avraham Abish Chaim-Dovidoff Oksion, Abe Baranoff grew up in Kukhari, a speck of a town, in Kiev province, Ukraine. Faced with a 25-year hitch in the Czar's army, which sounds better than it is, he slipped across the Austro-Hungarian border at nineteen and beat it to the port of Rotterdam. His cousin in New York, Sholem Baranoff, sent him passage under the name Abraham Baranoff. He docked in Hoboken on New Year's Day, 1908. He liked his nom de voyage and kept it.

Sonia Gershowitz left Minsk province in 1906, a year after the first Russian Revolution failed and right-wing mobs attacked the usual, all-purpose scapegoat: Jews. She sailed from Libau, Latvia, and then from Liverpool, to New York, alone, at the age of fourteen, not five feet tall. A year later, she was joined by her mother, grandmother, and brother. They rented a flat in Brooklyn and took in a boarder to help pay the rent.

Abe, the boarder, was drawn to the quiet strength that made Sonia the rock of their family. They married in 1911.

Michael Barrie

THE BARANOFF/BARRIE FAMILY

This memoir of early Montville was excerpted from a recently published family history, *How We Got Here: The Barrie Family in America*. The author, Michael Barrie, is the grandson of Abraham Baranoff and his wife, Sonia, who resided in Montville in the 1920s and early 1930s. *How We Got Here* is not available commercially but the family has donated a copy to the Sandisfield Library.

The family name was changed to Barrie in the 1940s when their sons moved and achieved success in the professional beauty products industry. Their Sandisfield social experience, especially a friendship with well-known resident boxer Dave Shade, is treasured by the family.

Michael Barrie, who has maintained the family interest in the town of Sandisfield, is the son of Milton Barrie and Marilyn Paris Barrie. He is also a grandson of Abe and Sonia, who are central to this story, and of Charles and Rebecca Paris. Both sets of grandparents were immigrants from Russia near the turn of the 20th century.

In his professional life, Mike was a writer for Johnny Carson on "The Tonight Show" and David Letterman on "The Late Show." He co-wrote several films including "Bad Boys" with Will Smith and Martin Lawrence and "Oscar," starring Sylvester Stallone. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Fredde, and, he says, "various four-legged freeloaders."

Ron Bernard

MEMORY LANE

SANDISFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEMORY LANE QUIZ

Can you name these contestants in Sandisfield's Annual Turkey Shoot from October 1981? Sponsored even then by American Legion Post #456, the shooters lined up to aim at targets, not turkeys. Now they don't even shoot at targets, but roll dice to win prizes. Some of the prizes are Thanksgiving turkeys, thus it's still a "Turkey Shoot."

Identify as many as you can from left to right and send your answers by email to: editor@SandisfieldTimes.org or by postal to Sandisfield Times, PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255. We hope you have as much fun as these contestants seemed to be having 38 years ago! 🍀



Photos: Don Victor/Sandisfield Times Archives



Letters to the Editors

A big thank you to the volunteers who so faithfully get all the news to the people of a wonderful little town.

It's hard to believe we've been a property owner there for 62 years. The little camp house that Charlie and I built by ourselves is still in constant loving use by our children and grandchildren.

We have millions of happy memories of days at Spectacle Pond, the Rowley boys (Bill and Marvin), hikes in the forest, picnics, parades and much more. Great people!

Lila Innes
Granby, Conn



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your
foundation
on higher
ground

before you put your
house on stilts



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charming, immaculate accommodations
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★★★★★

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Shaggy Dog Story Ends Well

By Setsuko Winchester



From left: Kim Spring, animal control; Peyton, the lost and found protagonist of the story, who belongs to Amanda Leavenworth; Simon Winchester, homeowner where Peyton came frolicking into the yard sans ID or collar.

Realizing it was not a small bear but a fluffy black dog with white front paws, we managed to convince the animal with snacks and kind words to stay with us in the yard. Simon was able to hold on to the dog by its fur until I ran to find a leash to put around his neck. A call to Kim Spring revealed that a “floppy dog” was reported missing an hour earlier.

