



THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume XI, Number 1

April 2020

Virus Dictates Major Changes to Town Operations

FORGET "BUSINESS AS USUAL"

By Ron Bernard

In view of the dramatic if not historic challenges faced by Sandisfield and all other Berkshire towns due to the COVID-19 virus, Town leaders have made important changes to long-established standard practices.

As State guidelines and town management decisions change rapidly and daily newspapers and television newscasters scramble to keep up, a monthly newspaper like the Times doesn't have a chance at being timely, but what we can and will do is keep you informed as much as possible as we all go together along this unexpected and unmapped journey.

At the regular meeting of the Select Board on March 16, the Town's emergency services and Board of Health were asked to attend and make presentations.

With the objective of reducing the risk of virus transmission, the State has urged town governments to alter both their meeting practices and how employees interact with citizens.

The March 16 meeting was focused and serious. Town Manager Joanne Grybosh set the tone by defining the purpose of discussions: "We need to establish protocols to assure good decision making, for proper responses, and to protect town employees," she said. The proceedings were business-like

and concentrated on dealing with a situation that is complex, fast-changing, and unprecedented in living memory.

An "emergency declaration," closely patterned on a similar document previously issued by the State, was approved and signed by Board Chairman Mark Newman. The declaration is a formality which positions Sandisfield to avoid at least some bureaucratic red tape in order to act more quickly when "immediate public action is needed to prevent, minimize, or mitigate damage to the public health, safety or general welfare of the people or their property"

The Board established the following policies effective until further notice:

- The Town Hall Annex is closed to the public at all times. A drop box will be installed so that residents may deposit, for example, payments. The Council on Ageing room is no longer accessible.
- The highway department facility is closed to the public.
- The library is closed.
- Old Town Hall is closed.
- The Transfer Station is open as usual but the attendant will not physically assist those dropping off refuse or recyclables.

NO CONFIRMED CASES HERE. SO FAR.

By Brigitte Ruthman

While rumors swirled around Town, Board of Health spokesman Roger Kohler assured that as The Times was going to press on March 23, no residents of the community had been stricken by COVID-19.

"The Board of Health would be officially notified within 12 hours of a presumptive positive scientific test through the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiological Network of a positive test," Kohler said. "That has not happened. Right now, there are no cases."

He added that there are "a few incidences" involving individuals who are self-quarantined based on possible suspected contact with a confirmed positive patient, but none of these individuals are showing symptoms and none have tested positive.

The individuals in question may have been exposed during or in the aftermath of an ambulance transport in Otis of a presumptive positive patient who was taken to Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington before being transferred to Berkshire Medical Center on March 3. All of those individuals have passed a 14-day mark when symptoms would usually appear.

Questions regarding local cases should be directed to Town Hall, where officials were working to update the Town's website with the latest coronavirus information.

Cont'd p.4

Town Of Sandisfield | Office Of The Town Clerk Year 2020 Calendar Of Events

OFFICES UP FOR ELECTION AND WHO IS RUNNING SO FAR

Office	Term	Candidates So Far
Moderator	1 year	Open
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	Open
Constables	3 years	John Burrows
	3 years	Open

SCHEDULE OF TOWN ELECTION EVENTS

- Apr. 2 Town Caucus, Old Town Hall, 7:00 p.m. Opportunity for new candidates to sign up for election
- Apr. 6 Last day to object or withdraw nomination papers for candidates for town offices.
- Apr. 23 Last day to register to vote at the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Election.
- May 16 Annual Town Meeting at Fire Station #2, Route 57, 10:00 a.m.

- May 18 Annual Town Election, 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 Presidential and State Election, Town Hall Annex
- Nov. 3 Presidential and State Election, Old Town Hall, 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Tax Collector's Woe

From The Evening Review (East Liverpool, Ohio) April 1, 1938, cost 3 cents

SANDISFIELD, Mass. – Woe is the life of the tax collector.

Voting an appropriation of \$5 to repair a hole in the Town Hall floor, citizens turned down a proposal to buy an adding machine and typewriter for the collector.

Primary Results, Here, at Home

REPUBLICAN	→	
Donald J. Trump		29
William Weld		1
Joe Walsh		1
Roque "Rocky" De La Fuente		1
STATE COMMITTEE MAN	→	
Michael F. Case		19
Tyler James Hastings		10
STATE COMMITTEE WOMAN	→	
Robin S. Almgren		20
Christine M. Canning		9
LIBERTARIAN PARTY	→	
Presidential Preference		
Samuel Joseph Robb		1
GREEN-RAINBOW PARTY	→	
		No ballots
DEMOCRAT	→	
Presidential Preference		
Joseph R. Biden		46
Bernie Sanders		45
Elizabeth Warren		33
Michael R. Bloomberg		17
Pete Buttigieg		4
Deval Patrick		3
Amy Klobuchar		1
Tulsi Gabbard		1
Andrew Yang		1

Change Afoot at Post Office

BUT ONE THING REMAINS THE SAME

By Seth Kershner

With the recent departure of Amy Carriveau, Sandisfield has a new clerk manning the post office.



East Otis resident, Amy Rintoul, is the new postal clerk in Sandisfield.

Photo: Jerry Herman

Incoming clerk Amy Rintoul jokes: "I am glad that people in Town don't need to learn a new name."

An East Otis resident, Rintoul has deep roots in the area but has only been with the United States Postal Service a little over a year. In her new role, Rintoul sorts all incoming mail and checks that Sandisfield's lone mail carrier is ready for their routes. She reports directly

to Linda O'Neil, postmaster in Otis.

Prior to serving in the post offices of Otis, Stockbridge, and Monterey, Rintoul worked primarily

in the hospitality industry. After many years as manager-owner of Prospect Mountain Campground in Granville, she later held positions at area restaurants like Knox Trail Inn and the Silverbrook Café.

"I've been in and around the Berkshires my whole life," Rintoul said, "and I'm excited to be here in Sandisfield."



Our new postal clerk also has a green thumb, and in her off hours plans to improve the look of the landscape around her new office. Nothing too ambitious – some lilies here, a few hostas there – but she hopes to get a little help with digging and planting.

Readers who are interested in volunteering a couple of hours some Sunday in May should stop by the post office and let "the new Amy" know. 🍷

CLASSIFIED ADS

Bee-keeper's gear for sale: a jacket w/ hood, gloves (size L), and a smoker. "Like new" condition. \$50. Email Adam Brown at ajb92180@gmail.com. 🍷

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OML Complaint Forces Board to Scramble

A REQUEST FOR CLARITY OR A “STORM IN A TEACUP”?

By Ron Bernard and Bill Price

In February, the Sandisfield Select Board was accused by a resident of inadequate practices regarding its postings of regular and executive session agenda and meeting minutes.

An Open Meeting Law (OML) complaint by Alex Bowman of New Hartford Road alleged five violations, including insufficient specificity for agendas and minutes and untimely distribution of meeting minutes. Current practice, the complaint read, is unhelpful both for residents who may wish to attend meetings with certain topics of interest to them and for those who did not attend but wish to better understand what transpired.

The selectmen were caught by surprise in part because the complaint came directly to the board and not through the town clerk. The issue was discussed at the following meeting, on February 24, when it was decided that outside town counsel, KP Law of Boston, would be retained to assess the merits of the complaint.

The outside counsel's report to the director of the Division of Open Government in the Massachusetts AG's office, authored by Town Attorney Brian Riley on March 5, acknowledged that “the agenda items and meeting minutes in this case do not have the level of detail that the Attorney General has recommended.”

He stated that the Board also acknowledged the problem and has resolved to improve in both areas.

Reporting about executive sessions can be particularly sensitive concerning collective bargaining or individual contract negotiations. For example, select boards are not required to name names or to reveal detailed strategy. However, Mr. Riley indicated that the Sandisfield Select Board has acknowledged it will endeavor to better identify the purpose of executive sessions in posted agendas.

