

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume X, Number 11

March 2020

Further Steep Rise in School Budget Planned

By Sandisfield Times Reporters

Sandisfield must accommodate an 8.9 percent increase in its share of spending for Farmington River Regional School District, selectmen have learned.

Although last year's increase of 8.4 percent was rejected by voters at the annual Town meeting in May, it was ultimately approved at a second vote with little change.

Increased education spending was one reason Sandisfield taxpayers saw their bills go up last year. At a February 11 meeting of the Select Board, School District Business Manager Eric

Jesner said the overall budget of \$4.94 million saw an increase in all spending categories. Another reason for the bigger bill is that a greater proportion of Sandisfield students are now attending FRRSD.

Sandisfield currently sends 99 students to the Farmington River Regional School, a K-6 school in Otis. Sandisfield's contribution is based on its share of enrollment, and a complicated state education cost-sharing formula based on three-year averages.

While the Commonwealth does pitch in, its share of the \$21,095 cost-per-student is minimal - about \$2,140 - and will increase by just \$30 per student.

About 80 percent of the school budget was described by school officials as fixed staffing, insurance and benefits related expenses.

"We are trying to save a buck if we can," FRRSSD Principal Tom Nadolny told selectmen.

Announcing: The Sandisfield Times Essay Contest

This is directed at children of all ages, from under nine to over ninety. We'd like you to write an essay, of 500 words and not one word more or less.

The deadline for submission will be April 30th. The winning essay - which we will announce at the Annual Town Meeting on May 16th - will be published on these pages in the July edition of the paper. The winning writer will be awarded a cash prize of **two hundred and fifty dollars**.

The subject is what we all know, that Sandisfield is different, but we really want to know is it better??

Three of us will act as judges. What we are looking for - aside from your sticking to the deadline and

the word count - is that you answer the question with deft cleverness, interesting use of the English language, and a light touch. It



goes without saying that the essay must be original, and is your work - not that of a relative or friend. We won't demand this in a contract: in a town as small and tight-knit as yours, trust is all.

Please either email your submission to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org; or mail it to PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

We look forward to reading what you have to say. And to handing someone a check for \$250, to spend or save as you will. We hope this will be annual event, with a different topic every year.

The Very Best of Luck!

Simon Winchester
Founding Editor

Fire Department Seeks Town Funds for New Truck

By Brigitte Ruthman

Updating the local volunteer fire department's aging fleet is among the priorities under consideration as the town wrestles with rising costs in advance of a town meeting in May.

With one of its two engines now 24 years-old and unable to meet National Fire Protection Association standards without costly repairs, Chief Ralph Morrison is proposing that the Town fund its replacement. The average life expectancy of a fire truck is 25 years.

The Town's newest pumper cost \$330,000 a decade ago. Its modern equivalent would carry a price tag of around \$400,000 and could take up to 18 months to deliver, Chief Morrison said. Up to another \$100,000 should be spent on outfitting and equipment. Morrison added that the equipment cost could be revised downward if more of the older items like air packs can be repurposed.

The option of leasing a truck would cost \$63,000 annually. Financing a new truck would cost about \$65,000 with preferred town financing.

NO BARGAINS

Maintaining public safety moving forward will be challenging and expensive, said Morrison at a February 18 Select Board meeting. "There are no bargains when it comes to anything having to do with fire, police or ambulance response."

At the February meeting, Morrison presented the Select Board with notes he had taken after consulting with a vendor. After looking over the notes, the Select Board then asked for a detailed price quote before March 15, the deadline to include the line item for presentation to voters at the annual Town meeting.

Cont'd on p. 2

DID YOU KNOW?

We Are Now on Facebook!

The Sandisfield Times now posts each new issue on its Facebook page.

Facebook features allow users to connect with or comment on anything related to the Sandisfield Times.

We're at @SandisfieldTimes or go to <https://fb.me/SandisfieldTimes>. And don't forget to like and follow us!



Excise Tax Bills Due March 20

Motor Vehicle Excise Tax Bills for Levy Year 2020 were mailed February 18. Payment is due at the Treasurer/Collector's Office by March 20.

Transfer Station Hours

Transfer Station attendant Tony Melloni asks that we remind residents of the hours the Station is open for business.

Wednesday, 12:00 noon-5:00 p.m.

Saturday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Select Board Report

The number one subject occupying the Select Board during the past two months has been the Town's 2020/2021 budget. This year nearly every department has submitted its proposed budget to the Board on time, which is great progress over previous years. Reviewing every department's proposed budget has required many extra work sessions. While time-consuming, this process has gone smoothly and without any of the contentiousness of past budget proceedings.

Town Manager Joanne Grybosh's preparatory work with the departments has helped a great deal. The budgets have now been passed to the Finance Committee for its review. We're happy to report that we now have a process in place which everyone understands and in which all departments cooperate.

The only exception to this, and it is a large exception, is the School district budget. Despite a pledge by the School Committee in last year's Special Town Meeting to work with the Town on planning next year's budget, this did not occur prior to our budget reviews. With an unknown figure for over half of Sandisfield's budget, all budget approvals had to be considered tentative until this figure is determined. On February 11 the School Committee together with the school's Business Manager and Superintendent met with the Select Board to review the draft school budget. The Select Board asked many questions about specific line items and got answers to most of them. The way it looks now is that the school district budget will increase by about five percent. In addition, Sandisfield's pupil enrollment share will increase by about four percent, giving the Town a budget increase of nine percent, or

Fire Department Seeks Town Funds for New Truck

CONT'D FROM P. 1

Selectmen George Riley and Brian O'Rourke questioned whether the truck can't be fixed at half of the proposed cost to replace it. Morrison said the pump, a crucial internal mechanism which pushes water flow to outside hoses, is rotting so badly it works "like a sieve."

At the meeting Riley pointed out that the unexpected cost of the proposed fire truck purchase, which was not included in the Town's Capital Improvement Plan, must compete with soaring education expenses. "We have to cut somewhere," Riley said.

Morrison bristled in response, saying public safety should take priority. Morrison and his brother, police chief Mike Morrison, said the truck request has been requested and rejected for five years.

Besides the current truck that Morrisons would like to replace, the department also has two tankers to carry water in a rural area without hydrants, as well as a truck equipped to handle wilderness rescue and brush fire situations. A total of four trucks are able to deliver 6,000 gallons of water on a first response.

"The current fire truck may be 24 years-old, but it has only 36,000 miles on it," Riley told the Times after the meeting. "That's 1,500 miles a year, including the annual Memorial Day parade. I believe we've had only one major structure fire in the past five years, at the highway garage," said Riley, who added that he was sharing his own personal views and was not speaking on behalf of the Select Board.

Riley also questioned the urgency of the purchase, pointing out that Sandisfield is well served by mutual aid agreements with the neighboring communities of Monterey, New Marlborough and Tolland, that require automatic dispatch of the closest emergency response unit.

"I'm certainly open to discussing this further," Riley added, "but our equipment should be appropriate to our actual needs, and not just our desires." 🗣️

\$136,500. We will have to find a way to absorb this large increase.

The second major issue, given the unprecedented recent weather, has been (no surprise) our roads. The extremely volatile weather has created havoc with all of Berkshire County's dirt roads, rivaling last winter when we thought it couldn't get any worse. Our highway crew has done a heroic job, yet still couldn't always keep up with the worst conditions.