A couple of hours later dog and co-owner Eli Holland were happily reunited. 🐾



We had just arrived home late Sunday afternoon and were listening to the final match of the Federer/Djokovich game in the car on the BBC when Simon said, “Is that a bear?”

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All photos shown are the actual work of C.W. Nelson

For Love of an Old House, Part 3

THE FRONT PARLOR – BEFORE AND AFTER

Photos and story by Lorraine German



Before: the front parlor as guest bedroom.

the mantle and the stenciled wall that surrounded it, which had been painted by the same artist who stenciled the Josiah Sage house in South Sandisfield.

From my husband Steve’s grandparents’ time in the early 1920s onward, the front parlor had been used as an extra bedroom – first for boarders and later for guests. Over the years, the walls were painted blue and then paneled. The original floorboards were replaced with plywood and covered with brown wall-to-wall carpeting.

It was time to turn the room back into a parlor. Once the mantle was finished, Steve and I tackled the fireplace wall. As we removed the paneling,

The faux marble mantle featured in Part 2 of this series wasn’t the only outstanding feature of the front parlor of the house on Town Hill Road: The entire room was featured in art historian Janet Waring’s 1937 book about early homes. She described in detail

chips in the paint revealed hints of the red, green, and yellow stenciling that lay beneath. But the blue paint couldn’t be removed until we consulted with professionals. We had to find the best way to remove the paint to preserve as much of the stenciling as possible.

With the paneling gone, I dry-scraped the baseboard to reveal the original charcoal-gray paint – a color that would have complemented the gray veins of the faux marble mantle. I painted the paneling on the other three walls a light cream and painted their baseboards to match the gray of the original.



After: the front parlor restored.

We pulled up the wall-to-wall carpeting and painted the floor a deep reddish-brown that harmonizes with the colors in the room. An old hooked rug replaced the brown carpet. Some chairs, tables, and curtains completed the room’s transformation from spare bedroom back into a sunny parlor that invites guests to sit down, rest, visit awhile. 🐾

Police/Fire/EMS Logs

NOTE: North Main Street is Rt. 8 north of New Boston Bridge; South Main Street is south of the bridge.



POLICE

May 2019 Incidents

- May 1 Medical, Dodd Road
- May 1 Citizen assist, New Hartford Road
- May 2 911 Hang-up, New Hartford Road
- May 9 911 Hang-up, Sandisfield Road
- May 10 Suspicious activity, North Main Street
- May 13 Medical, South Beech Plain Road
- May 14 Motor vehicle accident, North Main Street,
- May 16 Medical, South Beech Plain Road
- May 16 Fire Alarm, Sandisfield Road
- May 16 Medical, Sandy Brook Turnpike
- May 19 Medical, Sandisfield Road
- May 20 Burglar alarm, Stump Road
- May 22 Medical, Lower West Street
- May 22 911 Hang-up, Town Hill Road
- May 26 Medical, Sandisfield Road
- May 27 Mutual aid to Monterey for a structure fire
- May 30 Citizen assist, Hammertown Road.

June 2019 Incidents

- June 3 Wires down, Clark Road
- June 3 911 hang-up, Sears Road
- June 3 Citizen assist, South Beech Plain Road
- June 6 Medical Sandisfield Road
- June 7 Motor vehicle accident, Sandybrook Turnpike
- June 7 Medical, Sandisfield Road
- June 8 Domestic disturbance, Main Street
- June 8 Noise complaint, Dodd Road
- June 10 Medical, Sandybrook Turnpike
- June 13 Erratic operator, North Main Street
- June 14 Vehicle fire, Sandisfield Road
- June 16 Well-being check, Sandisfield Road
- June 16 Medical, New Hartford Road
- June 17 Motor vehicle accident, Tolland
- June 20 Mutual aid to Tolland, CD alarm
- June 23 Medical, Tolland
- June 23 Medical, Tolland
- June 27 Fire alarm, Sandisfield Road
- June 30 Motor vehicle accident, Tolland



FIRE

May 2019 Incidents

- May 14 Motor vehicle accident, assist EMS with extrication
- May 16 Fire alarm activation, investigate, no fire
- May 27 Mutual aid to Monterey for a structure fire.