The most compelling allegation concerned the timely dissemination of meeting minutes. Mr. Bowman had requested the Board to release minutes of open and executive session meetings at 8:30 a.m. on the morning after a meeting had adjourned. Counsel stated that “the OML provides that ‘minutes of all open sessions shall be created and approved in a timely manner ... and shall be made available upon request by any

person within 10 days.’” The Attorney General has defined this to mean 10 calendar days, not 10 business days which is about 14 calendar days.

At its regular March 2 meeting, the Select Board confirmed that it had assumed it had 10 business days to work. Member Brian O'Rourke emphasized that this was an honest mistake.

He added that the board has taken this complaint seriously and has spent considerable time reviewing guidelines and policy and has learned from it. “We will strive for full compliance,” he said.


In an email to The Times, complainant Bowman said, “What I'm asking for, creating better agendas and minutes, can play a huge role in forcing self-accountability, and takes very little additional effort. It's really about discipline. The minutes are pretty much the ONLY way that we can tell what the select board does, so they should be clear. This board should take steps to correct these inadequacies and hopefully soon will. But they haven't yet.

“For instance,” Bowman continued, “the total agenda item for the March 18 Work Session was to ‘review, discuss and vote on the FY2021 budget.’”

In an email inquiry to the Select Board, Bowman wrote: “This is a \$3.5M budget. It affects a wide range of issues and many different areas of interest. A high-level blanket agenda item does not tell us anything. What items are likely up for discussion? Are there budget items in contention? Perhaps those items could be listed on the agenda?”

Selectman George Riley replied that it was not possible to take the OML guidance literally or “the agenda would be about a dozen pages long.”

He added that the pending Working Session would “focus on areas where we can reduce appropriations” and that the session will “unfortunately not include the School budget, as that has already been approved and finalized by the School Committee. We will have to decide at Town Meeting, as last year, to vote yes or no on that.”

While “literally” often is an impossibility in government affairs, some indication of potentially contentious issues in an agenda would be helpful. Both facts were known at the time of the agenda posting and could have been included in the meeting agenda. 

Three Decades, Enough Already

“SIMPLY RAN OUT OF TIME”

By Bill Price

A long time serving is finally over for Kim Spring, a sense of emotional responsibility lifted.

Sandisfield's long-time Animal Control Officer, Kim formally submitted her resignation in February, effective March 31. The Select Board, to its credit, accepted and said a heartfelt “thank you,” speaking for at least 30 years of Select Board members.


Kim works full time at Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center and is a member of the Sandisfield Board of Health. She said, “I'll miss the animals and the people I met, but I simply ran out of time. I couldn't do the hours of classes that are required for the Animal Control Officer position, which are often held in the middle of the state. And, I have to admit, I've lost my urge to help every lost animal in town.”

She took the job sometime around 1990 at the request of Marty Clark, who was Animal Control Officer at the time, along with holding other Town positions. He was also running his own logging operations and asked Kim to help him out of one-too-many jobs.

“I was 18 or 19,” Kim said. “Being a kid, I had a passion for animals and law enforcement, and I said yes. That seems like yesterday.”

The ACO position is important in Sandisfield, particularly because so many people here have pets and farm animals. There have been recent outbreaks of rabies, and it is important that a competent person be available to respond. Dogs get lost all the time. And there are, of course, the bears. And sometimes, moose, which mostly keep to themselves and cause little to no trouble.

At press time, it was unclear what the plan for Sandisfield's ACO is or will be. A search had not yet begun for a replacement for Kim. New Marlborough is considering the option of asking their police chief to serve as the town's ACO as well, and he has agreed, pending negotiations.

This summer, Kim and this reporter will co-author a few of her “wild and crazy” times chasing animals through Sandisfield. 

Virus Dictates Major Changes to Town Operations

Cont'd from p. 1

- A prominent notice is posted at each site along with contact phone numbers. New guidelines concerning meetings of boards, commissions, and committees were reviewed.

The format for Select Board meetings as well as long-time standard practices about how the Town deals directly with the public were abruptly changed.

Effective immediately boards and committees will not meet unless there is an emergency reason. The Select Board however is required to meet and is still under the Open Meeting Law rules. At time of publication there remained a question about whether Select Board meetings had to be open to the public as before.

Town Manager Grybosh stated in the meeting that video conferencing via the Internet, a product offered by a number of vendors, is being evaluated. She said that this appears to be a practical alternative which will meet open meeting rules and offer a convenient way for the public to stay informed. The State is also expected to provide additional clarification concerning public meetings.

Meetings and regular updates will be announced on the Town's web site, sandisfieldma.gov.

Until notified otherwise, Town employees will continue to work normally at the Town Hall Annex and at the highway department. Conscientious daily cleaning will be practiced at both sites.

The position of Town Clerk is considered essential. Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko brought this up at the March 16 meeting. She later told the Times, "My office has certain indispensable duties such as issuing death and burial certificates. No one can be buried unless the proper certificates have been submitted, approved, and released by the state."

The Board approved on a unanimous vote the purchase of a new laptop computer as a contingency in case the Clerk is required to work remotely during this emergency. Afterwards the computer will revert to being a shared town asset.

Dolores added, "We may be able to get a portion of the laptop, and for that matter other unforeseen expenses, partially refunded through FEMA."

She reiterated to the Times that the State is encouraging municipalities to avoid public gatherings and said this has implications for an upcoming caucus scheduled April 2. "Somehow we have to figure out a way," she said. "These meetings typically last only seven minutes and are lightly attended although important. If the weather is good, we can perhaps meet outside and that should work."

Be sure to regularly check the Town website for updates: www.sandisfieldma.gov.



From the Sandisfield Board of Health

Roger Kohler, spokesman for the Board of Health, posted the following on ConnectSandisfield Face book on March 21.

I was on a conference call yesterday (March 20) with the members of the medical community and local Boards of Health and the message was to Stay Home! Promoting social distancing is the fastest way we can get everything back normal around here. It'll still be a week or two before we see if what we are all doing is effective.

According to the call, there are 22 cases of people in isolation at Berkshire Medical Center (9 confirmed, 13 pending test results) and 6-7 are on ventilators, which is a lot for such a short amount of time. If the current rate continues, BMC may get saturated. (People remain on ventilators for up to 10 days). We need to work together and slow down the spread.

The Dept. of Health and Human Services have relaxed a little on HIPAA, so our Public Health Nurse will now have electronic access to BMC records, which is where the testing is taking place. The DPH has also issued orders that will help protect our first responders when going to the address of known positives. There is a lot going on and I send regular reports to our town's emergency response team.

Please, everyone, practice social distancing.

I also realize that not everybody has access to the internet. Informative packets will be at the transfer station and post office.

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Ten Years of the Times

By Simon Winchester

It would idle of me to offer these birthday greetings without making mention of the ghastly crisis which currently grips the country.

All I will say is this: that as a community of great antiquity – we are 258 years-old this year, an occasion for birthday greetings of a different sort - we have been through dramas much like this before.

Sandisfield did this most notably in 1918, when the entire world was hit by the H1N1 pandemic that killed many more people worldwide than died in the Great War. Sandisfield was hurt too: our population of about 525 in 1917 went down by at least fifty – a ten percent slump which at the time we thought of as catastrophic. But we got over that sickness then – and we will get over this sickness now. What seems like a world-ending occurrence today will be viewed by history as merely a setback. As one British prime minister said many years ago when asked what he remembered most about his time in office: Events, dear boy. Events. This is an event, in spades.

But another anniversary event was begun when a group of us met over beef stew and cheap red wine on a frigid and snowbound January night in 2010 and put together plans for creating a monthly newspaper.

