

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



Plebis

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume X, Number 10

January/February 2020



Ice Storm, Sandisfield

Sunrise is the best time of the day. Possibilities loom. The ice storm that hit Sandisfield at the end of 2019 left trees and everything else covered with ice for three days. The temperature for two of those days barely budged from 31 degrees. The lower regions of town barely knew it was so bad, but the hilltops and high places were covered with what seemed like glass. The ice became less beautiful when it came crashing down on all sorts of stuff, including my truck. I was walking in ice boots with logger spikes, the only way to get around without slipping. By mid-January fences were still down, all around the farm, and some of the ice was still here. But who would want to live anywhere else than in the pure beauty of New England?

Photo and text by Brigitte Ruthman



Rowley Farm Buildings, 9 Years Ago

Photos by Larry Dwyer

Last month Ron Bernard reported on the efforts by the State's Department of Conservation and Recreation to prop up and stabilize two of the surviving buildings on the historic Rowley Farm on Cold Spring Road near Spectacle Pond.

Soon after the article was published, Larry Dwyer sent us photos he had taken when he explored the old farm buildings in 2011. Larry's photos reveal what might have been preserved had the DCR been able to move a few years sooner when the buildings and contents were in better shape than they are today.

The future of the property is still uncertain, though the DCR plans to conduct building studies to determine if other structures can be stabilized. After that, the department will consider if the property could be contracted out as a working historic farm or possibly used as an educational museum. In the meantime, the property is off-limits and visitors are strictly prohibited.



LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

AVE ATQUE VALE, BILL

By Simon Winchester, Founding Editor

It had to happen, I suppose.

From thirteen hundred miles away – from Minneapolis, in fact – Bill Price, editor of our newspaper for the last seven years, has decided to roll down his sleeves and put away his eye-shade and return to the gentler pursuit of a quieter and more normal life.

It is time, he thinks, for a person who lives all year in Sandisfield to take the role of editor and put a new stamp on The Times. He has suggested that Seth Kershner of Sandisfield Center who helps run the Library at the community college in Winsted undertake the task. It's a normal step since Seth has served as co-editor for the last year. Seth has cheerfully accepted and next month begins his term as our doughty and hopefully happy leader for the next many years to come.

It is wholly due to Bill's indefatigable level-headedness and inexhaustible courtesy that we have survived and prospered as a newspaper. His editorship is the principal reason that we are regularly cited as being by far the best and most vital of the small local journals that have sprung up hereabouts in recent years.

Bill has much to be proud of, and we in turn are proud of him. We look forward to welcoming both him and Miriam when they return this summer to their house beside the chuckling (sometimes roaring) Clam River down on River Road – this time to relax properly in their garden without having to worry about covering all the news unfolding in the town around them.

That will now be Seth's challenge, which we know he will meet with fortitude and inspiration – with the help of our loyal staff of volunteers. The Sandisfield Times will continue, with a few new plans here and there which we hope will please you all. That will help offset our sadness at saying farewell to Bill as editor. All of us, however, are pleased to welcome Bill's continuing role at The Times, however he chooses to define it. We wish Bill, Seth, our volunteers – and you, our readers – all the best.

Sayonara, SORT OF

By Bill Price, Editor

Well, not really *sayonara*. I'll be around, as Tom Joad said.

My third issue as editor of The Times was the Sester Centennial Celebration of the Town's 250th anniversary. That August 2012, our front page was a photo by Richard Migot of the exquisite and thrilling fireworks over Carr Field presented by Sandisfield's own Dave Lewis & Family of Berkshire Fireworks. But the fireworks on that front page were published in B&W.

Now – thanks to our many donors and subscribers and advertisers – The Times is in much better financial shape and can afford occasional color covers without breaking the bank. And because the front and back covers are printed on the same sheet, we can squeeze four pages of color out of the price of one. So, when we find the right picture for a cover, we'll do color, like this month with Brigitte's sunrise.

I'm stepping back as editor of The Times. It's been a pleasure to be editor and guide of this newspaper. A pleasure to have commissioned stories like Tom Christopher's October 2016 look at Sandisfield loggers Gary Pease, Marty Clark, and Billy Carr. To have helped Brigitte Ruthman's dispatches from farm and field to reach her charmed readers. To have encouraged Ron Bernard to keep on with his Sandisfield stories (as if I could have stopped him). To have encouraged a few Out on a Limb reports/bellyaches. To have encouraged Setsuko Winchester's enlightening walk through American history this month on page 12.

I'm glad to have helped report about people who are bold enough to stand for public office and then filled those roles to the best of their abilities. I'm glad to be able to report on good things happening to our neighbors, and regret having to report some of the not-so-good things, but it is a newspaper, after all.

Our expanding team of reporters and volunteers will help Seth Kershner, an excellent and thoughtful editor/reporter, continue to bring you the news of our town. Seth's enthusiasm and fresh skills will be good for the paper. I'm ready to hand him my green eyeshade and sleeve garters and watch him go. For me, I'll still be hanging around, helping the team put out the news.

SANDISFIELD FACES BUDGET CRUNCH

SELECT BOARD SCRAMBLES TO ADDRESS SPIKE IN RETIREMENT FUND CONTRIBUTION

By Times Reporters

In the midst of a busy budget season, the Select Board has learned that it will now have to account for a 27% increase in what it owes to the Berkshire County Retirement Fund. As the board readies its 2021 budget proposal, they will need to scratch up an additional \$20,435 in retirement funds.

Select Board Chair Mark Newman told the Berkshire Record in its January 17-23 edition that the difference would be made up by cutting down on

spending by Town departments. "We have to arrange all of the numbers to meet that target," Newman said. "I don't want to be the guy who has to say 'I have to raise your taxes.'"

The retirement fund is based on a formula that accounts for the number of retired Sandisfield employees who are drawing a pension as well as current Town employees who could possibly draw a pension in the future. Last year's budget saw the Town pitch in \$74,738 towards the fund. In 2019, Sandisfield added two new employees—Town Manager Joanne Grybush and Public Safety Officer Michael Johnson—while another retired.

Town departments began submitting their budgets in November. Following the Select Board's review of each budget, on January 16 they turned the budgets over to the Finance Committee. The committee consists of three new members – William Blanchard, Myles Reynolds, and Steve Seddon – plus two veterans, Roger Brown and Chairperson Kathy Jacobs.

The Finance Committee has until late February to examine the budgets and return them to the Select Board. The board hopes to have the final budget in place by mid-March. 🍷

MANAGER VS. ADMINISTRATOR

It's Up to the Board, Says the State

JOB EXTENDED TO FULL TIME

By Bill Price

A few Friends & Neighbors wondered about Town titles when the Select Board announced in October that Joanne Grybosh had been hired as town manager. The previous three occupants of the position had been town administrators.

In neighboring Connecticut and in the civic experience of some residents, the town manager is or is expected to be the "boss" of the town. Not so in Massachusetts, says the Handbook for Massachusetts Selectmen, 4th edition, 2014.

The Handbook encourages town governments to hire a professional administrator or manager because of the complexity of running a municipality – but it's left up to the town as to how to distribute titles and responsibility.