We have done well with grants recently, thanks largely to the efforts of our Town Manager. In partnership with New Marlborough and Sheffield, we received an award of \$166,000 from the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) project. (New Marlborough and Sandisfield will each take 25 percent of the award, with the remainder going to Sheffield.) This state grant will fund a pilot project to study ways to strengthen some of our worst unpaved roads and brace them against the effects of climate change. Over several weeks last year, many Town officials worked hard on a planning process to identify our needs, and we are thrilled to see their efforts pay off!

The work of planning for our MVP award, together with our Green Community designation, have combined to put us ahead of the pack in being considered for future grants. On January 23 several Sandisfield officials went to Williamsburg to receive recognition for a one-million dollar MassWorks grant to rebuild 2.5 miles of Route 57 from the New Marlborough line to New Hartford Road. We also received a \$17,500 technology grant for computer mapping of the town, which will be a great help to our Assessors, DPW, Fire and Police departments. And our new cardboard compactor is now on site at the transfer station, to be wired up when the ground thaws in the spring. 🗣️

*Mark Newman, Chair
Brian O'Rourke
George Riley*



Gratitude for What We Still Have

And an Ode to What We've Lost

By Bill Price

FIRST, WHAT WE'VE LOST:

The Mill River General Store and Post Office in January. The Monterey General Store to misdirected gentrification two years ago. Terranova's in Otis at the perfect intersection of Rts. 8 and 23. The Hilltop at the top of the hill in Tolland.

Closer to home, the New Boston General Store to a runaway truck caused by careless road construction procedures in 2012 and, some 20 years before that, the Montville General Store – at the intersection of Rt. 57 and Hammertown Road – to life moving on.

At one time Sandisfield had four or five general stores. Only two were left by the end of World War II. The death of the stores was a combination of declining populations, fewer summer or winter camps which brought a lot of business to the Berkshires, grocery trucks refusing to deliver to small stores in the boondocks (Pete at the New Boston Store had to haul his own milk and bread every morning from Winsted suppliers), and the fact that it's hard to impossible to make a living selling a few groceries a day.

In the days when you had to harness a horse and hook up the buggy to get a pound of butter, it was necessary that stores be closer to home and grocers could actually make a living buying and selling basic vitals and sometimes boots and overalls. Now, with pickup trucks encased in wraparound sound systems and super-efficient heating and air conditioning, folks can go much further for bread and milk and even enjoy the ride.

BUT IT AIN'T THE SAME.

Nothing beats walking into a small-town general store with a nearly indescribable sense of permanence, uneven wooden floors, uneven heat, shelves stocked with much of the stuff we want, a person behind the counter who we know well enough to ask about the weather or bellyache about (or praise) the road superintendent. A store with a few things upgraded – a better cooler for the beer and milk, better bread choices than Wonder, and a gizmo for accepting charge cards – but the cash register still clangs when we offer real money, the coffee is hot and ready, the half and half in an opened quart in the fridge, and there's a porch or at least a short flight of steps up into the place.

But we still have a few places, and they're not too far away:

Katie's in Otis, is exactly as described above, with a superb butcher in the back of the store and a place to eat just outside which works well in the spring/summer/fall. The Colebrook General Store, while a bit across the border in Connecticut (let's extend the Berkshires to include the place) has a few grocery shelves, serves a fine breakfast and lunch, customers are greeted as they arrive, and isn't far away, particularly for folks in South Sandisfield. The Granville Store, a bit east on 23, has good coffee, a stew pot always hot, plenty of vitals on the shelves, provides breakfast and lunch and, most mornings, friends and neighbors sit around a table jawing about stuff. And it isn't that far, particularly for folks in New Boston.

And the Otis Poultry Farm is still there, serves breakfast and a lot more, including more stuff than you can buy. While its property may become a marijuana-growing operation, the store is supposed to stay open.

Go while you still can. 🍷



The Colebrook Store, 2020.



Eric Pachulski wrote: "Recently I met a new cutting-tool salesman at work. Turned out his family used to own a house and barn, both since burned, near the beginning of Hammertown Road. He sent me this photo of the Montville Store in the 1970s. When you needed a gallon of gas, we didn't need to go far for it."

OUT ON A LIMB: SORT OF OP-ED

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

News from the PTA

FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

By Linda Curtiss & Aimee Magovern

On Sunday, February 9, the PTA sponsored a family field trip to Butternut Ski Resort in Great Barrington where students and their families enjoyed two hours of tubing on a beautiful winter day. It was a wonderful way for Farmington River families to spend time together.

On January 14, The Knox Trail Inn hosted a dine out to benefit the PTA. We received 10 percent of all food sales from that evening, as well as an additional donation from the restaurant. Many thanks to The Knox and all who attended for their support.

Our Wednesday night ski program at Otis Ridge concluded on February 26 with a final night of skiing and a pizza party. Thank you to the Ridge for once again providing a convenient, inexpensive way for our children to learn to ski and snowboard.

Our annual Cash Calendar Fundraiser is now underway with daily drawings beginning March 1 and continuing through April 20. Winners are posted daily on our school's website (frsrd.org) and PTA Facebook page (www.facebook.com/frsrdpta/).

The Cash Calendar, our most productive way to raise money for the PTA, notifies Farmington River students, families, and staff of activities throughout the year, including assemblies, tubing at Butternut, Ski Program, Field Day, Screen Free Week events and much more. The PTA has also been able to support classroom activities throughout the year, most recently repairing the baby grand piano for the upcoming Spring musical happening in May. Local businesses and families this year have donated a record \$7,175 thanks to the efforts of Dawn Lemon, Cash Calendar Chairperson. We appreciate the generosity and support of our entire community. 🍷

Historical Commission Re-Established

By Ron Bernard

Last fall, the Town was notified that the section known as New Boston Village had qualified for National Historical District status, it having met the necessary criteria for such designation by the National Park Service. The Sandisfield Historical Commission (SHC) was re-established then following a period of inactivity due to lack of a qualified quorum. The SHC will now coordinate the process with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) which is the first and most important agency that approves nominations which are very prestigious.

We expected that the MHC would conduct a public informational meeting here by the end of last year as a final step before the New Boston Village file was sent to Washington for final approval and listing in the Federal Register.

The MHC informed us last month, however, that revisions in criteria by the Park Service required that our outside consultant provide additional information to support the nomination. That process is underway and as soon as the new state review is complete, an informational meeting will be scheduled here in Sandisfield.

At that time property owners within the proposed district boundaries will receive a letter from SHC about the meeting which will be open to the public.

(For information regarding the proposed boundaries and regulations, see The Sandisfield Times, October 2019, p. 4).

The new commission consists of chairman Ron Bernard and members Connie Canty, Rosanne Hoekstra and Jean Atwater-Williams. For the time being, we will meet as needed. Scheduled meetings will be posted on the town website. For questions or information, please contact any commissioner.

Questions frequently arise about whether there are restrictions or obligations by home owners in national historic districts (there are none). The box at right provides a general explanation of the roles of the various organizations concerned with preservation of historical assets in a town. 🍷

AN EXPLANATION ABOUT ROLES OF HISTORICAL ORGANIZATIONS

TOWN HISTORICAL COMMISSION.