Our first issue came out in April, exactly ten years ago. We sported just eight pages – and our main story was about the derelict houses by the bridge on Route 8. Many in town had worked hard to get rid of them, and the new newspaper lent its young voice to the cause – and now the houses are gone. They were replaced by a charming little park beside the river, with a bench for summertime and a Christmas tree in December. It was the first indication that a community newspaper could influence events, could help make improvements.

Since then we've never looked back. At first we were thought to be a bulletin-board for metropolitan swells. But that has subsided (though not completely disappeared), and before long most folks in town were reading us, were even looking forward to each issue. And now most in town are supporting us, proudly, since we have in The Sandisfield Times undoubtedly the best of all the local newspapers, the best design, the best writing, and a paper which presents – we hope – the best, most timely, and most accurate information for our citizen readers.

But a good newspaper is really only a reflection of the community it serves – it is a mirror to us as a people, such that all the nice things I've just said are really what needs to be said about Sandisfield. As one of the founders of our newspaper, I want to say how proud I am that the community is good enough and kind enough to want to stand behind our publication, such that with luck and a fair wind – and no more pandemics, we hope – we will remain regular, relevant, and reliable for you for many years to come.

So – a successful social distancing to us all – and we look forward to reporting whatever events may occur, dear boy, and we'll be there to tell you all about them and what they may mean for Sandisfield and those of us who live here. 🍷

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus Plebis

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume I, Number 1 April, 2010

ROUTE 8 HOUSES: A SOLUTION AT LAST?

Simon Winchester

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

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

If voters agree – and the Town acts to spend the demolition money – they will in all likelihood bring to end an unsightly saga that began back in July 1990, when the Sandisfield Board of Health first

moved to declare the houses, numbers 93 and 95 South Main Street, a health hazard.

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

But in the twenty years that followed little substantive changed – until now. Many reasons and excuses will be put forward for what anyone seeing the houses would justly regard as an unconscionable delay – it took eight years, for instance, for the



Photo: Simon Winchester

properties even to be formally condemned. The principal reason, however, is simple: the owners of the two houses, though long absent from Sandisfield and now living in other states, always paid their taxes. *cont p.3*

LAMENT FOR A MYSTERY NEIGHBOR

Jerry Herman

I often used to wonder, as I drove up Route 57, about the big red barn with lots of windows peeked out in white trim just past the cemetery. South of the Shelterhood Cafe, and on the same side of the road, it sits next to a big grey clipboard house. On some nights I would see activity, with light blazing out from all the windows, but I haven't seen that light or any activity in quite a while. And there's a reason: a sad one.

At 65 Sandisfield Road, this was the Carr Metal Products factory. But I 'sus' was because the factory is now out of business. They closed down without most of us really knowing what they ever did. So I tried to find out. Though several telephone calls to Paul Campagna, the firm's President, went unanswered, there was information available from other sources.

When the company was operating it was privately owned and was categorized – believe it or not, Sandisfield – under Space Propulsion, units and parts. Highly-skilled mechanics working in what looked like a big red horse barn in fact constructed small but vital pieces of metal that went into aircraft and space vehicles. *cont p.2*

AVIAN NOTES
Margaret O'Clair

COME THE BLACKBIRDS



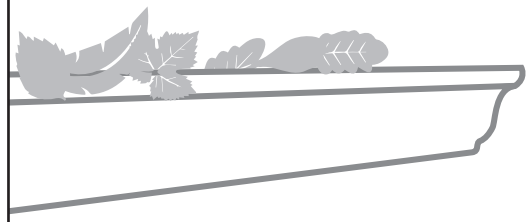
For many of us the sight of robins hopping about the lawn in search of worms and insects is one of the first signs of the awakening spring. For others it is seeing a blackbird on top of the nest box, squawking his little heart out for a mate.

In fact, these two so-called 'spring' birds have been with us all winter long. When the ground freezes over they form small flocks and head deep into the woods where they forage for insects in the leaf litter, in rotten wood and behind old tree bark, and only reappear months later, when the world thaws. *cont p.2*

The beginning issue of The Sandisfield Times, Vol. 1, #1, April 2010.

Is your mind in the gutter?

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South Main Street's Vertical Horizon

By Bogart W. Muller

Hey! What's that going in on South Main Street just past the bridge over the Farmington River? No, not Star Studio. No, not the excavator-and-bulldozer action. I'm talking about that newly built little road facing the cliffs.

Why it's the Western Mass Climbers Coalition (WMCC) securing their latest climbing destination. Last November, WMCC was pleased to announce their acquisition of Hanging Mountain, a new and untouched climbers' paradise with almost 200 traditional and sport climbing routes. Jeff Squire, board member and Chairperson of WMCC says, "This opportunity just landed in our laps and we took full advantage of it.

"Bouldering has become a passion for many people in the New England area," he added, "so the purchase was a win."


Although not yet fully open, this land now has a full access road and parking area to serve professional climbers.

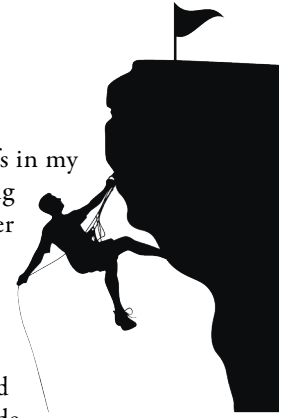
The WMCC is a not-for-profit grassroots organization that promotes the protection of natural resources and represents rock climbers and recreationalists in Western Mass. Since 2000, they have been the leading voice for climbers all over this region. Another group, the Ragged Mountain Foundation (RMF) has teamed up with this outfit to help promote, finance, and maintain the site.

This is a big win for the area. Not only will there be people passing through to engage this sport, they will also put the name of Sandisfield on a climbers' maps. Even if it's just a hikers' destination, folks from near and far will make their way here and maybe give business to the local establishments.

In fact, I rappelled these cliffs in my teens. I remember teaming up with a professional climber named Rocker who helped me find a small boulder to train on. After 15 minutes of teaching me how the ropes work and how the harness operates, he said "You're good to go!" and we made our way to the top of Hanging Mountain.

Looking down I nearly got sick, the tops of 150-foot tall trees were still 80 feet below me and it was now or never. Bouncing slowly down the side with the face of the cliff in my face, I cheered loudly as I touched the ground and immediately said that I wanted to go again.

This is a fun, noiseless (except for shouts), and challenging sport. Although proper equipment is as important as training and sheer guts, this is a great way to relieve stress in your life because no matter what's bugging you, all you can think of for those terrifying minutes is where your hand or foot is supposed to go next. 



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

Sandisfield Tales

Young Hunter is Frozen to Death in Sandisfield

BODY IS FOUND ABOUT 25 YARDS FROM CHICKEN COOP, LYING FACE DOWNWARD AND COVERED WITH SNOW

From North Adams Transcript, November 22, 1937

Arvid Antonson, 24, of South Sandisfield was found frozen to death in the woods of the Coldbrook road in Sandisfield yesterday afternoon about 12:30. Saturday afternoon at 3:30 Antonson and a friend, Donald Shores, went hunting. When they were about 15 miles from the road Antonson complained about his legs. He was carried by Shores for about six miles to a chicken coop.

Antonson said that he would sleep there for the night and told Shores to return home. They agreed and after Shores walked out to the road he decided to return and persuade his friend to return home. This, Shores said, he refused to do.

Shores returned home and yesterday morning at 11 sought the aid of three friends, Benjamin Shaffee, Lee Ostrowski and John Hotchkins, all of Sandisfield. When they reached the chicken coop, they found Antonson gone.

Searching the vicinity, they found him about 25 yards from the coop lying dead face down on the ground covered with snow.

They returned to the village and notified state police at Lee. Lieut. Detective Daniel Murphy and State Trooper Thomas L. Lloyd of Springfield, senior patrolman at Lee, investigated. The body was viewed by Dr. John Beebe of Great Barrington, medical examiner of the Great Barrington district, who ordered the body removed to the Birches funeral home in Great Barrington.