"The long-held view," says the rulebook, "that managers have more authority than administrators has no basis in state law. Some town manager positions have fairly modest authority, and some town administrators have significant authority."

The State is only interested in towns being run well. "The powers, duties, and responsibilities of a town management position, by whatever title, are determined and defined locally," says the Handbook.

"Since it didn't make any difference to the State, we wanted Joanne to get on track with a good start," said Board Chairman Mark Newman.


"She's not supervising Town staff," he added, "but managing several things at the same time. She's more of a manager. We didn't see a need for a person to oversee the staff as we imagined an administrator might. Town employees are doing a terrific job. We needed a good writer and manager of grants, a procurement officer, someone with working knowledge of Massachusetts General Law. Someone who could help us manage the Town's business."

Apparently, that's just what's happening. At every Board meeting since late October, Town Manager Joanne Grybosh has provided a long list of activities and chores and jobs finished during the week. She began the job scheduled for only three days a week, with 10 hours per week reserved for her previous position as secretary for the DPW Superintendent. At the time this reporter wondered if the job could be handled at only three days a week. Apparently not.

At a January 2 Select Board Work Session Grybosh reported that she is "actually putting in 50 hours a week" at the job and "would like her job to be full time." The Board agreed that funds were available to make the increase and that Grybosh "has done a tremendous job to date."

At the following Select Board meeting, January 6, the Board unanimously passed a motion to "increase the town manager's position to full time (40 hours)." Her salary was increased for the remainder of the fiscal year, utilizing the balance in the Town Administrator's salary account.

But what about the DPW secretary job? Joanne reported that overlapping synergies between the town manager and DPW jobs were occurring naturally and because of her long working relationship with the DPW Superintendent she doesn't foresee much shortfall. "If there is," she said with confidence, "we'll get it done." Maybe she'll put in still more hours?

Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko is pleased with the job Joanne has been doing and the tenor of Joanne's relationship with the rest of the Town Hall staff. "I think we got the right one this time," she said. 

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The Times appreciates all who donated so generously to our 2019 appeal.

November donors were listed in the December issue.

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SilverBrook Renovations

SLOW BUT STEADY PROGRESS

By Ron Bernard

Referring to their renovations of the former SilverBrook Café building in West New Boston, the new owners Seth and Melissa Fritch reported that they “are soldiering on, doing necessary but tedious work such as carefully prying up precious old boards, one nail at a time.”

They discovered that some of the flooring on the second floor were “made of 18-inch wide boards, two inches thick. In some places the floor was layered as much as four inches of various types of wood.”

Their priorities now are basic – secure the c. 1850s landmark from the elements and pests. “The goal is to keep the inside in and the outside out,” Seth

said. “The place has been idle for quite a while, and the mice and wasps decided to be squatters.”

Last summer and fall the couple and family and friends pecked away at a laundry list of mundane things like new doors, windows, and insulation. Melissa added, “We have a lot more work ahead of us, but the upstairs apartments are in much better shape. Each new window and door made the space quieter, less drafty, and a lot cheaper to heat.”

Seth acknowledged the surrounding piles of demolition debris which concern him. “I know this is not ideal but it didn’t make financial sense to get a dumpster until March when we’ll be able to fill it handily.”

Renovations of old buildings usually reveal secrets. Seth uncovered evidence of a fire, probably early in the building’s history, when it was a mill, its original purpose. He said that his guess was that the fire “was what took the shingle mill out of commission.”



Wasps lived in the SilverBrook rafters for years. They must have been very happy there.

Photo: Seth Fritch

As to what you might see when the place opens for business (no estimates yet), Seth said. “I have a bunch of slabs from a great old sugar maple at our place in Colebrook. They are going to make beautiful bar tables one day. We can’t say when, but we’ve already installed our first keg on tap from the new Norbrook Brewery in Colebrook.”



TOWN OF SANDISFIELD OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK YEAR 2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Offices up for election this year:

Office Term	Currently held by
Moderator 1 year . .	Simon Winchester
Selectmen 3 years . . .	Mark Newman
Town Clerk 3 years . .	Dolores Harasyko
Board of Assessors . 3 years	Steven Kopiec
School Committee 3 years .	Nick DellaGiustina
Board of Health . . 3 years . .	Victor Hryckvich
Planning Board. . . 5 years	Thomas Jacobs
Constables. 3 years	John Burrows Nazario Sanchez

Feb. 12: Last day to register to vote or change party enrollment for the Presidential Primary

Feb. 24-28: Early voting for the Presidential Primary, Town Hall Annex

Mar. 3: Presidential Primary, Old Town Hall 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Mar. 19: Last day to obtain nomination papers for local election.

Mar. 23: Last day to submit nomination papers.

Apr. 2: Town Caucus – Old Town Hall. 7:00 p.m.

Apr. 6: Last day to object or withdraw nomination papers.

Apr. 23: Last day to register to vote for the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Election.

May 16: Annual Town Meeting at the Fire Station #2, Route 57 at 10:00 a.m.


May 18: Annual Town Election at Old Town Hall, 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Aug. 12: Last day to register to vote and change party enrollment for the State Primary.

Sept. 1: State Primary Old Town Hall from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.


Oct. 14: Last day to register to vote for the Presidential and State Election.

Oct. 19-30: Early Voting for the Presidential and State Election, Town Hall Annex,

Nov. 3: Presidential and State Election, Old Town Hall from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. 

HELP WANTED

Secretary/Administrative Assistant to Finance Committee

The Town of Sandisfield is seeking applicants for the position of Secretary/Administrative Assistant to the Finance Committee. The primary duties will involve assisting the Town Finance Committee by attending meetings, writing and distributing meeting agendas and meeting minutes and posting them to the Town Web site, and performing other secretarial duties as may be required. In addition, should the Committee have questions regarding budgets, the secretary/administrative assistant may be asked to provide additional data by performing appropriate research. Meetings are typically held on Saturday mornings and Wednesday evenings and may be twice monthly during budget season (typically February through May) and less frequent during the remainder of the year. A working knowledge and familiarity of Microsoft Word and Excel and use of their own computer are required. The position is for approximately 10-20 hours per month and possibly more during budget season, but always less than 20 hours per week. Pay is negotiable based upon qualifications and other factors. Those interested can submit their resumes by mail, in person, or via email to: Town Manager, Town of Sandisfield, P. O. Box 90, Sandisfield, MA 01255, or email townmanager@sandisfieldma.gov. Applications must be received by 4:00 PM Thursday, January 30, 2020. The Town of Sandisfield is an EOE/AA employer. 

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SANDISFIELD'S HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM


FY 2018

TRI has been working for the Town of Sandisfield to manage their FY18 Housing Rehabilitation Program funded with a grant award of Community Development Block Grant Funds. These funds are benefitting low to moderate income homeowners.

In the past year, TRI has successfully completed nine Projects in Sandisfield. Sandisfield residents are benefiting significantly from the various repairs that the program offers.