Established by state law, these bodies are strictly advisory. They promote preservation, inform town government about potential threats to historic assets and help individuals and sections (districts) with applications for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. They are also the town's contact point with the state historical commission. NRHP designations are prestigious and home owners are not obligated or restricted in any way. The proposed New Boston Village Historic District is an example of a national historic district.

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Established under a town's bylaws only when there is a local historic district which has been approved by voters. These commissions have certain locally determined regulatory powers, as defined in the bylaws, concerning proposed architectural changes to listed historic structures in a local district. There is no local historic district in Sandisfield.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

These are private associations whose mission is two-fold: first, education about town history; second, protection and preservation of historical artifacts like antiques or its own building if historic. Historical societies often run museums. An example is the Sandisfield Historical Society. Historical societies are not connected in any way with historical or historic district commissions. 🍷



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TOURNAMENTS



He Says He Didn't Get the Memo

By Ron Bernard

Every November this determined little engineer returns to our place on Cold Spring Road to prepare his winter quarters at this very spot under the bluestone walkway. He doesn't seem to know or care that he is not supposed to do this. Now, with a snow cover, he's hunkered down for the winter. Not a peep for weeks, no activity. Maybe like Punxsutawney Phil he'll poke his head out again on March 15 and look for his shadow. A very little one.



The Sandisfield Times is your community newspaper and letters to the editor and news from your neighborhood, your family and friends (births, deaths, honors/ awards) are always welcome.

From our next issue we'll happily print your classified ads, free if under 30 words. Get composing! Send with contact info to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org

Council on Aging



By Nina Carr

Only one month of nasty weather to go, and we can "spread our wings" a bit. We are planning a couple of interesting events for April.

Bob from "Wildflowers" will be back on Monday April 6 for an Easter/Passover flower arrangement class at 2:00 p.m. The cost is \$10. Please call Nina or Linda to sign up.

We are also going on a day trip to the Butterfly Museum in South Deerfield and out to lunch



on April 29. We have reserved a van, so let us know if you would like to be part of the group.

Our normal activities will continue in March, lunch every Wednesday, with bingo or cards to follow. Blood pressure clinic on March 25, and Chair Yoga every Wednesday at 2:00.

If you need a ride to an appointment or shopping please contact us, and we'll try to help out. Think Spring! 🍀



Happy Birthday to an American Soldier

The Sandisfield American Legion Post 456 wishes 30-year member Bud Tacy an amazing 100th birthday!

Post members will attend an open house birthday celebration March 14 at the Laurel Lake Landing assisted living facility in Lee from 2:00 until 4:00 p.m. Bud will be presented with a certificate of appreciation by Post Adjutant Gene English.

During his service with the U.S. Army during World War II, Bud received the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with three stars, and the Philippine Liberation Ribbon. He wore an Expert Badge with Machine Gun Bar and a Sharpshooter Badge with Carbine Bar.

Happy birthday, Bud, from your fellow Legionnaires and everyone in Sandisfield. 🍀




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Octogenarian Ben Luxon Finds Salvation in Work

Creative Aging: 65 and Better in the Berkshires

By Bernadette Brusco



Photo: Peter Levine

"I'm a wave rider," says Benjamin Luxon. "I ride the waves life has sent my way."

A classical baritone soloist, Luxon sang around the world: lieder, oratorio, and opera with the world's leading symphonies, conductors, and opera houses. Ben was twice forcibly retired, however, by a devastating health issue – deafness.

Born and raised in Cornwall, England, Ben moved to

London to study teaching; there, he sang informally. Someone suggested he apply to the London Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and he was accepted. His robust classical musical career began.

Suddenly in 1990, the first life wave hit. He lost hearing in one ear and retired at age 53. Ben, however, continued to work with conductors who knew him. Then in 1994 while working on "The War Requiem" with Robert Shaw, the second life wave hit. Hearing loss in his remaining ear forced his complete retirement as a singer.

In 2000, Ben moved to the United States, settling in Sandisfield. He busied himself gardening, splitting about four or five cords of wood a year, and devising performances, and poetry readings.

In 2007, he received a cochlear implant, and he was off riding his second life wave. While singing was off the table, his magnificent baritone was put to good use in dramatic readings and theatre.

For Sandisfield's 250th anniversary in 2012 Ben co-wrote (with Val Coleman), directed and staged the play "Rascals and Others", involving over 20 villagers in the production. The Sandisfield Players, a community theater group, was born. They now stage two productions a year. Ben writes, directs, raises money, and, along with others, builds sets and manages props. Local children always have a large place in the productions. In 2016, Ben took 36 Sandisfield Players in his production of "Our Town" across the Atlantic to perform at the Minack Theater, the famous open-air theater in Cornwall.

Now, at 82, Ben is turning Stravinsky's "The Soldier's Tale" into a one-man show. Ben's philosophy: "Work is salvation!" 🍷

Reprinted with permission from *The Berkshire Eagle* series, *Creative Aging: 65 and Better in the Berkshires*, December 23, 2019.

Mailbox Mayhem

CULPRIT STILL AT LARGE

By Sandisfield Times Reporters

Montville residents awoke one Sunday in mid-January to find their mailboxes, set at the bottom of Town Hill Road along Rt. 57, plowed down. The culprit, likely travelling east, must have crossed into the opposite lane with enough speed and force to not only take out half-a-dozen mailboxes, but also uproot an eight-inch treated post, planted three (frozen) feet into the ground, along with its platform and a road sign -- and still be able to limp away.

In an email, Sandisfield Police Chief Mike Morrison told the Times that an officer from his department began an investigation into the incident on January 25. Since then, this officer has been following up on leads and interviewing residents and social media posts.

Meanwhile, after pictures of the carnage went all over social media, one very particular Town Hill resident took it upon himself to visit the scene and collect plastic debris – molding and lens fragments – left at the site. After taking them home and submitting them to careful analysis, it turns out that one piece of plastic still retained its manufacturer's factory numbers.

Using these numbers, and searches on Ebay, this amateur sleuth was able to identify the type of vehicle to which these parts probably belonged. Using a newly formed Facebook group, "Sandisfield Taxpayers Forum," he then posted pictures of the parts along with a diagram suggesting how they fit onto the original vehicle.

Soon it was discovered where this vehicle in question may be: not far away at all.

A few days later, the police collected the evidence from our detective neighbor. More than a month after the police took the evidence, questions are being asked about the investigation and who will replace the mailboxes.

Frustrated neighbors now have to pay out of pocket to repair their mailboxes while our mail carrier must exit her vehicle and stoop down to deliver letters in a manner similar to feeding the family cat.

Vandalism of mailboxes is serious stuff – a federal crime. Punishment includes heavy fines. Not too long ago, these same boxes were subjected to a nighttime beatdown by vandals. Then, as now, Town Police failed to pinpoint the perpetrators due to a lack of evidence.

Whoever is to blame for the mayhem could not have made it very far, as the vehicle would have suffered major front end as well as underbody damage.



Chief Morrison added that this remains an active investigation and anyone with information should contact the Sandisfield Police at policechief@sandisfieldma.gov. 🍷



Goodbye, Amy. Hello, Amy.