Sandisfield Wrestlers Compete in Regional Tourney

By Tim Brooks

Three high school athletes from Sandisfield made their community proud by placing in the top tier at this year's Western Massachusetts Championship, held at Taconic High School in mid-February.

Caden O'Rourke and Sam Cormier, both seniors at Monument Mountain Regional High School, and Eli Cormier, Sam's brother and a sophomore, each placed in the top four of their respective weight classes. With a total of fifteen schools participating, it was notable to have so many grapplers from Sandisfield with qualifying finishes.

Senior Caden O'Rourke, a son of Selectman Brian O'Rourke, was the second-biggest member of the team, wrestling in the 195-pound weight class. He has been a top athlete at Monument, playing baseball and serving as captain of this year's football team. In an interview with The Times, O'Rourke said he has been accepted to Norwich University in Vermont and is awaiting responses from the University of Massachusetts and Drexel University. Wherever he decides to go for college, he plans to participate in Army ROTC and study Construction Management.

"I know that I have big decisions to make about my future, based on where I end up," O'Rourke said, "which makes this a very stressful, but still very exciting moment."

Senior Sam Cormier overcame a big obstacle this winter, having snapped his fibula in a wrestling match in the finals of the Eagle Tournament, held two days before Christmas. He was cleared to wrestle the week of the Western Massachusetts Championship, where he won his first match. "After returning from his injury, this was an amazing accomplishment," Coach Simon Jones told a reporter for MassLive.com. "It's very difficult to



MMRHS's Varsity Wrestlers take time away from the Western Massachusetts wrestling tournament in February to pose for a team photo. Kneeling (far left) is Coach Simon Jones. Standing behind him (far left) is Coach Marty Cormier, then Caden O'Rourke, Sam Cormier, and Eli Cormier, joining the other members of the Monument Varsity Wrestling team.

Photo: Brian O'Rourke

return from an injury-related extended period off in wrestling," Cormier told the news outlet, "because it's all about conditioning, strength, and stamina." His win makes him the first three-time Western Massachusetts champion for the school since the early 1990s. After graduation this spring, Cormier will enlist in the United States Navy.

As for Eli, the rising junior "will be a force to be reckoned with on the mat," Coach Jones told The Times.

An older brother of Sam and Eli Cormier, Marty Cormier, is himself a former MMRHS wrestler and

now part of the coaching staff. Under the leadership of Coach Jones and his assistants, Sandisfield should continue its long tradition of churning out champion wrestlers. 🏆

Friends & Neighbors last month by error listed two Sam Cormiers as members of the wrestling team. The Cormiers on the team are Sam Cormier, a senior, and his younger brother, Eli, a sophomore.

Pot Bylaw in the Pipeline

IS IT POSSIBLE TO PLEASE BOTH CAMPS?

By Tom Christopher

Sandisfield's town government is playing catch-up. Our town is one of only seven in Berkshire County that haven't already regulated the construction of marijuana growing facilities and dispensaries within their boundaries. This became an issue last fall when Jennifer Philbin, previously of South Carolina, purchased a 72-acre parcel on West Hubbard Road and proposed building not only a home on the property, but also to cultivate marijuana on site. At the time, Sandisfield had no way to legally address the issues raised by this proposal. That, however, is changing, as Sandisfield's Planning Committee hammers out an appropriate bylaw.


Roger Kohler, chairman of Sandisfield's Planning Board, is frank about the complications of this process. Opinion in town has divided into two camps. One welcomes the tax revenue that such a marijuana growing facility might bring. But neighbors of Philbin's proposed facility are concerned about the traffic, noise, light, water and air pollution such a business could bring to their rural, quiet neighborhood. In drafting a bylaw, the Planning Board has tried to address the concerns of both groups.

This has been a time-consuming, evolving process. After researching other towns' regulatory responses to the same situation, the Planning Board presented a draft bylaw to the Select Board at the end of January. This was later returned to the Board for revision. Currently, the process of re-writing continues, and Planning Board chairman Kohler encourages residents of differing viewpoints to contact him.

As Ed Brozman, a member of the West Hubbard Neighborhood Group, points out to

call a marijuana-growing facility a "farm" is not entirely accurate. Because of problems with odor, marijuana growing is not typically pursued in open fields. Rather, cultivation occurs within the confines of large, enclosed industrial buildings that may occupy large areas and require obtrusive security measures.

The Planning Board's proposed bylaw addresses this issue by prohibiting the outdoor commercial cultivation of marijuana and by limiting the permissible size of an enclosed growing facility. It also restricts indoor growing to structures of 5,001 to 100,000 square feet. Facilities of up to 5,000 square feet will be permitted so long as an odor control system and appropriate security measures are in place. Such facilities will also be required to be located 1,000 feet from any property line. An exception will be made for smaller operations of 1,000 square feet or less, which will require set-backs of only 75 feet. This exception has been included to facilitate small business start-ups by Sandisfield residents.

When completed, the draft bylaw will be presented to the Select Board and presented for approval of Town residents at a special town meeting. It will not be completed in time for this year's Town Meeting next month. 



Arts Center Events Cancelled Until June

BUT WE'RE PLANNING GOOD THINGS ONLINE

By Barbara Penn

A few weeks ago, we were looking forward to a bang-up 25th anniversary to kick off our 2020 season. The array of programs and workshops and free events we had planned can be seen on our website.

Then, it seems like days ago, we understood we'd have to make hard decisions about what programs to hold, what to cancel, how to sanitize the building and the number of people to admit to an event. We even set up a Health Team including a local doctor to advise us.


Now, as the Times is going to press, we are all looking at very different decision factors for the coming months.

At least until the end of May, the decisions are disappointing but not hard: we are suspending our programs and season opening at least until June in order to maintain social distancing and help keep everyone healthy. We've cancelled the April 25 Earth Day Celebration and postponed other May events like the Family Cabaret. Our fundraiser dinner may be an online auction instead.

But we'll still be active and present. We are committed to you and to our mission to take good care of our historic building and improve our capacity to deliver interesting and varied programs. So, while our doors are closed, here are a few things we'll be doing:

Investing in minor building improvements, consistent with the health of any workers, and cleaning up things like mailing lists, online files, and the other administrative chores that can be done at home

Turning an in-person event into a webcast – for example, we're hoping the Poetry Pharmacy with the Sandisfield Players under Ben Luxon might be a poem-a-day "good medicine" reading online. Or for Earth Day, we may post some activities and games for kids to do at home.

By next month's issue of the Times we should know about the extent and duration of cancellations or if programs can resume sooner. Given the best medical understanding of the virus, that's not likely, but a lot can happen in a month. Please check www.sandisfieldartscenter.org for the latest information. 

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Select Board Report

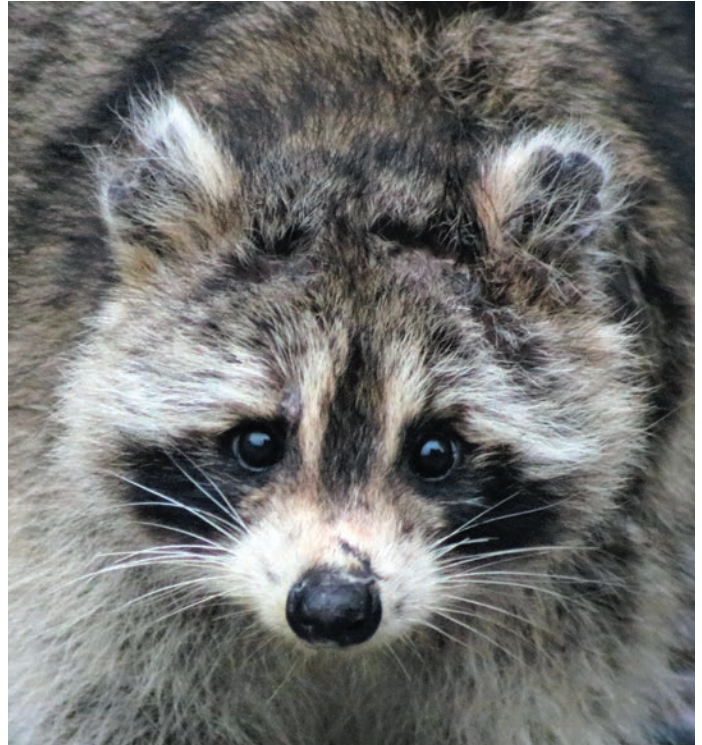
Until the advent of COVID-19, the main subject occupying the Select Board in March was the Town's 2020/2021 budget. As of mid-March, after many work sessions, we are over our levy limit by about \$200,000 due to increases in department budgets – particularly the school district – as well as retirement and insurance increases. Together with the town manager and the Finance Committee the Board has been working on ways to reduce our tax appropriations.