June 2019 Incidents

- June 3 Wires down, Clark Road
- June 4 State-mandated drill at nursing home
- June 7 Assist EMS at motor vehicle accident, Sandybrook Turnpike
- June 14 Vehicle fire, Sandisfield Road
- June 20 Mutual aid to Tolland, CD alarm
- June 27 Fire alarm, Sandisfield Road
- June 30 Mutual aid to Tolland, motor vehicle accident, assist with landing of Life Star helicopter



EMS

May 2019 Incidents, 911 Calls

- May 1 Medical, transported and transferred patient into care of Southern Berkshire Ambulance
- May 10 Mutual aid to Tolland, transport to Baystate Medical Center, Springfield
- May 11 Mutual aid to Tolland, transport to Noble Hospital, Westfield
- May 11 Mutual aid to Tolland, transport to Noble Hospital
- May 13 Lacking full crew, assist Otis Rescue Squad with response and transport of patient
- May 14 Motor vehicle accident, extrication required. Assisting Sandisfield with response were fire and rescue squads from Otis, Winsted, Tolland, Monterey and Colebrook. Winsted ambulance transported all three patients to Baystate Medical Center.
- May 16 Medical, transport to Fairview Hospital, Great Barrington
- May 16 Medical, no transport
- May 18 Medical, transport to Fairview Hospital

EMS, May incidents, CONT'D

- May 18 Medical, Southern Berkshire transport to Berkshire Medical Center, Pittsfield
- May 18 Mutual aid to Tolland, transport to Noble Hospital
- May 19 Medical, transport to Fairview Hospital
- May 22 Medical, Southern Berkshire transport as Sandisfield responded to next call
- May 22 Medical, transport to Berkshire Medical Center
- May 22 Medical, cancelled by 911 dispatch
- May 24 Medical, Otis responded and transported patient to Berkshire Medical Center
- May 26 Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital
- May 26 Mutual aid to Tolland, no transport
- May 31 Dispatched to Otis, no crew available in Sandisfield; dispatched Becket instead.

June 2019 Incidents

- June 4 Mutual aid to Tolland, transport to Baystate Medical Center
- June 6 Medical, transport to Fairview Hospital
- June 7 Motorcycle accident, transport to Charlotte-Hungerford Hospital
- June 7 Medical, transport to Fairview Hospital
- June 8 Medical, transport to Fairview Hospital
- June 10 Medical, Southern Berkshire responded
- June 16 Medical, transport to Fairview Hospital
- June 16 Medical, transport to Berkshire Medical Center
- June 17 Mutual aid to Tolland, no transport
- June 23 Mutual aid to Tolland, transport to Noble Hospital
- June 23 Mutual aid to Tolland (2nd call), transport to Noble Hospital
- June 28 Medical, Otis Rescue Squad responded
- June 28 Medical (2nd call), Otis Rescue Squad responded
- June 29 Medical, no transport
- June 30 Mutual aid to Tolland, Life Star transported patient

August at the Arts Center

FREE FAMILY EVENTS, ART, AND HISTORICAL INSIGHTS

By Hilde Weisert

Thanks to Sandisfield resident and world-class puzzle expert Michelle Arnot for another enlightening crossword contest last month. The Arts Center is lucky to be able to draw on so much unique talent from our residents.

Two of those talented residents are Val Coleman and Bill Cohn, who over the last ten years or so have collaborated on the “Coleman/Cohn series of talks on American life and culture.” Val’s talk on the Constitution is coming up in October, and on Saturday, August 17 at 4 p.m., retired professor Bill Cohn will speak on “Combating the Enemy Within.” With the long view of a historian, Cohn will help us place today’s resurgent fears of internal dangers in a larger and perhaps reassuring perspective.

As usual, the month begins with a free opening Art Gallery reception, Saturday August 3 from 2 to 4 p.m. This month we’re delighted to have paintings by local artist and teacher Marguerite “Marge” Bride. Bride’s watercolors of Berkshire farms, barns, houses, landscapes, and sunsets will make you see the everyday world with new eyes.