After much dithering by the Postal Service it has finally been decided: Amy Carriveau has left our tiny Post Office and will go to East Otis - but with her replacement another Amy, by last name Rintoul, to somewhat soften the blow. All will mourn the loss of her predecessor, and we will envy the ruffians up in Otis, wherever that might be, who are getting one of the friendliest and most efficient postal clerks who ever weighed a parcel or sold a stamp or registered a letter or wrote out a money order. We wish her godspeed and fair winds, and look forward to the parcel-weighting skills of the new Amy, queen of what is surely of the nicest USPS outposts in the nation.



Recognition for Brigitte. Again.

**A TIMES REPORTER IS
HONORED BY NENPA**

By Bill Price

The Times is proud – and tickled – to report that our reporter Brigitte Ruthman has been honored again by the New England Newspaper & Press Association in their Better Newspaper competition. The awards were announced at a dinner February 8 at the Boston Renaissance Waterfront hotel.

Brigitte was part of a team of four reporters who won first place in the General News category for last year’s report titled “Confession,” a two-day package of stories reporting the release of the names of priests accused of sexual assault in the Archdiocese of Hartford.

She was also part of a team of eight reporters who won third place in the right-to-know category, for which the Republican-American submitted 13 examples of how, in less than a year’s time, reports’ effective use of Freedom of Information laws revealed information to readers that officials or sources did not want made public.


“By routinely defending the public’s right to know,” the judges said, “the newspaper is reminding officials that they will be accountable for their actions and providing readers with the accountability they deserve.”

Along with her voluntary work for The Times, Brigitte is a professional reporter who has worked for the Republican-American, a print and web newspaper covering Waterbury, Torrington, and northern



Brigitte has always been interested in journalism and getting to the bottom of things.

Connecticut, since the 1990s. Earlier she worked for The Burlington Free Press’s Capital Bureau in Vermont and (as a youngster) The Lakeville Journal in Connecticut. She also owns and operates Joshua’s Farm, a 36-acre farm located on Dodd Road in Sandisfield.

The recognition is not Brigitte’s first. In 2017 she won an award for excellence for an investigative series she wrote for the Republican-American about deadly accidents on a divided portion of Rt. 8 in Connecticut. Two years before that she won first place in the same excellence competition for a 2014 series about a repeat drunk driver who had avoided six convictions until he killed a young woman in a car crash on Rt. 7 in Sheffield. The driver was sentenced to 15-18 years behind bars and is still there. 

Get Dirty with Us

Snow Farm is seeking a full or part-time experienced gardener to assist us this season in our gardening business. You will be working with a crew in our numerous client’s gardens.

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Sandisfielders Perform at Boston's Jordan Hall

By Tim Brooks

This past fall, three Sandisfield residents were surprised to find themselves in the same place at the same time – in Boston's Back Bay.

Longtime resident, Flora Parisky, was enjoying a concert by the Longwood Symphony Orchestra, to find that two of the performers were weekenders in Sandisfield – cellist Katherine Hein, and bassist Jack Dennerlein.



A board-certified plastic surgeon in Framingham, Massachusetts, Dr. Hein weekends at her home on Viets Road. She grew up in the Midwest, received her medical degree from the University of Michigan and now serves as Vice Chair for Quality in the Department of Surgery at Metrowest Medical Center.


A New York native, Dr. Dennerlein is a researcher specializing in ways to prevent work-related injuries and musculoskeletal disorders.

Acting on a tip from Dr. Hein, in 2018 Dr. Dennerlein and his husband, Jeff Gonyeau, bought a property on North Beech Plain Road. (Built in 1785, the restoration of their weekend home was the subject of an article in the July 2018 issue of the Sandisfield Times.)



Members of the LSO – nationally recognized for its musical quality, innovative programming, and commitment to community engagement – all have day jobs as doctors, researchers, nurses, and therapists, and caregivers at Boston's leading hospitals and universities.

Music, medicine and service are the three core values of the LSO, which performs four concerts each year at Boston's Jordan Hall. Since 1991, each concert has raised money for a different community group, benefiting underserved populations throughout the Greater Boston region. Through its outreach arm, LSO On Call, members of the orchestra also visit healthcare facilities across the state to perform for patients who cannot attend concerts.

If you are looking for an enjoyable cultural event to attend this spring, and find yourself in the Boston area, consider supporting the LSO and enjoying the talents of your fellow Sandisfielders. Upcoming concerts, in Boston's historic Jordan Hall, including a concert on Saturday, March 7, spotlighting works by George Gershwin, and a May 9 celebration of Beethoven's music. 



Grow Your Own Shiitakes


By Emily Gallagher, Yanner Park Committee

Join us at Yanner Park for a shiitake mushroom log inoculation class!

You will learn how to grow shiitake mushrooms and take home your very own log inoculated with mushrooms to grow in your backyard for many years.



Registration is free but limited to 10 people. Please e-mail me at etarasuk@hotmail.com or call 603-312-5396 to register and learn more detail.

Date: April 18
 Time: 10:00 a.m. to noon
 Location: Yanner Park, Town Hill Road 



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Cultural Council Awards 2020 Grants Doles Out More Than FiveGs

By John Skrip and Ellen Croibier

For its 2020 season, the Sandisfield Cultural Council received twenty-six applications and awarded fifteen grants.


This year the Council received \$4,800 in grant money from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and, thanks to the Town of Sandisfield's annual contribution of \$250, we were able to award just over \$5,000. Award letters were sent out in January.

Of the eleven applicants that did not receive an award, many were rejected because others better met the funding criteria. The Massachusetts Cultural Council evaluation sheet was used to review the applicants.

Grantees by project title are:

- The Snowy Day
- Berkshire Ukelele Band & Berkshire Sings!
- The Great Colonial Encampment
- Anti-Bullying Assembly
- Farmington River Annual Community Arts Production

- 3rd Graders Learn about Native Peoples
- Bringing Nature into Libraries and Community Centers
- Farmington River Learns about Recycling
- FRRSD Musical Instrument Enrichment and Loaner Program
- Joel Brown – Guitar
- Frederick Moyer Piano recital
- Evening of Song
- Worldbeat-Vaudeville Extravaganza with Zoe Lewis
- Museums and More
- WAM Theatre Season of Events 2020

The grant recipients will be invited to a reception to be held in the spring. More information can be found online at www.massculturalcouncil.org under local council information. 




ConnectorCare Card to Culture Program

By Jennifer Hibbins

As a member of the Sandisfield Cultural Council, I would like to make local residents aware of a new way to save money going to museums, plays and movies.

The Health Connector and Massachusetts Cultural Council have partnered to provide ConnectorCare members with discounted admissions to art and cultural institutions. If you have this type of health insurance, bring your ID card (it will read "ConnectorCare" right on it) to the institution, and you'll be able to access the discount.

Discounts include free admission to the Eric Carle Museum (in Amherst) or Naumkeag, \$2 adult admission to Hancock Shaker Village or MASS MoCA, four free Mahaiwe movie passes per month, and \$5 tickets to Barrington Stage, Berkshire Theatre Group or Shakespeare and Company. (Some limitations apply). There are also discounts to Norman Rockwell Museum, Jacob's Pillow, Historic Deerfield and many others. To learn more, please visit <https://bit.ly/37J67zx>. 