FY 2019

TRI is currently accepting Applications for their FY19 Program. They have 1.3 Million Dollars in funds for for an additional 22 Projects! They are looking forward to continuing assisting Sandisfield residents and making critical repairs to their homes.

Contact Dawn Odell Lemon, Assistant Program Manager. She can be reached by telephone at (413) 645-3448 or via email at dawn@theresource.org. 

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IT Grant Will Help a Lot

The Town was notified January 8 by the Massachusetts Office for Administration and Finance that we have been awarded \$17,450 through the Community Compact Cabinet's Information Technology grant program.

The competition for this funding was intense. Our application was chosen because it met the overarching goal of driving innovation and transformation at the local level via investments in technology. There will be an awards ceremony and official announcement in the coming weeks. ♥

Election News

From the Office of the Town Clerk:

Dolores Harasyko, Town Clerk;

Pauline Bakunis, Assistant Town Clerk

This is going to be a very busy election year. Presidential primary, March 3. Town election, May 18.

If you want to run for an elected Town office, there are three ways to do this.

The first is to take out nomination papers at our office. This guarantees that your name will appear on the ballot as long as you have 25 certified signatures. When you take your papers around for signatures, make sure that the person signing is a registered voter of Sandisfield, that their address includes the house number and name of the road (route numbers or post office boxes are not accepted). The signature must be legible. If it is a creative signature please have the signatory print their name next to the signature.

Second, you can be nominated at the Caucus, April 2.

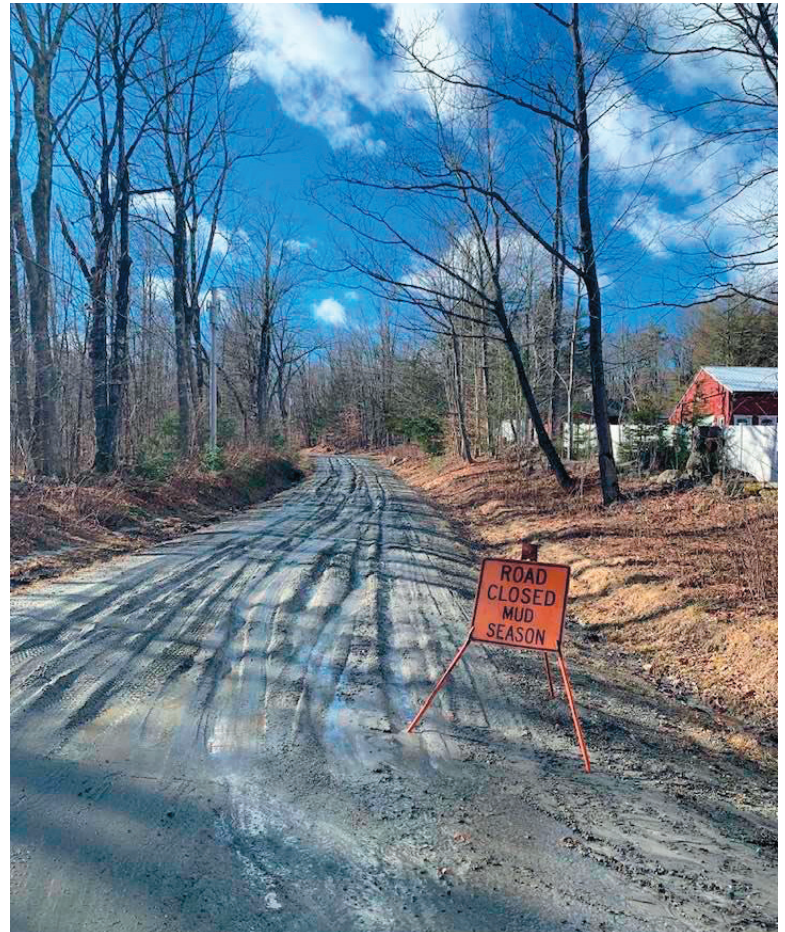
Third, you can conduct a write-in campaign.

Presidential Primary: The Presidential primary will be held March 3. Early voting for the primary will begin February 24 through the 28th. Early voting will take place in the Clerk's office on the following dates: Feb. 24 from 8-4, Feb. 25 from 8-2 and 6-8, Feb. 26 from 8-4, Feb. 27 from 8-2 and 6-8, Feb. 28 from 8-4. Early voting will also be available for the Presidential and State Election in November, schedule still to be determined. There will also be absentee ballot's available.

The Annual Town Election is on Monday, May 18, 2020 from 10:00 am to 8:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road. Absentee ballots will be available three weeks prior to the election. There are three reasons to vote absentee;

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

In order to vote absentee, voters need to fill out an absentee ballot application. You can request one in writing, online or by calling the Town Clerk's office at 258-4711, x 2. Once you fill out the application you can request that the ballot be mailed to you or you can vote in person in the Clerks office. If you wish you can fill out one absentee ballot for the entire year and we will automatically send you your ballots for all the primaries and elections. This works out well especially for students away from home. ♥



Dodd Road

Photo: Zoe Nelson



North Beech Plain Road

Photo: Ron Bernard

How Do You Get Home Around Here?

Carefully. It's unusual for our dirt roads to be closed so early in the year. Ice, mud, water, underlayers of problems of many years' duration. For the most part the mud hasn't frozen yet, which would allow for snow plowing and make the mud easier to drive on – if you can avoid the ruts. Road crews are working overtime dumping gravel, but the gravel can sink into Sandisfield mud. As they say, it's a hard row to hoe and a hard road to fix. Expect a long and soggy mud season this winter/spring.

LOCAL RESIDENT ESCORTS GOLDENS FROM CHINA TO THE U.S.

ED SWIECH VOLUNTEERS FOR A RETRIEVER RESCUE MISSION

by Tim Brooks

Longtime Sandisfield resident, Edward Swiech, has been a proud dog lover and owner all his life. Without much prompting, he will introduce you to and show off his new pet, Cooper, a five-year-old Golden Retriever rescue, which he adopted in November. Like many retired folks, Swiech enjoys spending time playing with and caring for his energetic and lovable canine companion.

Since 2015, he has also spent a fair amount of his free time volunteering for Yankee Golden Retriever Rescue (YGRR), which supports a cause he passionately believes in – the prevention of cruelty to animals.

After leaving Boston and moving full-time to his weekend home in Sandisfield in 2018, Ed Swiech continued serving as a home-visit volunteer for YGRR, meeting with prospective adopters throughout Western Massachusetts to make sure they have safe and welcoming living environments in which to bring newly adopted rescue dogs.

It was through this volunteer involvement that he learned of another opportunity to help, and last spring he joined a group of volunteers who would travel to China to rescue a group of abused and neglected dogs. It took two months, nine international round-trip flights totaling 121,000 air miles, but he helped to achieve YGRR's goal of saving 47 Golden Retrievers from slaughter.

For several years, YGRR has worked with a partner rescue operation, based in Beijing, to save hundreds of Golden Retrievers, most of which are found wandering the streets. Many of these dogs are captured or stolen from their owners and killed at slaughterhouses, then butchered for sale in local meat markets.