Due to the constantly shifting COVID-19 emergency, we have taken a number of emergency actions, including closing all Town buildings to the public, encouraging all non-essential staff to stay home, and setting up mechanisms for remote meetings for all Town committees. More is certain to come as the situation and State directives evolve.

At the risk of seeming trivial in comparison, we have dealt with other issues in addition to the above "Big Two." With the town manager, we are pushing rapid development of online bill and tax payments to the Town. We selected sheds for a Transfer Station Swap Shop; solicited bids for Yanner Park access and parking; dealt with auction sales of surplus DPW equipment; approved an urgently needed container for storage of Town records; and solicited a grant from the State's Division of Ecological Restoration for replacement of culverts on North Beech Plain Road.

We are trying to get as much current information posted on the Town website as possible.

Mark Newman, Chair
Brian O'Rourke
George Riley



Nature photographer and frequent Times contributor Cindy Ragusa of Otis caught this photo of the Ragusa's latest new friend, "Rocky." She said, "Rocky comes around to my house a lot, usually at about daylight."

Photo Cindy Ragusa

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Where Everyone Knew Your Name

FRIENDLY EATERIES AT THE SAME SITE IN NEW BOSTON

By Ron Bernard

North-bound travelers on Rt. 8 – even those few who slow down to meet New Boston's posted 20 mph limit – are unlikely to pay attention to the neat and tidy building with the brick façade on their right at the edge of a large open parking lot.



The recently closed Villa Mia, owned and operated by Dia and Tommy Klenja. Here Dia tends to her prize-winning dhalias, 2010. Sandisfield Then and Now

The building, now for sale, housed the former Villa Mia restaurant which, to the regret of its local patrons, closed its doors March 2019 after serving hungry patrons for nearly 20 years.

What may be unknown to many recent Sandisfielders is the fact that the site of Villa Mia has been home to about half a dozen village cafés going back to the 1930s.

Tradition began with a ski jump.

In the early 1930s, Winsted entrepreneur Nathra Nader built a professional-level ski jump at the site utilizing the steep hillsides to the east. Nader advertised the place as Suicide Hill, appropriately named according to old timers with long memories who recall death defying competitive events.



*Lillian Palmer's restaurant, c. 1940s.
Photo: Dawn Pachulski*

Nathra Nader's other claim to fame is that he was the father of Winsted's Ralph Nader, five-time candidate for U.S. president.

Suicide Hill was not a venue for recreational skiers, but daredevils and professional jumpers. The risky jump attracted serious competitors from across the country and even from Norway, the mother-site of Nordic skiing. One meet reportedly drew a crowd of 4,000 spectators.

Attracting such masses, Suicide Hill needed a restaurant, but apparently didn't have one until after the great storm and flood of 1938 seriously damaged the ski jump and put it out of business. Today there are only faint traces of the jump hard to be found among the trees and thick underbrush above the parking lot.

But one artifact from Suicide Hill survived – a plain utilitarian building used as the skier's lodge. Nader leased the building to Lillian Palmer, who opened a café in the building under the name of Palmer's, operating it until the mid-1940s.

After Palmer's came an unrelated chain of hopeful eateries.

In May 1950, Charles and Grace Allan took the next turn.

Known as Allan's, the place is fondly remembered by many folks still in town for its warm atmosphere, great home-made food and pizza, and its popular bar. The family business, known by all simply as "Grace Allan's," operated for 29 years.



Charles and Grace Allan were proprietors for many years.

Photo: Dawn Pachulski, granddaughter.

And the place was fun! Pinball machines, a piano, and horseshoe pits out back drew loyal patrons from miles around. The biggest day of the year was Good Friday because Connecticut restaurants then were prohibited from selling alcohol on that day.

Following Grace's death in 1974, Allan's was operated by her daughter Joyce and Joyce's husband, Maurice "Tuffy" Campetti. In 1979, the Campettis gave up the lease on the property, still owned by Nathra Nader, and moved about a quarter mile south on the other side of Rt. 8 where they opened a new restaurant, known as Allan's. Today, that Allan's is MJ Tuckers, owned and operated by Marty Cormier and Jeff Blacker. Tuckers continues the Allan legacy of good food, pizzas, and out back the horseshoe-pitching competitions.



*Walter Margraf behind the counter at Hit 'n Miss, March 1982.
Photo: The Record/Sandisfield Times archives*



*The Cottage Kitchen, 1986.
Photo: Sandisfield Then and Now.*

Back at the Villa Mia site, the building previously known as Allan's soon became the Hit 'n Miss. Proprietors Shirley Martinez and Walter Margraf struggled to obtain a wine and malt license, which was finally approved in June 1981. They operated on the site until Nader sold the property. Members of the Margraf family still live on Roosterville Road, just to the south of the location of the Hit 'n Miss.

In 1983, Walter Huntley purchased the property to give his daughter an opportunity to open a business known as Brandie's Diner. About four years later, Huntley sold to Louise and Ron Daigle.



*Ron and Louise Daigle operated the Cottage Kitchen for about seven years.
Photo: Louise Daigle*

In March 1987, after a bit of rehabilitation, the new place opened as the Cottage Kitchen with the Daigles as proprietors. Louise and Ron lived just up the hill behind the property. Strictly a family restaurant, the Daigles' place became a favorite with truck drivers and almost everyone else, especially for breakfast.

Louise's omelets, blueberry pancakes, and corned beef hash are still remembered in Sandisfield, Tolland, and Otis. Louise told the Times by phone from her home in Crossville, Alabama, "I still get requests from people up there for my blueberry pancake recipe." Louise and Ron keep up to date with town happenings with their subscription to The Times.

Next up was Jim Cooley who leased the building from the Daigles. Jim's Donut & Deli was short-lived and after it closed the building sat empty for a few years.

In the late 1990s, the site got its most famous, successful and recent renovation.



*The north elevation of Villa Mia reveals a portion of the original Nader building.
February 2020.*

Photo: Times reporter.

Dia and Tommy Klenja of Torrington, Conn., who had considerable restaurant experience in Connecticut, decided this spot on a busy state highway was suitable for their dream place. The location had caught Tommy's eye during his fishing trips to the area. They brought the property from the Daigle's and rebuilt the place almost from the ground up. They incorporated much of the old structure into a bright new 2,200 sq. ft. full-service Italian-style restaurant. Villa Mia opened in 2001 and was very successful.


More recently, business slowed and fewer of the Klenja family were needed to staff the restaurant. The opening of Fratelli's on Rt. 8 at Rt. 23 pulled much of their Otis business, warming winters meant fewer snowmobile customers, and the loss of the New Boston Store in 2011 meant half of the reason for stopping in New Boston disappeared. Villa Mia was a welcoming fixture in Sandisfield even as fewer cars filled the parking lot, until 2019 when the Klenjas decided to retire.