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A Reader Writes Of Town Centers, General Stores, and Good Journalism

From a communication to Simon Winchester, founding editor of The Times, after the letter writer read a report on Sandisfield and The Times in The Berkshire Edge.

Dear Mr. Winchester: The article in The Berkshire Edge last September, which highlighted The Sandisfield Times, drew me back to my childhood visiting my grandparents in Sandisfield.

Town centers, general stores, and good journalism are three important parts of any community. The fact that volunteers in Sandisfield have started a local newspaper is such a delight to learn.

Even back in the day Sandisfield felt peculiar as a "town" without a town. There was only the general store which the article sadly told me is no more. So very sad.

I am not a writer but the story brought back many, many memories of summers and vacations in Sandisfield 40-70 years ago. It took me back to my summers as a child visiting my grandparents, also transplanted Manhattanites, who bought a home in Sandisfield around 1935. Yes, Manhattanites found Sandisfield 80 years ago and maybe my Grandpa (we called him Beep, poor man. But that's a story for another day.) was the first Manhattan transplant.

Beep's home was on Fox Road (I think the turn from Sandisfield Road is at Silver Brook




Pete Murray at his New Boston General Store, 2010.

Photo: Sandisfield Then and Now

Road and later joins Fox?) and Silver Brook ran through his 65 or so acres where he could often be found with a fishing pole. He retired there and was elected Town Treasurer, a post he held for decades and performed from his home office. Again, he was a pioneer for working from home. He passed away in that home in 1977, and two years later my grandmother passed away in the New Boston Nursing Home as one of its first residents.

My fondest memories of those visits include Christmas with the tree Beep cut himself, Nama driving to the town dump with me in the passenger seat, swimming at York Lake, enjoying ballet at Jacob's Pillow when it was just a barn, and most especially my visits with either of my parents or grandparents to the New Boston General Store to buy a vanilla ice cream pop dipped in chocolate or perhaps a Coca Cola from the red soda machine on the front porch. The delicious scent of old wood and the slightly crooked wood floor are also fond memories.

I was heartbroken from my home town here in Long Island to learn the general store is no more. But at least a town center and good journalism have united in The Sandisfield Times. As for the general store, it lives on in the memory of that little girl with her ice cream pop. 



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MORE READERS WRITE Cannabis concerns

Bogart Muller’s letter brings up concerns that many residents have about the town’s lack of tax revenue sources, which are badly needed to fix roads, support the schools and more (“More on Pot Farm Controversy,” January/February). However, the references to Great Barrington generating “hundreds of thousands” should be put into context.

Great Barrington was fortunate to benefit from Theory Wellness as the first, and until recently the only, recreational marijuana retailer in town. However, Theory Wellness’s owner and CEO himself has warned of the “built-in economic obstacles for pot retailers, including competition on the horizon.” (Berkshire Eagle, Nov. 2, 2019). The \$1.5 million paid so far to Great Barrington will likely never be repeated. As more retailers open, in other towns, counties and states, the profit and tax revenue will shrink. The same would go for cultivators. In time, large, industrial, corporate sponsored growers will provide stiff competition and lower prices, putting small growers out of business. Once legislatures in New York and Connecticut legalize marijuana, those states will have their own suppliers, further decreasing business in Massachusetts.

It is also worth noting that in Great Barrington, a recent proposal to build an industrial cultivation facility on Van Deusenville Road, was withdrawn after enormous community opposition. Residents were worried about the same air, noise, light, and water pollution issues that concern us. What Mr. Muller describes as “a few people” who “are not happy” could multiply into a much greater number of Sandisfield residents if marijuana establishments were to open down the block from their houses.

At present, Berkshire County has three towns that have completely banned all marijuana business, two that are undecided, twenty that have adopted zoning regulations and seven that have taken no action, including Sandisfield. It is now time for Sandisfield to act.

We are not asking the town government and voters to consider zoning laws to prohibit marijuana from being grown or sold in Sandisfield. Rather, the proposed bylaw for consideration protects neighbors and abutters from air, water, noise and light pollution, increased traffic and possible police or security presence. This bylaw would prevent any marijuana cultivation facility from opening next to someone’s home (or be located at least 75 feet from a property line.) It would also stipulate exactly where marijuana could be grown and sold. With such zoning laws in place, we could both increase tax revenues and maintain the quality of life in Sandisfield.

West Hubbard Road Neighbors:

- Chris Bragdon and Michael Bragdon*
- Karen and Edward Brozman*
- Paul Carbone*
- Leslie and John Garwood*
- Lorraine and Jay Greenwell*
- Steve Kahn*

- Laurie Kanter*
- Barbara Lynn*
- Michele and Vincent Mauro*
- Ronald Pachulski*
- Matt Schur*
- Linda and Jon Schweitzer*
- Silvio Sielski*
- Michael Wittkowski*

Anyone who would like to receive periodic updates can send their name and email address to: sandisfieldpotinfo@gmail.com. 🇺🇸

OUT ON A LIMB: OP-ED

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

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Do the Right Thing

GET YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY COUNTED

By Times Reporters

The Census is coming to Sandisfield from the middle of March until late April.

The U.S. Constitution requires a nationwide census be conducted every 10 years in order to know how many members of the House of Representatives each state should be apportioned in Congress.

It matters how many of us live here. After the 2010 census, Massachusetts lost a representative in the U.S. House when the congressional district that was Berkshire County absorbed by Congressman Neal's district.



Census data also directly affects how federal dollars are allocated to states and municipalities covering everything from transportation and infrastructure to food assistance. Annually, about \$675 billion of federal funds are distributed based on census numbers for programs like Medicare and Medicaid, SNAP (food stamps), federal highway money, educational and library grants, and more.

Around the second week of March, you should receive a letter in the mail asking you to go online to the Census Bureau's website, www.2020census.gov, and complete the survey online. This is the first year the census is online so getting counted is even more convenient.

For those of us who fail to register after the initial mailing, there will be a second reminder by mail, and then, for anyone who still hasn't responded online, a third reminder by mail. If the Census Bureau still hasn't received your online survey, a fourth reminder, which will include a paper survey, will come through the mail.

A fifth and final reminder will be sent out at the end of April to anyone who hasn't completed the survey. If the Bureau still doesn't hear from you, a Census worker will knock on your door sometime between the beginning of May through August. The survey is also available by phone.

Post office boxes will not receive anything from the Census Bureau. Areas that are primarily served by post office boxes will have forms dropped off at their door by the Census Bureau.

Is it safe to answer the census? If you have been telling the IRS that you spend most of your time in Florida, but you really spend most of your time in the Berkshires, can't the IRS find out? Even more frightening for some, if you are an undocumented alien, will Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) find you?

Mark Malloy of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, which is helping with the Census, said, "It is illegal for the Census Bureau to share data with any other agency. Census employees are sworn for life that they can't release this data. The individual data does not get released for 72 years; only aggregate data is released."

Malloy stresses that the online survey has been tested extensively for security breaches. There is no reason to fear that census information regarding personal information such as immigration status or IRS residence will be shared in any way.