NOW TO THE FREE FAMILY EVENTS.

Come by Friday, August 9 at 5:30 p.m. for the free family film, “The Empire Strikes Back II,” a series hosted by our friends and neighbors Bogart and Tina Muller and curated by their movie-maven son Riley.

On Saturday, August 24 at 4 p.m., join us for a free program for both children and adults. Local author Jana Laiz, writer-in-residence at Herman Melville’s Arrowhead, will read from and talk about her recent books *Blanket of Stars* and *Billy Budd in the Breadbox: The Story of Herman Melville*, as well as two books in development for film, *Weeping Under This Same Moon* and *A Free Woman on God’s Earth: The True Story of Elizabeth “Mumber” Freeman, The Slave Who Won Her Freedom*. A writer with a purpose, Laiz’s goal is to “change the world one book at a time.” Jana’s reading is timed so that if you are participating in the Sandisfield Library’s summer program, “Reading is Out of This World,” which ends with a Celebration Party with Ed the Wizard and Alien Balloon Twisting at 1 p.m., you can come on over to the Arts Center to keep the reading fun going!

Jana’s program is made possible in part by a grant from the Sandisfield Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Their generous grant will allow us to provide some of Jana’s books to the Sandisfield Library and the Farmington River Regional School. 🍷



Sandisfield Arts Center

5 Hammertown Rd, Sandisfield, MA

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WATERCOLORS

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FRI, AUG 9, 5:30 PM
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THE EMPIRE STRIKES
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— — — — —
SAT, AUG 17 4 PM \$10
BILL COHN
 LECTURE: “COMBATTING
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Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro

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

AUGUST EVENTS

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. Features a story time. Led by Nina Carr. Free!

Wednesday Weekly Gatherings from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging, basement level at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex on Route 57.

Chair Yoga on Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging, basement level at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex on Route 57. Free.

YOGA with Ann Gadwah offered most Wednesdays from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road. Bring a yoga mat or towel. Visit ConnectSandisfield on Facebook or contact the Recreation Committee or Library for dates. \$5.

Opening Reception: Marguerite "Marge" Bride on Saturday, August 3, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road. Watercolors and scenes, especially architectural images. Private showings are available by appointment with the artist. The exhibition will be on display through September 5.

Free Family Movie Night on Friday, August 9, at 5:30 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road. This month's selection for the whole family is *The Empire Strikes Back*. Free.

Sandisfield Firemen's Steak Roast on Saturday, August 10, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Fire Station #2 on Route 57. Dancing to live music from 6:00 p.m. Tickets can be purchased from any volunteer or by calling A&M Auto (258-3381). Tickets not available at the door. Ice cream bars to benefit the Sandisfield Scholarship Fund.

New Boston Church Service on Sunday, August 11, at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. All are welcome!

Bill Cohn Lecture "Combating the Enemy Within" on Saturday, August 17, at 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road. For information visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org. \$10.

Jana Laiz: Children's Book Author on Saturday, August 24, at 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road. Ms. Laiz will read from and talk about her recent books. A great event for the whole family. For information visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org. Free.

Clam River Hike on Sunday, August 25, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. sponsored by the Berkshire Natural Resource Council. Enjoy the dark hemlock forest and incredible views of the Clam River on this four-mile hike. Meet at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex. Bring a lunch/snack, and water. Wear sturdy footwear for this moderately paced hike. Contact Mariah (mauman@bnrc.org or 413-499-0596, Mon-Fri, 9-5) for more information.

OTHER EVENTS IN NEARBY TOWNS

Arts Festival on Saturday, August 3 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Farmington River Regional School on North Main Street (Route 8) in Otis. Unique gifts, arts and crafts, pottery demonstration, hot dogs, and more.

Fishing Derby on Saturday, August 10 from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. at the Berkshire Hatchery on 240 Hatchery Road in Monterey. The Derby is for children thirteen and under, rain or shine. Prizes are awarded and limited equipment and assistance is available. For more information, call 528-9761.