Dia Klenja at work in the Villa Mia kitchen, 2018.

Photo: Times archives

MJ Tuckers thrives because it is as much (or more) of a tavern than restaurant, attracting loggers, Connecticut drinkers and drivers, locals after work, and an increasing number of summer residents.

But we all miss the Cottage Kitchen and Villa Mia. Before long, it is hoped that new proprietors will emerge to continue this nearly 90-year tradition of a friendly place for families and friends and groups to meet and enjoy good food and good company once again. 



Police/Fire/EMS Logs

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



POLICE

January 2020 Incidents

January 1 Medical, Tannery Road
 January 3 Suspicious activity, Sears Road
 January 5 911 call, abandoned, Sandisfield Road
 January 5 Section 12, Sandisfield Road
 January 6 Assist citizen, Silverbrook Road
 January 6 Medical call, Town Hill Road
 January 7 Motor vehicle accident, S. Main Street/
 Tolland Road
 January 9 Medical call, Slater Lane
 January 10 Well-being check, Sandisfield Road
 January 11 Medical call, Sandisfield Road
 January 11 Domestic dispute, Jamie Lane
 January 11 Harassment, S. Beech Plain Road
 January 11 Assist citizen, Sandisfield Road
 January 13 Assist citizen, Town Hill Road
 January 14 Motor vehicle accident, S. Main Street
 January 14 Trespassing complaint, River Road
 January 14 Vandalism complaint, S. Beech Plain Road
 January 16 Medical call, Sandisfield Road
 January 16 Vandalism complaint follow-up, Fox Road
 January 16 Erratic motor vehicle operation, S. Main Street
 January 19 Citizen assist, Sandisfield Road
 January 20 Unattended fire, S. Main Street
 January 22 Citizen complaint, Silverbrook Road
 January 24 Medical call, Sandisfield Road
 January 24 911 hang up, North Main Street
 January 25 Motor vehicle accident, Town Hill Road
 January 27 Well-being check, Town Hill Road
 January 27 Assist citizen, Silverbrook Road
 January 28 911 hang up, N. Main Street
 January 29 Investigation, Town Hill Road
 January 29 Traffic complaint, Sandisfield Road
 January 29 Tree down, N. Main Street
 January 30 Suspicious motor vehicle, River Road
 January 30 Medical call, Sandisfield Road
 January 31 Medical call, Sandisfield Road
 January 31 Complaint follow-up, Elk Road
 January 31 Citizen business complaint, Sandisfield Road
 January 31 Traffic complaint, New Hartford Road



FIRE

January 2020 Incidents

January 20. Unattended outside brush fire, extinguished



EMS

January 2020 Incidents

January 1 Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital,
 Great Barrington
 January 5 Medical call, transport to Berkshire Medical Center,
 Pittsfield
 January 6 Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital
 January 9 Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital
 January 11 Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital
 January 16 Medical call, transport to
 Berkshire Medical Center
 January 24 Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital
 January 24 Medical call #2, transport to Fairview Hospital
 January 30 Medical call, transport to
 Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Torrington

SCAM WARNING


From Facebook "ConnectSandisfield"

By Hanna Colby

Attention residents of Sandisfield. Recently the State Police in Lee were called to investigate a paving scam.

It's reported that a man approached a resident at her home to patch a spot in her driveway for \$150 with some leftover airport mix from a job they had completed nearby. She agreed and four men in two vehicles (a red pickup truck and a white pickup truck) came and put down approximately 4 yards of material and spread it around. And then told her she had to pay significantly more.

If anyone has been approached recently by these men please contact the State Police barracks at (413) 243-0600 with any info.

Do not accept any unsolicited business offers of any kind. Get a business card, vehicle description, license plate, and direction of travel, and call the barrack. 

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

Feb 6-7 ice
 Jan 17 -2.0°
 Feb 15 -4.0°

SNOWFALL

Nov Total 10"
 December 2019
 Dec Total 24.5"

2020
 Jan Total 24.5"
 Feb Total 4.5"
 Mar 17 <1
 Mar 23 4"

SEASON TO DATE: 49"

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A Rite of Spring? OR JUST A 5-YEAR CYCLE?

Town Hill Mailbox Mayhem, February 2015.

Photo: Ron Bernard

By Bill Price

In January some drunk or other person in a hurry to get somewhere else mowed down the row of mailboxes at the foot of Town Hill Road where it intersects with Rt. 57.

That event reminded us that the April 2015 issue of The Times reported on a similar act of mayhem on the same row of mailboxes that occurred at the end of February that year. The 2015 event appeared to be part of a series of vandalism that night that stretched from Otis through New Boston, up Beech Plain Road, and the foot of Town Hill.

The perpetrators of both events are still unknown and on the loose. TM



Town Hill Mailbox Mayhem, January 2020.

Photo: Carl Nicholas

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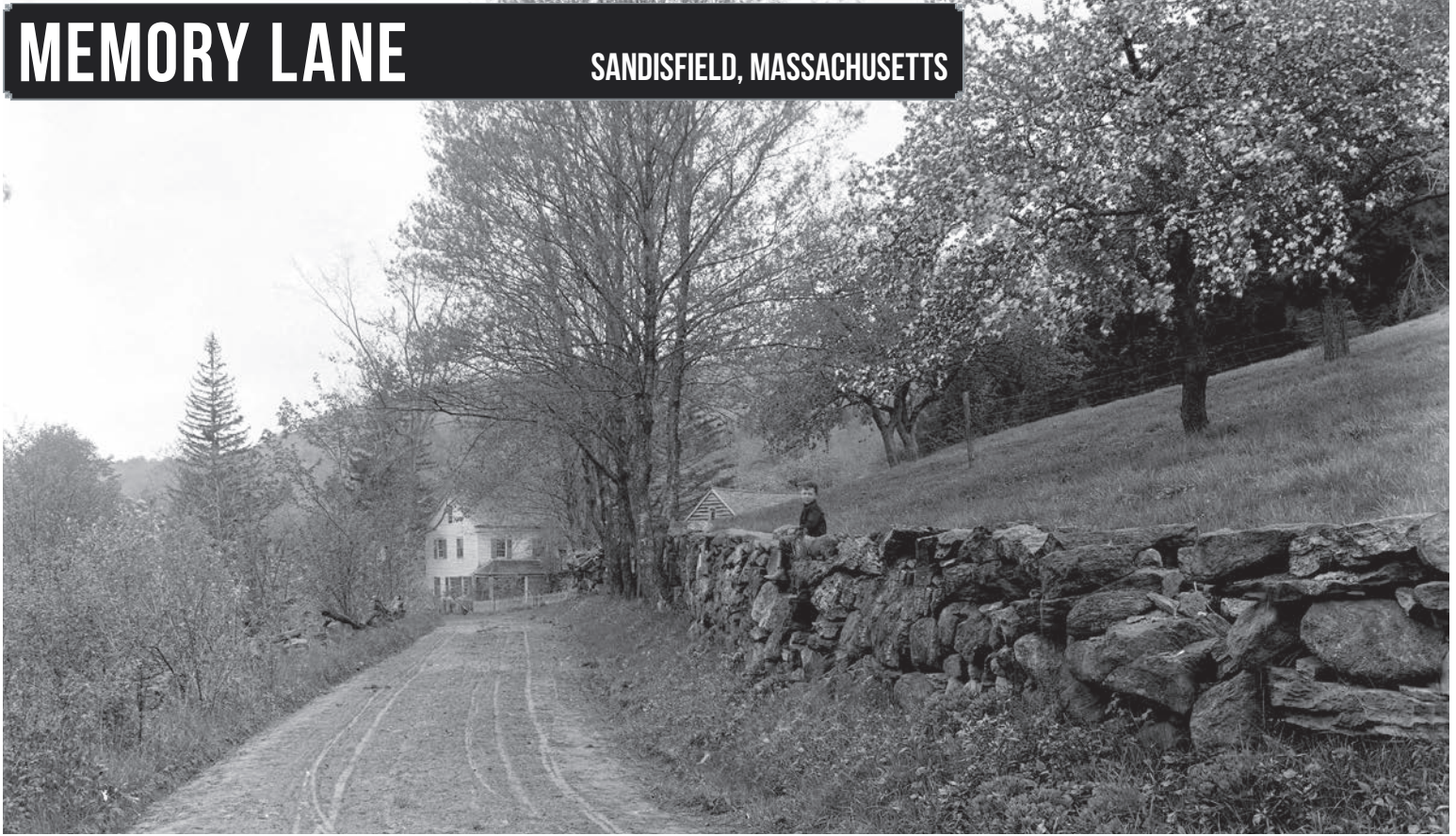
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berkshirehealthsystems.org



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55 Pittsfield Rd., Suite 12B, Lenox

MEMORY LANE

SANDISFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS



Memory Lane Quiz

Can you identify this location in Sandisfield as it appeared in this DeMars image taken about 1906?