Ed Swiech and Gail Hachenburg in Beijing, ready to bring a shipment of rescued Golden Retrievers to new homes in the United States.

Last April and May, YGRR volunteers flew to Beijing, where they met with local contacts who initiated the rescue and transfer process. After making sure that the rescued dogs were properly crated and ready for air travel, and organizing all the necessary immunization and vaccination papers to get the shipment through international customs, both in China and upon arrival in the U.S., the YGRR travelers then proceeded to “escort” a pallet of five dogs (the maximum number permitted to accompany a U.S. traveler) on their return flight from Beijing to JFK.

Upon arrival, they made sure their precious cargo was processed through customs (not a quick process, by any means) and then did an on-site health check, to make sure each animal had made it safely through the 18-hour flight. Local YGRR volunteers were then met outside JFK, who took possession of the crated dogs and transported them to YGRR headquarters in Hudson, New York, where they were given complete medical examinations and housed in their kennels until ready for adoption.

“Traveling to China and seeing all the famous sites has always been on my bucket-list,” said Ed Swiech. However, this was not the type of trip that allowed for leisure time and sight-seeing. Most of the volunteers who made this trip last spring did so on a one-day turn around basis, meaning that they left for the U.S. the morning after they arrived in China.

Ed, who travelled with a fellow YGRR volunteer, Gail Hachenburg of Medway, Mass., added a couple of days to the itinerary in order to get some time to look around.

Arriving in Beijing at 7 p.m. on a Saturday evening, after a 17-hour non-stop flight from Boston, Ed and Gail did their best to cram in as much local sight-seeing as possible into the next 48 hours,

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Lucky dog. Ed with rescue dog named Oliver after landing at JFK..

which included visits to The Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace and the Beijing Zoo (famous for their Panda's).

Too soon it was time to leave. By 8 a.m., Tuesday morning, Swiech and Hachenburg were back at the Beijing airport, handling all the arrangements to get the dogs boarded onto their flight.

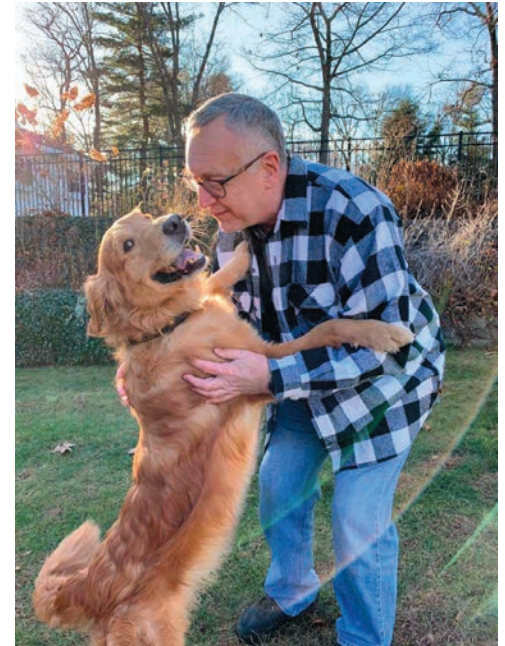
One last-minute snafu almost caused them to miss their flight – the credit card number on Swiech's air ticket did not match the credit card number on the cargo bill. Fortunately, thanks to a quick international call back home using "We-Chat," Swiech was able to get the correct account number and sent on his way. The route home included a stop in Taipei, before heading non-stop to JFK. After clearing customs, at 11 p.m., the duo had another two-hours by car back home to Massachusetts.

At one time it was unusual to think of transporting rescue dogs from one state to another or bringing abused or neglected animals to the United States from other countries, but not today. The issue of supply and demand for adoptable dogs of all types is no longer evenly spread across the country. In the Northeast, Great Lakes, and Northwest, the demand for adoptable dogs often far exceeds the locally available supply. Conversely, many Southern shelters and rescue groups tend to have an oversupply of unwanted animals.

Established in 1985, Yankee Golden Retriever Rescue is a charitable organization dedicated to providing comprehensive medical care, behavioral evaluations, and adoptive homes to homeless Golden Retrievers in the six New England states. Rescue services are provided to Goldens who have been abandoned, mistreated, neglected or left in shelters. YGRR is also proud of its' programs of care for Senior Goldens and Goldens with special medical needs.

In the past few years, YGRR has also expanded its' mission to include helping dogs in need due to extraordinary crisis events elsewhere in the country, as well as to rescuing dogs in need from outside the U.S. The effort to find new homes for the animals stranded in Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina in 2005 significantly accelerated this trend by demonstrating how rescue groups could cooperatively work together to find new ways to re-home unwanted dogs. It's now estimated that tens of thousands of dogs from other states and countries are transported around the country every year.

On a personal note, Ed relates his own experience with rescued Golden Retrievers. "A few years after losing my first Golden Retriever in 2002, I was ready to adopt again. Following Hurricane Katrina, in August of 2005, I went online and found the Gulf States Golden Retriever Rescue site, which had photos and profiles of dogs that had been found or turned in following the huge weather disaster in that area. I fell in love with a 3-month old puppy named Texas and in short order was approved to adopt him. He was flown from New Orleans to Boston in early May of 2006 – and was the most wonderful pet for the past 13 years. Texas passed away in October, which left a big hole in my life. I knew it was time to 'rescue' another deserving dog – and through YGRR, Cooper joined our family the day before Thanksgiving."



Ed with his newly adopted Retriever, Cooper, at home in Sandisfield in December.

Since 2014, YGRR has been working with a number of different partner organizations overseas, and has rescued hundreds of Golden Retrievers from China, Egypt, and Turkey, and continues to do so. "I'm so happy to be able to help with this effort as a volunteer for this organization," said Swiech, "and I encourage everyone who loves animals to support similar groups doing equally important work for the welfare of animals." For more information about YGRR, check out their website at www.ygrr.org.

OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

It is hard to say goodbye to the **Mill River General Store** after 180 years as the New Marlborough community hub and, after the earlier demise of our own New Boston Store, the longest-operating general store in the Berkshires. According to The Berkshire Record, the decision was "mutual between the owner of the building, David Herrick, and the store's current proprietor, Jessica Holcolmb." We'll report more on the store's passing next month. We can't take much more of this kind of news.

Planning Board Is Lighting Up

PRESENTS BYLAW DRAFT TO SELECT BOARD

By Bill Price

The Planning Board was scheduled to present a draft of a Marijuana Bylaw at the January 27 Select Board meeting, news too late for this issue of The Times. To bring you up to date until at least January 23, following are relevant minutes from the last two months of Planning Board meetings.

Considering that a new town resident has purchased property on West Hubbard Road with the announced intention of starting a marijuana-production facility and is working through the permit processes for building a house on the site in order to establish residence before applying for town and state permits, coming up with pot regulations at this point seems a little like the horse trotting along behind an already rolling cart.

In any event, the Times applauds those who are stepping up to do the hard and often thankless tasks of governing.

Following are minutes from the November and December Planning Board discussions. The subject first came up at meetings in September. Neighboring residents on West Hubbard have attended the meetings and contributed to the discussions.