Afternoon of Delta Blues and Rhythm Tap on Sunday, August 11 at 3:00 p.m. at the Otis Town Hall Green on Route 8. This event will take place inside if there is inclement weather.

Square Dance on Saturday, August 17 at 6:30 p.m. at the Otis Center Fire House. Caller Cliff Brodeur & the Housatonic Philharmonic Orchestra.

Colebrook Fair on Saturday, August 31, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in historic Colebrook Center. Food, vendors, and fun!



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Official Town meetings take place at Town Hall Annex unless otherwise indicated.

TOWN WEBSITE: www.sandisfieldma.gov

AMBULANCE: 911. Non-Emergency: 258-4742

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

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

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

BOARD OF HEALTH: Kim Spring: 258-4711 x3.
Meets 2nd Tues: 7 p.m., Old Town Hall.

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

BUILDING INSPECTOR: Eric Munson Jr.: 258-4590

COMMUNITY CENTER COMMITTEE:
Billie Pachulski: 413 652-0252

CEMETERY COMMITTEE:
Kathie Burrows: 258-4943. Meets as needed.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION: Meets 3rd Tues: 7 p.m.
Email: concom@sandisfieldma.gov.

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

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

DPW SUPERINTENDENT: Brad Curry: Emergency, 413-717-7627
717-7627 cell. Office 258-4711 x 7

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

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

FINANCE COMMITTEE: To be announced.
Meets as needed. Check for schedule.

FIRE. EMS. EMERGENCY: 911
Ralph Morrison, Fire Chief: 258-4742

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

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE: John Skrip: 258-4788

LIBRARY: Librarian: Theresa Spohnholz: 258-4966;
sandisfieldlibrary@gmail.com
Mon/Tues: 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Wed: 2-5 p.m.
Thurs: 5 - 7 p.m., Sat: 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

NOTARY: John Skrip: 258-4788
Theresa Spohnholz: 258-4966 or 258-4711 x 4

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

POLICE. EMS. EMERGENCY: 911
Non-emergency: 258-4742
Police chief cell: 413-441-2129/policechief@sandisfieldma.gov

POLICE-STATE: Lee Barracks: 413 243-0600

POST OFFICE: Amy Carriveau, Clerk, 258-4940
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RECREATION COMMITTEE: Billie Pachulski, 413-652-0252

SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER: (May-December)
5 Hammertown Road, PO Box 31
258-4100; www.sandisfieldartscenter.org

SANDISFIELD TIMES: Seth Kershner and Bill Price, editors
413 429-7179 or editor@sandisfieldtimes.org
Published monthly (Jan/Feb combined)
PO Box 584, Sandisfield

SELECT BOARD: 258-4711 x 2
Meets Monday, regular meeting, 7 p.m. Town Hall Annex.
See posted agendas for changes in meeting times.

STATE OFFICIALS:
Smitty Pignatelli, State Representative
413 637-0631; rep.smitty@mahouse.gov
Adam Hinds, State Senator; 413 344-4561; adam.hinds@masenate.gov

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

TOWN ACCOUNTANT: Margaret McClellan
by appointment; 258-4711 x 5 or accountant@sandisfieldma.gov

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR: To be announced

TOWN CLERK: Dolores Harasyko
Town Clerk Assistant: Pauline Bakunis
PO Box 163, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or townclerk@sandisfieldma.gov
Town Hall Annex: 258-4711 x 2
Mon: 8 a.m.-2 p.m./ 6 p.m.-7 p.m.
Tuesday - Thursday 8 - 4 pm or by appt.

TOWN HALL: At Town Hall Annex
66 Sandisfield Road, PO Box 90, 01255
Open Mon-Thurs: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Mon: 6-7 p.m. or by appt.

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

TRANSFER STATION: Tony Melloni:
Wed: 12 noon - 5 p.m., Sat/Sun: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

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



Lila Innes



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Copies are also available in Otis at Berkshire Bank, Katie's Market, Papa's Fuel, Otis Library, Otis Rec Center, 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 Café. Also available at the Southfield Store in New Marlborough, and at the general store and post office in Colebrook. Back issues are available for purchase.

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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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