If you are a resident or frequent visitor, you have passed this site countless times. The first reader to correctly identify the location AND the historical name of the house* associated with the land will receive a free one-year mail subscription to the Times which is transferable to anyone you'd like to be able to read us in print. Send your response by email to editor@SandisfieldTimes.org.

*Sandisfield Then and Now may be helpful.

Photo courtesy Great Barrington Historical Society.

Sandisfield Tales Manager of Ski Jumper Drowns in New York

From The Berkshire Eagle, June 8, 1939

SANDISFIELD, June 3. Carl Thomlevold, well-known ski jumper who performed at "Suicide Hill" in New Boston for two seasons, was drowned in New York recently, according to word received here by friends.

According to the information received, Mr. Thomlevold, who had been a barge captain in New York for some time, and another barge captain were on their way back to their barges when the rowboat in which they were travelling capsized. The other captain was rescued, but Mr. Thomlevold was drowned. His body has not been recovered.

Mr. Thomlevold came to Winsted when the Colebrook River Ski Hill was built as manager of Miss Kolstad, noted skier. He resided in Winsted for some time, later taking up his residence in New Boston, when the ski hill was built. He acted in a supervisory capacity during the building of the latter hill.

During his residence in New Boston, he made many friends.

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A Crossword Solution: How Can We Help Our Planet?

SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER "GOES GREEN"

By Anne Mihalick

Please check the venue before April 25, in case the Silver Anniversary needs to be postponed due to the COVID-19 response. In the meantime, alert readers can fill out the Earth Day crossword puzzle.

The opening "Silver Anniversary" presentation at the Sandisfield Arts Center will be a CELEBRATION OF EARTH on April 25 - the 50th anniversary of Earth Day - on Saturday from 1-4:00 p.m.

Admission is free and activities are scheduled for all ages. Everyone is welcome. It's going to be a fine day.

Our skilled and resourceful neighbors will demonstrate earth-friendly crafts: spinning natural fiber, green woodworking and chair making, mushroom cultivation, turning trash to treasure.

Groups dedicated to decreasing our carbon footprints for a more sustainable planet will offer useful knowledge about native plants, pollinator gardens, composting, solar installations, and eco-landscaping.

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.

In the meantime, try your hand at this Earth Friendly Crossword Puzzle. ♻️

CLUES

Outer circle solving clockwise: What we can do with:

- R1 Aluminum cans
- R2 Plastic straws
- R3 Packaging
- R4 Water bottles



ACROSS

1. Liquid ice.
3. One can be black, brown, Panda, or Polar.
5. Bald ____.
6. Accumulated objects.
9. Important layer in the stratosphere.
10. Star at the center of our solar system.
11. ____₂ ; a greenhouse gas on the rise.
12. Our planet.
14. 24 hours on (12).
16. Golden Anniversary, Roman style.
17. Author of *Silent Spring*.
20. He said "We have met the enemy and he is us."
21. Source of tofu.
22. Hot or cold: abbr.

DOWN

2. Essential to life. We breathe it.
3. Small flying furry mammals that eat mosquitoes.
4. Fate of CFC and DDT to save (9) and (5)
7. You can measure your carbon ____ print.
8. Fossil ____.
11. Dire Straits: Our climate is in it.
12. President Nixon formed it in 1970.
13. Bees make it.
15. He wrote "An Inconvenient Truth."
18. A 5th "R" of sustainability,
19. ____ being, one of estimated 8 billion on (12) across.

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OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



One day in mid-March, Melissa Gabso and Seth Fritch were back in Town working on The Old Silverbrook Cafe which they are lovingly refurbishing bit by bit. They have just installed new windows and done major house-cleaning, filling three dumpsters of material! If you see them, stop by and say hello to them and their dog, Gobi!

Photo: Setsuko Winchester

The Dean's List at Winsted's Northwest Connecticut Community College for the Fall 2019 semester included Sandisfield resident **Chelsea Ferreira**.



On "ConnectSandisfield" on Facebook, **Catherine Layne** wrote: "Every small town has elderly or disabled people that need to get medications, food, supplies, etc. Every small town needs to come together and help each other by carpooling, not people, but SPACE IN THEIR VEHICLE!! Save gasoline, exposure to virus, and help others. I WILL!"

Several friends and neighbors responded to Catherine's note: **Deb Mccuin-Stone** wrote: "Great idea."

Ellen Flynn Folmer said, "I am in Great Barrington every weekday. Happy to pick things up for folks."

Lori Murphy wrote, "I travel all over Mass and CT for my work and I am happy to pick things up for my neighbors!!"

Petrina Folsom wrote, "I drive to Winsted every day and back to Tolland. I'm happy to pick up whatever someone needs who is elderly and unable to leave the house." 🐾



An Ode to a Bear Sighting

By *Brigitte Ruthman*

A neighbor called to say a bear had left after eating from the bird feeder and was headed up the road toward my place.

So I rushed home. Worried over my young calf.

The bear is wandering just now on the fringes of where she belongs much more than I do, as pitch black as the darkness where I won't go, and behaving just fine.

I have met her just once. She sighed that time, and walked away.

On another day one of her cubs dropped from a tree as I was walking by. I thought it to be a large raccoon. The cub shook his head and mumbled as he walked away.

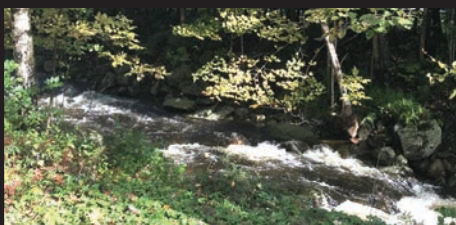
The neighbor had met her too, last summer, but thought it to be an intruder when he was in the basement and heard feet thud on the floor above. He ran upstairs in time to see the bear pass back out through the open window – how it had gotten into the house in the first place.

He wasn't so much surprised to find that it was a bear not a man as he was to see how fast it could be gone again. 🐾

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Contact Barbara at (516) 527-9627

June Wink: Living in Wild Thymes

By Greta Phinney

Printed in *The Berkshire Eagle*, March 23, 2020, in their series on *Creative Aging: 65 and Better in the Berkshires*. Used with permission.



Photo: Peter Levine

In the early years of her adulthood, June Keener Wink discovered a passion for dance, for the freedom and openness it brought to her life. Letting go of what we've been told we are and experiencing a freedom of being became her mission, one she brought into

partnership with her husband Walter's non-violent peace activism.

Throughout their lives together they worked in tandem to educate and encourage nonviolent activism around the world.

Walking into Wink's home you immediately realize dance is not her only passion. You are in an artist's studio with a potter's wheel, the scent of clay, and pieces of pottery in various stages of completion from initial drying to completed glazing and firing. Her work is beautiful, offering up a vision of what it means to "take off the leash."