So, if your driver's license is in Florida, you pay your taxes with a Florida address, and you vote in Florida, but spend most of your time in Sandisfield, it is safe to be honest on the census form and be counted here.

Expect questions such as name, age, gender, race, Hispanic origin (since it is not considered a race), and primary country of origin. These questions become crucial when congressional districts are redistricted since every attempt is supposed to be made to create a racially balanced district. Also, expect a question about household distribution as well as questions accounting for household size that includes people who are part of the household but not living permanently within the house, such as college students.

Census access points will be libraries, senior centers and Town Hall, which may provide publicly available computers for people who don't have access at home.

So go out there, perform a civic – and Constitutionally mandated – duty, and get yourself and your family counted. Sandisfield can use the numbers! 🇺🇸



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Moreover...

Duck! if you see a Delivery Drone

By Simon Winchester

One chilly Saturday morning in early December some years ago I told a little lie to the FedEx delivery man. Not, as it turned out, a sensible thing to do.

We were reminiscing happily about Christmastide in the Philippines, his country of origin, particularly about the local seasonal delicacy known as balut. "You like to eat balut?" he asked, a little incredulous.

"Oh yes," I lied. "I love them."

Beware of what you wish for. The following Saturday he delivered a box of them – twelve enormous duck eggs. Mercifully he was too busy with his rounds to stay and watch me eat one – for in truth I loathe balut.

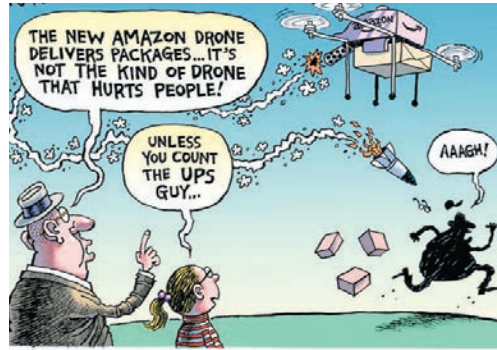
For they are not simply duck eggs. They are eggs on the verge of hatching, and each contains an embryo – a soft beak, a scattering of tiny feathers, a rubbery little neck. This mass of gelatinous proto-duck, washed down with a can of San Miguel, is a delicacy in the Philippines – and consuming it is what the FedEx man expected of me.

He stopped by the following week? "All gone?" he asked. "Yes," I said, this time truthfully. But where, I didn't say. For the eggs all went into the garbage, thence to the dump.

Each year, for maybe the next ten, he'd bring me a box, and I'd thank him and smile manfully. Then he got transferred to another run, and I've never seen him since.

I love the delivery men who are assigned to this remote country route. (Well, maybe not the DHL guy, who can never, ever find our house.) And we surely all love dear Larry, who has been the UPS driver ever since I've been here. He's retiring in May, and it is no exaggeration to say it'll mark the end of an era. UPS is a very strict company, privately-held, and I'm not going to jeopardize Larry's final few weeks, other than by saying he's the friendliest, nicest and most efficient of guys. One who loves a good story, and stopping by.

But soon delivery guys will be a forgotten species, like lamplighters and whiffletree-makers. For guess what is coming, and soon, to replace them?



Amazon PrimeAir, of course, and their fleet of super-fast delivery drones.

It turns out that places like Sandisfield are just perfect for early trials of the new 30-minute guaranteed delivery service that Amazon promises is just over the horizon.

This month's Harper's magazine offers some details. In hub cities like Pittsfield strange beehive-like structures will soon rise, their sinuously curved walls pockmarked with little portals for the tiny six-bladed, twin-winged drones the company plans to use.

As Harper's describes the drill, airport trucks will bring in the boxes – five pounds maximum at first, more later – and inside the beehive robots will sort them and assign specific drones – their tongues hanging, panting – that are waiting to carry each along the once-costly "final mile" of the delivery journey. A catapult will hurl my drone upwards, its propellers will boost it to 400 feet, and GPS will prompt it to fly level, now using its wings for speed, to a point close to where we live.

After that cameras and sensors and tiny radars take over, the device hovers, makes certain where it is and lowers itself until it is six feet above my porch. An elephant-trunk-like extremity emerges from the drone's nether regions, wafts itself about and noses to a safe and secret spot on the porch and lo!, down slides my package, gently placed, upright, by the door. A quick text message telling me all is done 'n' dusted, the drone rises and scoots away.

Then, a supposed bonus. Perhaps on its way up the drone's cameras will notice that my apple trees look in need of pruning and could use a smidgen of fertilizer and that my bedroom curtains seem a little ratty. Later that day I'll mysteriously receive a Hi How Are You? note from John Field Arborist, and whoever is the successor to Country Curtains.

And it is at moments like this that I'll really miss the delivery guys, the human beings. Well, perhaps not the perpetually lost soul from DHL. Nor that nice weekend man from FedEx, to whom I shall never again tell a lie. Because I am sure that if I ever do, my coming nightmare will be balut, drone-speeded to the porch, only thirty minutes away, and every weekend for the rest of my life. 🍷

Can't Win if You Don't Enter

By Bill Price

It could have been us.

"Home Town," an HGTV show, recently made-over the small town of Laurel, Mississippi. At least, that was the pitch.

As usual, the truth is more than that. It took dedicated people years of hard work to bring Laurel back to life.

The transformation, however, as shown over a series of programs on "Home Town," was such a success that the program announced a contest to pick another small town to renovate.

Maria Domato of Lower West Street alerted The Times that maybe Sandisfield could be that town.

The winning town was to have less than 40,000 people. (We qualified.) Historic architecture. (In spades.) Multiple individual family homes. (Count us in.) Public spaces. (In acres.) Parks. (Getting there.) Local diners. (Get thee down to Tuckers.) Recreation centers. (Do they need a roof?)

Towns had to apply with videos, testimonies, ideas on how to make their town better, by February 4. Well, stuck in the mud again, we didn't get our videos and testimonies and good ideas collected in time and missed the deadline.

Maybe next time. Whichever lesser place than Sandisfield is selected will be featured in "Home Town Makeover," a six-episode series slated to premiere on HGTV in 2021. 🍷



The Sandisfield Times is your community newspaper and letters to the editor and news from your neighborhood, your family and friends (births, deaths, honors/ awards) are always welcome.

From our next issue we'll happily print your classified ads, free if under 30 words. Get composing! Send with contact info to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org

Earth Day Celebration at Arts Center

AFTER 25 YEARS, CENTER “GOES GREEN”

By Anne Mihalick

The day of this writing, mid-February, the sky is grey and shrouded in mist. Snow has turned to mush. The birches are finding their way back upright after ice storms bent their top-most branches to the ground for days. While the quiet of deep winter envelops this corner of Berkshire County, a lot is going on indoors at the Sandisfield Arts Center.

Opening its “Silver Anniversary” season this spring, the Center will celebrate all of the exciting, creative, and busy 25 years since its founding.

The opening presentation will be a CELEBRATION OF EARTH on April 25, the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, on Saturday from 1-4:00 p.m. Activities will be scheduled for all ages.

After a welcoming ceremony by our renowned Ben Luxon, local poets will remind us of the inspiration we draw from our natural surroundings – then our skilled neighbors will demonstrate earth-friendly crafts such as spinning natural fiber, green wood working and chair making, mushroom cultivation, turning trash to treasures, and more.