Meeting of November 20

ITEM 4. The Board discussed new home plans with Jennifer Pilbin of 12 West Hubbard Road. Pilbin must confirm new structure is greater than 30' from all property lines. Pilbin will confirm exact distances and email them to the Planning Board. Approved unanimously pending measurements.

ITEM 5. Planning Board discussed creating a subcommittee regarding cannabis. Four town residents wish to be members of aforementioned committee. The Planning Board discussed New Marlborough's approach to a cannabis subcommittee.

ITEM 6. Roger Kohler discussed pursuing bylaws with respect to cannabis. Planning Board discussed exploring the current cannabis bylaws in Cheshire and Windsor, Mass. Paul Gaudette proposed drafting a bylaw to present at the December 2019

meeting. Board members reviewed the Status of Community Action on Recreational Marijuana Law. Members also discussed the Cannabis Control Commission. Maps of Sandisfield were reviewed to clarify where it may or may not be appropriate to place growing and/or dispensing facilities. Growing and selling, the pros and cons of each, were discussed at length. Opinions regarding cannabis were then heard by the Board. Main routes, 57 and 8, would be the roads most likely impacted by cannabis sales or growing. The cultivation of cannabis and its guidelines need to be determined.

Meeting of December 10

ITEM 4. The Board discussed a Cannabis Bylaw draft. Ed Brozman asked about the overlay locations and farming of hemp – is hemp farming a legal farming crop in Massachusetts? Paul Gaudette explained that hemp farming is covered under the Federal Farm Act and is legal to farm.

Ron Pachulski asked about the odor of hemp and if there were any other health concerns. [Questions also included] building style restrictions, tier system for location, setbacks, and town revenues. Roger Kohler suggested adding Micro Businesses solely for growing facilities 2,000-5,000 square feet being allowed off the overlay be added to the Cannabis Bylaw draft. [The bylaw draft was postponed until the January meeting.]

Planning Board members are Roger Kohler (chairman), John Fields, Tom Jacobs, Paul Gaudette. One vacancy.

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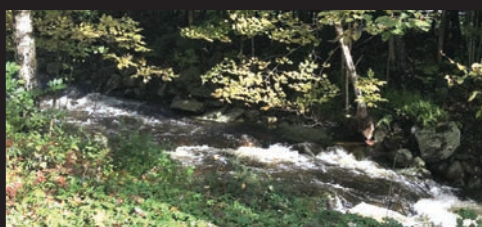
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WINTER SNOWFALL AND EXTREMES

2019-2020 to date, as measured/estimated at a Beech Plain backyard weather station.



EXTREME EVENTS

Dec 30-31	ice storm	December 2019
Jan 11	62° F	Dec 2 10"
Jan 12	61.0	Dec 3 7"
Jan 17	-2.0	Dec 11 4"
Jan 18	-1.0	Dec 17-18 2"
		Dec 30-31 1.5
		Dec Total 24.5"

SNOWFALL

November 2019	January 2020
Nov 12 1"	Jan 6 1"
Nov 13 5"	Jan 16 1"
Nov 17 3"	Jan 18 3"
Nov 19 1"	SEASON TO DATE: 39.5"
Nov Total 10"	

Special Letter to the Editor

More on Pot Farm Controversy

By Bogart Muller

After reading and re-reading in last month's Times the Special Letter to the Editor titled, "Pot Farm Controversy Continues..." I stand befuddled.

Our Town is in serious need of revenue, period. There is no outstanding source of money to repair roads or get the school budget straight. We use homeowners' tax dollars exclusively to maintain our Town budget. While surrounding towns have done the homework, planned for the future, and moved ahead investing in solar, wind power, infrastructure, grow facilities, and other means of sustainability and watched it pay off, we struggle just to keep the lights on.

Once, a meeting was held and a person very well connected to law told us that legislation was going to pass and that cannabis, illegal at the time, would be legal to sell and profit from. They suggested we plan to set our by-laws to accommodate this impending industry. They were practically laughed off the floor. So, what is set up in Great Barrington generating hundreds of thousands could have been put here, generating hundreds of thousands.

Not long ago, Athena proposed to build a facility here that could have brought permanent, well-paying jobs to the area, promising tax revenue that by now would have rendered new and repaired roads, all new EMS equipment, and improvements to existing Town buildings, if not new buildings. It would have been a huge success had the town taken into consideration the long-term benefits from such an installation. Jobs created for local residents in the healthcare field wouldn't have to commute all the way to Connecticut, Barrington, or Pittsfield. Because a very small handful of people that didn't want it versus the wellbeing of an entire town that would have benefitted, sadly, it never happened.

We face this again. An opportunity to try again.

Are we going to allow a bonified business person with a lucrative business plan in a billion-dollar industry set up shop here without noise, without interfering with daily life, and without being disagreeable? Are we going to slam the door shut on this business and regret it later as other towns next door reap the benefits

of their welcome mat to this industry? Will we see what's best for the Town in years to come? Or will we lose yet another promising source of much needed revenue and just raise people's taxes to cover the cost of running the town?

Lawsuits could arise from this. A person well-rehearsed in farming NOT being allowed to farm? Sounds like an unnecessary, expensive legal battle ultimately costing the Town money (your money) to defend itself and its decision.

The fact that it is pot is the kicker here, people, plain and simple. What if it were a commercial greenhouse to grow tomatoes, potatoes or soybeans, fruits or carrots? They require the exact same growing conditions. Let me ask, would there still be such an uproar?

Let's face it. We have a few very small businesses here in town that contribute to the offset of the homeowner's taxes. We lost a few in recent years and without any prospect of seeing new ones come in. We are left taxing the homeowners more to fund the budget and, as we all know, costs are always rising. We need to invest in something and not swat away potential long-term revenue such as this. We should be welcoming new business and embracing their challenges by asking what we could do to help them thrive instead of giving them a difficult time because a few people are not happy.

I was told by a powerful business person once, "The more you can do for me, the better off we both are..."



Letters to the Editors

FROM AN ONLINE READER

A perfect little paper. beautifully conceived and designed. Thank you.

Jean & Roy Jinks
Florence, Mass.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

Great series on the Lost Wilderness Ranch. We brought the Times along to share with our family

at Thanksgiving. Everyone enjoyed reading the stories, the pictures, and sitting around the table reminiscing about our own good old days at the ranch.

Dawn & Eric Pachulski
Sandisfield

FROM MONTEREY

Many thanks, neighbors. I pick up the Times and read it end to end. Great to learn about the Lost Wilderness Ranch, really sprightly writing. Keep it up!

Bonner McAllester & Joe Baker
Monterey, Mass.



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Out on the Limb of History

WHEN MOST OF THE ASIANS DISAPPEARED ...

By Setsuko Winchester

The report about the Sandisfield Arts Center's 2019 program last month was a lively column about how Sandisfield's Art Center strives to educate us about "Our Town," our constitution, and our history. Featured were "Stimulating and timely talks from our scholars Bill Cohn and Val Coleman (Val paid for copies of the U.S. Constitution at his inspiring and passionate lecture, 'The Constitution Alive') and Dr. Robert Maryks presented 'Fascism and Racial Laws in Italy' (preceded by a free showing of 'The Garden of the Finzi-Continis')."