There is joy and freedom in every piece. Her business is called Wild Thyme Pottery. One cannot help but smile!

When her husband passed away in 2012, June shifted some of her focus to the local community. Today she is clerk of the South Berkshire Friends Meeting. She is a team leader at the Great Barrington food pantry, and a volunteer at the Sandisfield Arts Center. She also serves on the vision team of the Fellowship of Reconciliation USA, which is creating a year-long fellowship to be awarded to a divinity student training in nonviolence, or an emerging leader creating change that challenges the powers that



June Wink Dancing Flame oil lamp.

be. This award, the Walter Wink and June Keener Wink Fellowship, supports the further development of the work she and her husband championed around the world.

If you visit her studio you will see some of her signature pieces, Dancing Flame Oil Lamps, as well as platters with various forms of dancing figures inviting you to be a part of the dance of life.

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Letters to the Editors

Editor's Note: On page 10 last month we published "A Reader Writes of Town Centers, General Stores, and Good Journalism." Addressed to founding editor Simon Winchester, the letter was an excellent memoir of early days in Sandisfield and what the author missed about that time, particularly her grandparents who had a home on Fox Road until the late 1970s. We meant to include the author's name, as she may be familiar to older Town residents. The author was Marilee Talmadge of Long Island, NY. We regret the omission.

ENJOYING THE TIMES

I'm certainly enjoying my subscription to The Sandisfield Times. I read it cover to cover and learn something new about your Town and its members in each issue. Please find enclosed funds for an extension of our subscription.

*Fred Newman
Winsted, Conn.*

A NOTE FROM A FRIEND OF SANDISFIELD

A part of myself is forever tied to Sandisfield. I share the special love of a small, off-the-beaten track New England community of real people. I'm so proud of what collectively you have accomplished to create a paper like this. The recent issues were especially good. I was transfixed by the Ice Storm photo on the front page by Ms. Ruthman and the sepia banner above [January/February 2020 issue]. The quality of writing is high and in my opinion you deserve a national award!

I totally agree with S. Winchester's argument that [the Times] is the center of a creative community which I heard him say in a radio interview about his recent book.

Enclosed is a small donation, all I can afford at the moment, but hopefully it will be more in the future. Please keep going. You are lucky to have so many special people in your midst to do things like this paper. Many other places are not so fortunate.

*Richard Ellis Hand
Sanford, Maine*

The writer is nephew of Col. K. S. Hand, a well-known former resident (1936-80) who in the 1960s intensively researched the early history of Sandisfield. Col. Hand died in 1980 and is buried in Center cemetery. Mr. Hand has been a friend of Sandisfield since childhood and a reader and supporter of the Times from our inception. — Editor

Council on Aging



By Nina Carr

Well, this is certainly not the Spring we had anticipated.

All activities at the COA have been suspended for the time being.

We hope to resume business as usual on Monday, April 6, with our flower arranging class, but we can't be sure. We are also still planning to go to the Butterfly Museum on Wednesday, April 29. Please call Nina or Linda if you would like to sign up for either of these activities.

I'm sure some of our seniors are feeling isolated right now, and are missing our weekly get-togethers. Please reach out to your friends and neighbors if you need help with shopping or anything else. Sandisfield has always been a good place to offer neighborly help and we're going to find out that it still is.

Also, get outside for a short walk now that the weather permits. That's always a good idea.

If necessary, if you have a serious concern, you can also call the non-emergency police number, 258-4742.

Some of our volunteer drivers continue to work. For example, a person in town is driven to medical treatments twice a week, so far. A couple of drivers have volunteered that when they go into town themselves they will pick up items for people who can't go into town or are medically compromised. If you need this service, call Nina or Linda for a contact.

And remember, Spring has Sprung. 🍀



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Recreation Commission: Kathy Carroll, Bill Dyer, Dana Pustinger, Jen Catolane
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NOW HEAR THIS!

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

APRIL EVENTS

PLEASE NOTE: Be sure to check to see if the events are still scheduled as listed due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Events at the Library and Council on Aging and Yoga with Ann Gadwah have been suspended until further notice.

Town Caucus on Thursday, April 2, at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road.

Flower Arrangement Class on Monday, April 6 at 2:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging, basement level at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex on Route 57. \$10. Please call Nina Carr or Linda Riiska to register for the class.

New Boston Church Service on Sunday, April 12, at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. All are welcome!

Grow Your Own Shiitakes Class on Saturday, April 18, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Yanner Park on Town Hill Road. 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. Please email Emily Gallagher (etarasuk@hotmail.com) or call 603-312-5396 to register.

Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 25, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center on Hammertown Road. Crafts people will display their work. An art installation will also be on display outside. Light snacks and drinks will be provided. Free.

COA Day Trip to the Butterfly Museum in South Deerfield on Wednesday, April 29. Registration is required (call Nina Carr or Linda Riiska to reserve your space in the van and for more information). The group will also stop for lunch.

SAVE THE DATE:

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

Bird Identification Walk on Saturday, May 30, from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. at Yanner Park on Town Hill Road. Join Rene Wendell of The Nature Conservancy for a walk to identify as many birds as possible. Last year, 29 different species were counted. Sponsored by The Yanner Park Committee. Free.

OTHER APRIL EVENTS IN NEARBY TOWNS

Right to Vote: Fight for Women's Suffrage, 1848-1920 on Monday, April 6 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Berkshire Community College on 1350 West Street in Pittsfield. Sponsored by Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). Registration (includes morning refreshments and lunch) \$40 OLLI members; \$55 public. Free for youth or college students. For information, call 413-236-2190 or www.olliberkshirecc.edu.

Housatonic Flats Beginner Bird Walk on Sunday, April 19, from 7:00 to 8:30 a.m. Join BNRC and Hoffmann Bird Club member Ed Neumuth for a walk at this unique location in Great Barrington. Space is limited (413-499-0596 or mauman@bnrc.org). RSVP is required. Meet at the parking area north from Price Chopper on Route 7 in Great Barrington. Route 7. Free.

Spring Happenings Walk at Steepletop in New Marlborough on Tuesday, April 28, from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. This 5-mile hike will feature wetlands, spring ephemeral wildflowers, and bird songs. Please RSVP (413-499-0596 or mauman@bnrc.org). Meet at the parking area on North Road just before the Old Inn on the Green. Follow North Road for 1.6 miles. Turn right at the steep, inclining driveway marked "684". Bear right into the lot at the top of the little hill. Free.

PLEASE NOTE: Be sure to check to see if the events are still scheduled as listed due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic.



ATTENTION!

SPECIAL NOTICE FOR LOCAL READERS OF THE TIMES

For the month of April 2020 the Sandisfield Times will be available to the public at the following locations in Sandisfield and nearby towns as long as they remain open. The Times may be read on our web site, sandisfieldtimes.org (free). Copies are also available by U.S. mail (see order form on back page).

NEW BOSTON

- A&M Auto
- New Boston Crane & Sleds

SANDISFIELD ROUTE 57

- Transfer Station (Wed/Sat/Sun)
- Post Office (24 hours)

WEST OTIS

- Laundromat

EAST OTIS

- Katies Store
- Papa's Healthy Food & Fuel

MONTEREY

- Public library (outside box)

COLEBROOK

- Colebrook Store
- Post Office

Thank you for your continuing interest in and support for your community newspaper.

Comments and suggestions are welcome.
Write to: editor@sandisfieldtimes.org



THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

P.O. Box 584

Sandisfield, MA 01255

www.sandisfieldtimes.org

*The Times is grateful to readers who
have donated in March.*

Carol Ginsburg

H. Dennis Sears & Rene Wood

Patrick Shelley

Sally Vaun



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 in 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.

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

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

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and advertisement queries to editor@SandisfieldTimes.org.*