Groups including the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, Mass Audubon, the Farmington River Watershed Association, and our very own Sandisfield Green Initiative will provide information on what we can do as individuals and as a community to decrease our carbon footprints for a more sustainable planet. Other groups will offer useful knowledge about native plants, pollinator gardens, composting, solar installations, and eco-landscaping to try at home.

For the kids we will co-create an outside nature-inspired art installation. Also planned is a display of earth-inspired artwork by children from the Farmington River School in the downstairs gallery.

Light snacks and drinks will be provided.

All of Sandisfield is proud of the town’s wonderful Green Initiative and the work they’ve accomplished so far.

To do its part, the Arts Center – a community organization with over 30 annual events and hundreds of people coming through our doors – has joined the effort. Over the winter, the Center founded its own “Going Green” committee to explore ways to be more mindful of the resources used at the Center and, when possible, help us move toward a zero-waste ideal, as well as expand educational opportunities focused on environmental topics.

Some immediate changes at the Center include new bins for recycling and composting, replacement of plastic cups with glassware, a box for recycling used programs and fliers. This year we will explore possibilities of added insulation, solar panels, and other ways to reduce the use of fossil fuels while staying in accordance with the historic restoration guidelines for the building, which is listed on the Register of Historic Places.

Not to worry! The Center will continue to provide the highest quality of entertainment, community theater, educational programs, talks from local authors, art exhibitions, and free events that you, the community, have grown to expect and graciously supported over the past 25 years. ♻️



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





Letters to the Editors

PLEASED BY TIMES' POET

To the Editor:

I continue to enjoy each issue of the Times. The writing is excellent and the coverage is both creative and comprehensive. Val Coleman's poetry – my favorite part – just gets better and better.

*Irene Conley
Woodbury, Conn.*

LOCAL RAG MAKES GOOD

To the Editor:

Back in 2012, during a National Geographic cruise from Cape Horn to Cape of Good Hope, I learned from Simon Winchester, who was lecturing on board, that a newspaper had been started in the town of Sandisfield.

Once I got back to my home to Texas, and thinking that it would be a good way to stay current, I Googled the paper.

Eight years later, and I continue to read the Times.

I read it because I find it to be one of the best newspapers I can get my hands on - and it pleases me to see a good newspaper. Mrs. McDougall, the teacher of my ninth-grade journalism class in O'Henry Junior High School in Austin would have given every issue an A+.

An insistence on quality in all phases of the Sandisfield Times are reflected in every issue. Thank you!

The local rag in my little village isn't fit to line the bottom of a bird cage.

*Jim Wilson
Salado, Texas*

TIMES SERIES PROMPTS WARMS MEMORIES

To The Editor:

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
Roosterville, New Boston*

JOB DESCRIPTIONS SORELY NEEDED

To the Editor:

Last May, one of the big discussions at the annual town meeting was a new \$10,000 item for incentive bonuses for town employees. The stated desire was to provide additional pay for those employees who performed above and beyond expectations. The general consensus from the voters was fear of doling out bonuses to people for "just doing their jobs", that is, there was not a way to effectively measure if someone was "going above and beyond". In response to the criticism, George Riley ensured that every position that was eligible for a bonus would have a formal job description.

In December, at almost the midpoint of the fiscal year, George Riley reported there are not yet any formal job descriptions but "reaffirmed the priority" and said he would "devote focused attention to this project in January". He also confirmed that there was not a job description for the newly hired town manager.

As of submission time, there had been no update. Will the bonuses be prorated? Should the townspeople vote down raising funds for next year's bonuses? If employees did not push the Select Board for getting these in place, are these even a worthwhile method of promoting performance?

*Alex Bowman
South Sandisfield*

[Editor's note: Town Manager Joanne Grybosh provides an update on pg. 10]

Town Works to Create Job Descriptions


By Seth Kershner

Nine months after voters approved an incentive pay scheme for Town employees, Sandisfield still lacks the job descriptions necessary to fully implement the program.

Voters at the 2019 annual town meeting approved \$10,000 for a new plan offering incentive pay for Town employees. The idea came out of the Town's contract with the local chapter of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the union representing two members of the Department of Public Works. After the Select Board renegotiated a clause of the contract with those workers, they created a series of "stair step" annual bonuses based on the employee's level of performance, with a top reward of \$1,000 given for a worker whose supervisor judged their work to be "outstanding."

However, the performance review and pay scheme would go beyond the DPW and extend to all Town employees working more than 20 hours per week. At the time, some members of the public noted that Sandisfield Town employees had long lacked detailed job descriptions, which is typically considered a necessary basis for measuring performance.

Two unionized DPW workers already have job descriptions, provided by their AFSCME contract. Town Manager Joanne Grybosh says that once the busy budget season is behind her, she will prioritize the creation of job descriptions for all other Town employees. "I will have them done," she told the Times in an interview. "They need to be done. You cannot do employee evaluations without them."

Grybosh added that the job reviews need to be completed by the end of the current fiscal year. 



OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Three Monument Mountain Regional High School wrestlers from Sandisfield – seniors **Sam Cormier** and **Caden O'Rourke** and sophomore **Sam Cormer** – competed in the Massachusetts Institutional Athletic Association's Division III state championship held in late February in Wayland, Mass. A report on their participation in the tournament will be in next month's Times. 

Comings and Goings



LILA KNAPP INNES

1927-2020

Lila Innes, who with her husband Charles had a “camp” in Sandisfield since 1957, died January 28 at her home in Granby, Connecticut, with her loving family around her.

Born in Bridgeport on December 9, 1927, the daughter of the late Raymond and Anna (Schick) Knapp, she was raised in Stratford and graduated from Stratford High School.

Lila was the children’s librarian at the Frederick H. Cossitt Library for 34 years before retiring in 1999. She enjoyed reading, nature, birds, wildlife, and gardening. Lila loved to cook and bake for family and friends.

She was a member of the Granby Civic Club and Salmon Brook Historical Society.

She and Charles and their four then small children began building their beloved “camp” in Sandisfield more than six decades ago. Charles died in December 2015 at the age of 96. They also built and enjoyed another cabin in Maine.

Survivors include their son, Calvin K. Innes of Passadumkeag, Maine, and daughters, Nancy A. Silkey of Granby, Carol L. Innes of East Windsor, and Janet Bumstead and her husband Ronald of Burlington. Grandchildren Alissa Bumstead of Shelton, Erik Innes and his wife Meghan of Idaho, Victoria V. Sweet of Saranac Lake, New York, and Arthur I. Sweet of Enfield.

Donations in Lila’s memory may be made to West Avon Congregational Church, 280 Country Club Road, Avon, CT 06001.

Thank You, Lila

A loyal reader of The Times, Lila wrote us last July:

“A big thank you to the volunteers that 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!”



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The Librarian's Corner

By Terry Spohnholz

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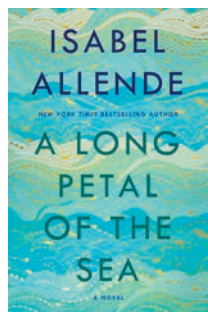
HAPPENINGS AT THE LIBRARY

Arts and Crafts with Kids, Saturday, March 14, 1-2:30 p.m. Every second Saturday of the month. March will feature St. Patrick's Day with leprechauns and cookies. Free and fun.