It's good that we learn the history of fascism and race laws around the world and re-examine what the constitution says, but shouldn't we also learn about one of the most legally racist periods in US history – the post-Civil War/Reconstruction era between the 1880s and 1940s?

During this period, when the U.S. was opening vast swaths of territory to "settle," hundreds of local, state, and federal laws were written and passed which would legally define who could and who could not become an American and thus receive constitutional protections as well as participate fully in our country's democracy. Back then it was a white minority fearing being overwhelmed by a non-white majority.

During that time a fearful electorate passed the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, banning further immigration from China. This act would inspire the creation of a new federal agency, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), which became a new arm of government created to enforce the new exclusion act.

A quick look at U.S. race laws that followed show that "not white" was chosen as the quick and easy way to separate the chaff from the desired "all-American" wheat. Those who did not fit in with this paradigm were left to fight it out through the courts which, more often than not, ignored the constitution's call for liberty and justice for all and instead confirmed and expanded this country's racially-based caste system, cementing it firmly into the laws of the land.

Most discussions on race today remain limited to a white/black paradigm but it's the hundreds of laws targeting other "non-white" peoples passed after the Civil War which still linger. Their effects continue to enliven our political discourse today.

While many of us in this country come from Europe, many of us did not. Many were already here and had a different row to hoe towards "freedom, liberty, opportunity, and justice." In fact, it was post-1880s that a whole new category of human beings was slowly shaped, molded, and defined by the rule of law – those deemed to be "Aliens ineligible to naturalize." (This would not include my husband, who is white, British, Christian, and an immigrant, but would have – had I not been born here – excluded me.)

These laws were all based on the 1790s Naturalization Act – which stated that "Any Alien" ... being a 'free white person' ... having had residency for two years ... was of good character ... could naturalize."

The phrase "Any Alien," of course, excluded native born Native Americans, the first to be excluded.

And a look at the long history of "Exclusion" laws shows how important that one adjective, "white," written into that early law by the founding fathers helped to tint the color of our laws and our citizenry ever whiter for nearly 150 years.

What we're seeing today is less "Garden of the Finzi-Continis" and more a continuation of the Page Act of 1875, the Dawes Act of 1887, and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. And In re Saito, 1894, was the first law passed in the U.S. to specifically exclude persons of Japanese ethnicity from becoming an American citizen, the court having ruled that because Mr. Saito was "not white" he was ineligible to naturalize. By 1922, it would become a federal law with the Supreme Court's ruling that a Japanese person was "not white," therefore could not be a naturalized citizen.

As a resident of the Berkshires, it was a bittersweet realization for me to discover that the Saito ruling was made in a district court right here in my adopted state of Massachusetts. The legal rationales were congressional intent, common knowledge, scientific evidence, and legal precedent.


Maybe that's why even after having gotten a graduate degree in Journalism from NYU, worked for 10 years as a journalist at NPR headquarters in Washington, D.C., and being a born and bred American, it's often not my observations on America that people are interested in. Rather I'm asked, "What is it like in Japan?"

After leaving Washington and the daily grind, I've been slowly and painstakingly piecing together the fragments of the Asian American experience, which was either completely missing or often regarded as a mostly irrelevant sidebar in American history. But this group's trajectory in fact fills in a missing chapter that can help make sense of our nation's origins myth which zigs from the founding fathers who wrote elegiacally of "justice for all" but in a zag officially enshrined the slave trade and ultimately a social hierarchy based on race.

We talk about Nativism, but it's never been about the "native born." A good look at our naturalization laws show that the all-important factor was "being white" or, as the rulings for exclusion stated, being "not-white."

In their bid to create a white, Christian German empire, we now know that Nazi leaders admired the American Empire and had copied America's race laws. They regarded the U.S.'s ability to eradicate its indigenous people and create social hierarchy based on race as what they would like to create in Europe.

We here in America like to talk about violations of freedom against whites and blacks, but we often fail to register anything other than silent acknowledgement for the passage of legislation after legislation written and passed against those in that legally grey category called "alien" or "non-white."

Perhaps knowing this could be just as instructive as getting acquainted with German and Italian race laws during WWII or watching "The Garden of the Finzi-Continis." 



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Council on Aging



By Nina Carr

We'd like to honor the memory of one of our long-time members, Betty Pachulski, who died at the age of 92 at the end of December. We regret her passing and send our regards and sympathies to her family.

We took a bit of a break over the holidays, since our regular meetings take place on a Wednesday and both Christmas and New Year's Day fell on Wednesdays.

Earlier in December we had enjoyed a delicious holiday luncheon and also had very good turnout for our wreath making workshop. As usual Bob from "Wildflowers" brought a wonderful variety of ribbon and decorative items, so the wreaths were just beautiful!

Thanks to Tina DeManbey's research and hard work, we have been in contact with Diane Monterosso of RSVP. You may have read about this group in the Berkshire Eagle. It is a volunteer group of seniors helping seniors mostly in the Pittsfield area. Diane is planning on extending this service to South County in the near future, and we hope to be part of this valuable network. We are looking for seniors who are interested in teaching classes in things like computers, nutrition, and strength and balance.

The COA can always use volunteer drivers as well. We would also like to hire someone to teach cake decorating and jewelry making in the near future. If you know someone or might be able to teach either of those things yourself, let us know.

Our normal activities are continuing on Wednesdays, including a visit from Porchlight VNA for blood pressure clinics, pizza and cards, and chair yoga. Check our website for details. Come join us for socialization and lunch every Wednesday! You know, you don't have to be over 65 to have lunch with us. Come on by. We'd like to visit with you. 🍷

Sandisfield Historical Society



Christmas Fair a Success

By Ann Wald, President

Another Christmas Fair is done and packed away for next year,

What a wonderful day it was. Most of the vendors are residents of our town, your neighbors, and the amount and range of talent they display is astounding.

Of course, Santa arrived to listen to the wishes of the children who were waiting for his arrival. Each child walked away with a smile on their face. Santa did a great job, and we're grateful he could take time from his busy schedule to stop by.

Music was provided by Tom O'Gara and his group of musicians as they played Christmas carols. Volunteers from the New Boston Congregational Church provided the food and drink for the day. Needless to say everything was delicious.

All said and done, it was a very enjoyable day.

The Historical Society will take a few months off to work on our schedule for next year. See you in the Spring. And we wish you all a great new year. 🍷

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2020 Rules for Transfer Station

NOT ON THE CENSUS? PLEASE REGISTER

By Times Reporters

The Selectmen wrote to residents in December that Transfer Station rules and sticker applications have changed for 2020. They wrote that “fraudulent use of the transfer station causes increased cost of waste management for the Town. Our goal is to keep costs down while maintaining proper disposal of trash.”

The new rules may take a bit getting used to, but the fee, at least, \$65 per household, has not changed. And two-car households can still get a sticker for each car.

Modeled after a system used by Sheffield, with local modifications, the procedure seems to be working well. Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko reported that by mid-January about 80 more stickers had been sold than by the same time last year and that people have been returning forms “to let us know they are not using the dump and where they are disposing of their trash.”

BIG YELLOW STICKERS

The stickers this year are yellow and larger and go on the inside of the driver’s side of the rear window. They can also be placed on the inside of the rear passenger window. No more excuses that the sticker washed off in the rain or just fell off the door frame. If you are using a rental car or feel you cannot place a sticker on a rear window of your car (see sidebar note from Jim Costigan), you can present it in person to the Transfer Station attendant.

The letter from the Selectmen was in fact an application that needed to be returned to Town Hall. If you lost or ignored the mailed application, forms are available at Town Hall Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Stickers are available to Sandisfield residents and homeowners only. The Town Clerk reserves the right to demand proof of residency. Residents must be listed on the Town Census. If you are a new resident not yet listed on the census, you must come to the Clerk’s office to complete a census form and purchase your sticker.

THE RULES ARE:

- Each household must purchase a sticker if you will be using the Transfer Station.

- A second sticker may not be used for a separate household.
- If you rent an apartment within your home, this is a separate household and you and your tenant must have a sticker.
- If you own more than one home, each home must have a sticker of its own.
- Stickers must be affixed to your vehicle in the rear window from the inside. (This can be on the inside of the rear passenger window.)
- Businesses are prohibited from using the Transfer Station. The Transfer Station is for household trash only.
- At any time, the person issuing stickers may ask for a photo identification or proof of residency.
- If you do not provide a valid license plate number, you will not receive a sticker.
- The letter concluded: “As of January 1, 2020, any vehicle NOT displaying the YELLOW sticker WILL be denied access to the Transfer Station.”
- Fines for Not Complying
- All vehicles entering the Transfer Station must display a current sticker.
- Entry of unacceptable waste (as posted) into the Transfer Station is prohibited.
- Transfer Station employees have the authority to stop any vehicle and inquire of any person entering the station, with the right to examine material a person brings to the station to determine compliance with its rules.
- Fines: First offense, \$70 which will be waived if a current sticker is properly placed within seven days of the offense. Second and subsequent offenses in same year: \$150 and revocation of Transfer Station sticker, if applicable.

NOT USING THE TRANSFER STATION?

Included on the form was an important new wrinkle for residents who do not use the Transfer Station. “If you WILL NOT be using the Transfer Station, your household MUST LET US KNOW HOW YOU WILL BE DISPOSING OF YOUR TRASH. You may also email your explanation to the Sandisfield Board of Selectmen at TownClerk@sandisfieldma.gov. Please remember to list your name, address, and the reason you will not be using the Transfer Station.”

Questions, call Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko at Town Hall, 413-258-4711, ext. 2. 

PUT THAT STICKER WHERE?

In December, Jim Costigan of Garden City, New York, and Sandisfield wrote to the Select Board about the requirement of where to place the Transfer Station sticker. “I have owned a home in Sandisfield for 47 years and because my car is registered in New York State I have a problem complying with the new Town requirement that the Transfer Station sticker must be attached to the inside of the rear window.”

He was concerned that placing the sticker in a rear window could be a violation of a motor vehicle law. Quoting New York State and Massachusetts regulations, he wrote that in New York the placing of “stickers on windshields or rear windows of motor vehicles other than those authorized by the commissioner is prohibited” and that Massachusetts motor vehicle regulations also prohibited stickers that “in any way obstructs, impedes, or distorts the vision of an operator.”

He requested that the placement of the stickers be modified to either the bottom of the rear window on the operator’s side or the side window to the rear of the operator’s seat. He felt that the modification “would serve the purpose of allowing the routine confirmation of the sticker without inconvenience to Town employees while avoiding subjecting residents to potential financial and legal consequences of violating the motor vehicle laws of Massachusetts and other jurisdictions.”

It seems that clarified regulations will alleviate Jim’s concerns. See adjoining article on the Transfer Station stickers.

Comings and Goings



CHARLES FIDLAR
1940-2019

A LEADING TALENT WITH THE SANDISFIELD PLAYERS

By Ben Luxon

When Charles Fidler died on December 14 at his home in Norfolk, Conn., at the age of 79, Sandisfield lost a friend and the Sandisfield Players lost an extremely talented member of their group.

When we formed the Players in 2013, we invited anyone interested in performing to join us. Some amateur and would-be actors answered the call from Otis, Great Barrington, and Norfolk for our first production, Thornton Wilder's "Our Town."

From Norfolk came two friends, Charles Fidler and John Funchion, both of whom became stalwarts of our company. With his professional stage experience and huge musical talent, Charlie immediately became an indispensable member of the group, acting not only in key roles in all of our subsequent productions but also using his directing and teaching talents.

And he was indeed talented. An obituary in the Norfolk News reported that Charles, born into a family of musicians, "was immensely talented as a violinist and singer. During his long musical career, Charles founded and directed the West Bank Singers in West Hartford, was choral director at Brown University, a member of the American Bach Soloists in San Francisco, and an assistant conductor at the San Francisco Symphony Chorus. Locally, he taught chorus for many years at Northwestern Regional High School in Winsted, imparting his love of music to a new generation of young singers."

In his work with the Sandisfield Players, Charlie was particularly good with young actors. It has always been our policy to involve and encourage young people whenever possible. When our 2015 production of "Hansel and Gretel" involved a cast of children

singing the music from Engelbert Humperdinck's famous opera – a capella, voices alone, no instruments – Charlie coached and trained the young cast. He did the same with the children in our 2018 production of 'Jack and the Magic Beanstalk.' His exceptional ability to coax and inspire confident and imaginative performances from our junior players was invaluable to the company and an unforgettable learning experience for our young actors.

Charles was also an extraordinary adventurer, as the Norfolk News' obituary reported, possessing "an enthusiasm for adventure that truly defined his spirit. Biking through the Western United States to Vancouver Canada at the age of 16 was just the beginning. He soloed Mount Whitney in his 40s, drove solo cross-country a few times, canoed anytime he had the opportunity, rowed crew, was a boxer, loved squash and an intense game of badminton. Charles began running long before it was popular. He was an athlete and an endlessly curious soul. He instilled that passion for adventure and his admiration of persistence into his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren."

Charles is survived by his wife, Marilyn, and a host of family and friends.

When he joined the Players, Charlie had just recovered from a serious illness. During his six years with us the cancer returned twice and by the second time had become terminal with a one-year life expectancy. Despite the prognosis, Charlie carried on for another three years of performing, hardly breaking stride and certainly never complaining about his illness. During the last year, although he ceased to perform on stage as an actor, he shared with me three major and differing poetry readings at the Norfolk Library and at the Arts Center here in town. We were planning yet another poetry venture just a couple months before his death.

Charlie was greatly loved, admired, and respected by all his colleagues for his indomitable spirit and his articulate sensitivity as an actor and human being.