NEW BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY

Warsaw Protocol by Steve Berry. The latest Cotton Malone adventure. Seven relics of the Arma Christi, the weapons of Christ, are disappearing one by one from sanctuaries across the world.

The Museum of Desire by Jonathan Kellerman. Psychologist Alex Delaware and detective Milo Sturgis struggle with an inexplicable massacre in this electrifying psychological thriller.



A Long Petal of the Sea by Isabel Allende. An epic novel spanning decades and continents follows two young people fleeing the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War.

Sisters by Choice by Susan Mallery. A heart-felt tale of love, family

and the friendships that see us through, told with humor and charm.

CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT BOOKS



Confessions of a Dork Lord by Mike Johnson

Reverie by Ryan la Sala – some dreams chase you back.

Don't forget the Library has passes to various museums. Stop by and find out what's available, made possible by a Sandisfield Cultural Council Grant. Included are the Springfield Art Museum, the Dr. Suess Museum, the Clark, MAMO, and various Trustee sites. Explore your world.

Please note that the library cannot accept donations of books, magazines, or games. We appreciate that you wish to donate to our small library, but we simply do not have the capacity.



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NOW HEAR THIS!

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

MARCH EVENTS

Playgroup on Mondays from 9:30-11:00 a.m. at the Sandisfield Library Community Room (basement). Pre-registration not necessary. The playgroup features a story time. Led by Nina Carr. Free.

Wednesday Weekly Gatherings from 11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging, basement level at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex, 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. in the community room at Fire Station #1 on Route 8, south of the New Boston bridge. 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.

Presidential Primary on Tuesday, March 3, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall, Silverbrook Road.

Winter Hike at Cold Brook Wildlife Sanctuary on Saturday, March 7, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Explore the forests and wetlands of this peaceful Sandisfield/Otis property with Dale Abrams, Naturalist for Mass Audubon's Berkshire Sanctuaries. Dress for the weather. Bring snowshoes or microspikes, if you have them, or call in advance to reserve Mass Audubon snowshoes. Bring water and a snack. Hiking poles recommended but not required. Cold Brook Wildlife Sanctuary is not yet open for public visitation outside of program times.

Please call 413-637-0320 to register or online at massaudubon.org/pleasantvalleyprograms. Free, but registration required.

Crafts at the Library on Saturday, March 14, from 1:00-2:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Free Public Library. Fun and Free!

St. Patrick's Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner on Saturday, March 14, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. at Fire Station #2 on Route 57. Sponsored by the New Boston Congregational Church. Corned beef, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, and assorted desserts. Tickets are available at the door and takeouts are offered. \$12 for adults; \$6.00 children under 12.

Blood Pressure Clinic at Council on Aging at the Town Hall Annex on March 25 at our regular Wednesday meeting, noon. Stay for lunch.

New Boston Church Service on Sunday, March 29, at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. All are welcome!

SAVE THE DATE:

Bus Trip to Foxwoods Casino or Mystic Aquarium on Saturday, April 4 at 7:30 a.m. Pick-up at the Sandisfield Free Public Library on 23 Sandisfield Road. Hosted by the Sandisfield Community Center. Pre-registration required. Call Billie Pachulski, 413-652-0252.

Bob from "Wildflowers" will be back at Council on Aging, Monday April 6, 2:00 p.m., for an Easter/Passover flower arrangement class. The cost is \$10. Please call Nina Carr or Linda Riiska to sign up.

Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 25, from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center on Hammertown Road. Representatives from environmental organizations will be present as well as demonstrations by local craftspeople. An art installation will also be on display outside.

COA Day Trip to Butterfly Museum in South Deerfield and out to lunch on April 29. A van has been reserved. Let Nina Carr or Linda Riiska know if you would like to be part of the group.

OTHER EVENTS IN NEARBY TOWNS

Flowers All March. **Berkshire Botanical Garden's annual Bulb Show**, March 2-29. A collection of New England favorites, lesser-known hard and half-hardy bulbs, and South African flowering bulbs rarely seen in the Northeast. Daily, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Free admission. 5 West Stockbridge Road, Stockbridge. 413-298-3926 or berkshirebotanical.org.

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

Open House for Sandisfield Families. Berkshire South Community Center on Sunday, March 8, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. And, on March 22, all South County Families are invited to use the facilities all day at Berkshire South Regional Community Center, 15 Chrissy Road, in Great Barrington. With proof of residency, individuals may enjoy all the benefits of membership. 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.

Right to Vote: Fight for Women's Suffrage, 1848-1920 day of learning on Monday, April 6, from 9:00-3:30 at Berkshire Community College, 1350 West Street, Pittsfield. Sponsored by Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), the program features speakers, the world premier of a play about Susan Anthony's trial, and a performance by the VOICES Spoken Word Ensemble. Registration (includes morning refreshments and lunch) \$40 OLLI members; \$55 public. Free for youth, college students, and EBT, WIC, or ConnectorCare cardholders. Information: Call 413-236-2190 or online at www.olliberkshirecc.edu.



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70 North Main Road • PO Box 237 • Otis, MA 01253
413/269-4541 • otisrec@verizon.net

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



SANDISFIELD TOWN DIRECTORY

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: 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, 717-7627 cell. Office 258-4711 x 7

EMERGENCIES: POLICE, FIRE, EMS
Call 911 for emergencies.
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NON-EMERGENCY: 258-4742
Police Chief: 413-441-2129, chief@sandisfieldma.gov
Fire Chief: 258-4742

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: Kathy Jacobs, Chair.
Kathyjake1840@gmail.com.
Meets as needed. Check for schedule.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Ron Bernard, Chairman, 413 269-0012. Meets As needed.

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-STATE: Lee Barracks: 413 243-0600

POST OFFICE: Amy Rintoul, Clerk, 258-4940
Window Hours: Mon-Fri: 9 a.m.-noon & 1-4 p.m. Sat: 8-11:30 a.m.
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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, editor
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
258-4711 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 MANAGER: Joanne Grybosh, Town Hall Annex, 258-4711, x 1
townmanager@sandisfieldma.gov
Tues, Wed, Thurs: 10-2, or by appointment

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.

VETERANS SERVICES: Laurie Hills
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*The Times is grateful to readers who
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Christine Nadelman & Steven Pincus

Hilde Wiesert

*(in memory of dearly departed neighbors and
friends, Beth Stephenson, Kit Gill & Nancy Flach)*



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.

Donations of any amount are needed to ensure the continuation of this newspaper. Please send checks to: The Sandisfield Times, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or donate online at our website: www.sandisfieldtimes.org. Donations to The Sandisfield Times are deductible under section 170 of the Federal Income Tax Code. Donations do not include subscriptions. Subscriptions do not qualify as donations.

Copies of The Sandisfield Times are available in Sandisfield at A&M Auto, the Arts Center (in season), the Transfer Station, Post Office, the New Boston Inn, New Boston Sleds, MJ Tuckers, the Library, Town Hall, and the Council on Aging meeting room.

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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obituary and family announcements, photos (600 dpi if possible)
and advertisement queries to editor@SandisfieldTimes.org.*