CHARLIE FIDLAR

I've known a couple of Charlies,
My son, my father, and my brother.
Every one of them has a place in my heart.
But there is plenty of room
For Charlie Fidler,
The wizard of my Charlies.
A great, sweet dozen of a man
Full of music by the brimful,
Who talked a cup of flowers
And taught ten thousand voices
How to sing.

*Val Coleman
West New Boston*



Special Note:

On Sunday, May 31, at the Arts Center, the Players will celebrate Charles Fidler's life and the time he shared with them.



Comings and Goings



ELIZABETH "BETTY" PACHULSKI
1927-2019

Elizabeth "Betty" Pachulski, 92, died Thursday, December 26, at Baystate Medical Center surrounded by her loving family.

Born March 21, 1927 in the Bronx, N.Y., Betty was the daughter of Richard and Maria (Keller) Giegerich. She was a graduate of Cathedral High School Class of 1945.

Betty worked in the kitchen at Fairview Hospital, in the customer service department at Zaire's, as a secretary, and as a house cleaner for her own business.

She enjoyed gardening, especially flowers, knitting and needlepoint. An excellent cook and baker, she loved reading, enjoyed going to the Great Barrington Senior Center, and loved spending time with her family.

Betty's husband, Harold Pachulski predeceased her in 2010, Betty is survived by two sons, Ronald C. Pachulski and Eric H. Pachulski and his wife Dawn; three daughters, Carol Touponce, Chris Bragdon and Maria Ghi and her husband Philip; one sister Anita M. Wirth; eight grandchildren,

Richard, Brian and Kevin Touponce, James (Jen) and Michael (Donna) Bragdon, Matthew (Billie) Pachulski and Dominic and Lily Ghi; and six great grandchildren, Griffin Touponce, Sawyer and Selena Bragdon, Emma Pachulski and Joshua Poirot and Chase and Morgan Bragdon. In addition to her husband, Harold Pachulski, Betty was predeceased by son-in-law Charles "Chuck" Bragdon.

Expressions of sympathy in Betty's memory may be made to the Sandisfield Ambulance in care of Birches-Roy Funeral Home, 33 South Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230.

Published in The Berkshire Edge, December 30, 2019.



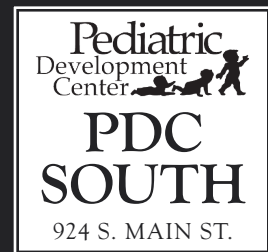
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NOW HEAR THIS!

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

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY EVENTS

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

COA 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 will be offered most Wednesdays from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Community Center (basement of the Sandisfield Library). Bring a yoga mat or towel for this calming practice. Visit Connect Sandisfield on Facebook or contact the Recreation Committee or Library for dates and cancellations. \$5.

New Boston Church Service on Sunday, January 26, at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. All are welcome!

Whose Tracks are These? on Saturday, January 18, at 9:30 a.m. at the Sandisfield Library presented by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. This program will feature a 45-minute interactive slide show on animal tracking. Please call 413-637-0320 to register or online at massaudubon.org/pleasantvalleyprograms. Free. This program made possible by the Sandisfield Cultural Council.

Paint & Sip on Saturday, February 1, at 6:00 p.m. at Fire Station #1, 79 South Main Street. Learn to paint a sensational image of a "Snowman with Bird" on a large canvas or an authentic slate tile with art instructor Michelle Iglesias. All painting materials, instruction, snacks, and wine are included. \$30. To reserve space call 413-205-8346 or visit berkshirepaintandsip.com. Sponsored by the Sandisfield Recreational Committee.

New Boston Church Service on Sunday, February 23, at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. All are welcome!

OTHER EVENTS IN NEARBY TOWNS

College Talk & Tips: Questions and Answers on Saturday, January 25, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the Monterey Community Center on Main Street in Monterey. Sue Young, a College Process Coach, will provide information on choosing the right school for the right price along with other important college search and application questions. For more information, call Sue (413-854-5048). Free.

Free Community Open House for South County Families on Sunday, January 26 and February 23, all day at Berkshire South Regional Community Center in Great Barrington. Try the Center for free. Go for a swim, break a sweat on the cardio machines, hike, or bring the kids to enjoy the play

equipment in the courtyard. Visit berkshiresouth.org for more information.

Free Admission at Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary on Wednesday, February 5, from 10:00 to 4:00. Pleasant Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, operated by Massachusetts Audubon, is located on 472 West Mountain Road in Lenox.

Winter Tracking on Saturday, February 8, at Beartown State Forest in Monterey. Join wildlife tracker Jim Pelletier and others from the Berkshire Natural Resources Council for a winter outing in Beartown. Email Mariah at mauman@bnrc.org if you would like to attend. Time to be determined. Free.

The Cougar Returns to the East on Saturday, February 15, at 6:30 p.m. at Berkshire Community College on 1350 West Street in Pittsfield. Wildlife Tracker Susan Morse will present the program. Sue has spent over 30 years researching wildlife, documenting her findings, and presenting programs. Free, but popular! Arrive early to get a seat.

The Times regrets that our combined Jan/Feb issue was too late to help publicize Mass Audubon's "Who's Tracks Are These?" program held at the Sandisfield Library and the Cold Brook River Wildlife Sanctuary on January 18. If anyone took photos of the event, please send them to us at editor@sandisfieldtimes.org and we'll include them in our March issue. Two coming Mass Audubon programs are listed below.

Winter Hike at Richardson Brook Sanctuary, Tolland. February 29, 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Sponsored by Mass Audubon Berkshire Sanctuaries. Explore the two-mile rocky trail through hemlock forests looking for sights, sounds and signs of those who spend their winter at this sanctuary. Members: \$8; nonmembers: \$12. Registration is required. Call 413-637-0320 or email at massaudubon.org/pleasantvalleyprograms to register.

Winter Hike at Cold Brook River Wildlife Sanctuary, Sandisfield and Otis, March 7, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Sponsored by Mass Audubon Berkshire Sanctuaries. Explore the forests and wetlands of this peaceful property with Dale Abrams. Free but registration is required. Call 413-637-0320 or email at massaudubon.org/pleasantvalleyprograms to register. NOTE: Cold Brook Wildlife Sanctuary is not yet open for public visitation outside of program times.



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Two More by Cindy

Bird on Ice

A goldfinch with puffed-up feathers tried to stay warm after the late December ice storm. It hangs on here with really cold feet to an ice-covered tree branch.

Bird-watcher Margaret O'Clair thought this one might be the rare semi-albino goldfinch that has been hanging out around her feeders all winter. (Maybe this is a Coldfinch?)



Ice Against Blue Sky

A tree leans over the road, weighted down with ice. But the sky seems to offer a warming touch, and the tree will soon stand upright again.

Photos: Cindy Ragusa

The Sandisfield Times is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization staffed by volunteers from the Sandisfield community and funded by individual and business sponsors. Its mission is to connect the community through reliable, regular, and relevant information. The paper is published 11 times each year, with a joint January-February issue and monthly issues thereafter.

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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, at the general store and post office in Colebrook, and at the library of NW Connecticut Community College in Winsted. Back issues are available for purchase.

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