

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

*Tribunus*



*Plebis*

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume XI, Number 6

September 2020

## It's All About the Climb

### HANGING MOUNTAIN SITE MAY OPEN COLUMBUS DAY WEEKEND

By Bill Price

As you drive across the Farmington River bridge south of New Boston, if you glance west toward Hanging Mountain you might see a few figures crawling across the cliff-face.

Those small figures will be some of the 12-15 "full-time" volunteers – with enthusiastic stragglers pitching in as necessary – who are preparing the cliff for a new climbing site under the aegis of the Western Massachusetts Climbers Coalition. Once open for climbs, the site is estimated to attract dozens of weekend professional and amateur climbers.

*con't p.4*



*Lock your car doors! In the predawn hours of August 11, a homeowner's security camera captured the moment this potential thief tried to get into a locked car in Sandisfield Center. (Screen grab via Peter Baimonte who posted the video on Facebook at Connect Sandisfield.)*


## Attention Readers

Effective this month The Sandisfield Times will be delivered, free of charge, to every postal street address and postal box in Sandisfield. Copies will no longer be available for pick-up at the Sandisfield Post Office.

Free copies will continue to be available at the following town locations: The Transfer Station (Wed/Sat/Sun), When Pigs Fly Farm, and in New Boston at A & M Auto and Tucker's Restaurant and at several locations in Otis, Monterey, and Colebrook depending on pandemic restrictions. Former and/or new locations will be restored or added to distribution service when restrictions are eased.

Seasonal or part-time residents may also consider the subscription option (please refer to the coupon on the back page or order online). The Times may also be read for free on our website, Sandisfield-Times.org.

Town-wide postal distribution will ensure that the Times is available to all residents, especially during this crisis. This expanded service comes with an incremental cost so your tax-deductible donations in any amount will be helpful and much appreciated.

We continue to strive for better service. Thank you for your support and readership. 

## Vehicle Break-in Spree Rattles Sandisfield

By Heather Bellow, Courtesy of The Berkshire Eagle, August 12, 2020

An early morning spree of vehicle break-ins and one auto theft has rattled a town where leaving cars and homes unlocked long has been the custom.


Three cars were broken into, and wallets, pocketbooks and other property stolen outside homes on New Hartford Road and Sandisfield Road/Route 57. One vehicle was stolen off New Hartford Road.

The thefts happened about 4 a.m., said Police Chief Michael Morrison. Vehicles in the towns of Tyringham and Lee also were targeted, he said.

One resident posted a surveillance video on Facebook of a culprit in the driveway checking a car door before running off. Morrison said he suspects that the same person or people are involved, and that they targeted vehicles parked close to the road.

Morrison, who has been chief of the town's Police Department for 40 years, said it has been a long time since something like this has happened.

"I can't even remember when," he said.

He reminds people to lock their cars and not leave valuables inside. 





*Hammertown Road completely blocked by debris.*



*The storm made South Beech Plain Road impassable.*



*Power lines sag under the weight of fallen trees on Town Hill Road.*

## Tropical Storm Isaias

These photos, taken by Department of Public Works Superintendent Brad Curry, show the devastation wrought by Tropical Storm Isaias. On Tuesday, August 4, the storm brought downed trees and power outages to the Berkshires and surrounding areas. With wind gusts in Sandisfield reaching as high as 40 mph, half of Town residents reported loss of power. In a special session of the Select Board, officials declared a state of emergency in response to the crisis. In the following days, emergency responders aided the Department of Public Works in clearing downed trees and facilitating access to blocked roads. While most in Sandisfield had power back within a day or two, many residents of the nearby communities of Riverton and Norfolk, Connecticut had to endure as many as six days without electricity. 🇺🇸

## Barbara Hotchkiss Injured

### CAUGHT BY FALLING TREE DURING ISAIAS

*By Bill Price*

Fear of falling trees while we're hiking, driving, or otherwise minding our own business. Many of us in Sandisfield have that fear.

That is exactly what happened to Barbara Hotchkiss of Roosterville Road during the great Tropical Storm Isaias of August 4.

"Had the tree landed a few inches another way," said one of the firemen who helped operate the Jaws of Life to open her car door, "you would have been killed." "That made me feel a little better," she said.

Not long before, she had left her son's place in Otis to drive home before Isaias got worse, but every road she tried was blocked by downed trees. Taking her last option, she headed down Town Hill Road but a tree was across it too. She turned her car around to drive back to Otis. That's when she heard a loud snap, looked up through her windshield, and saw a tree heading straight for her. She had no time to dodge it.

Sandisfield's emergency crews, already clearing roads, couldn't reach her location. The Monterey Fire Department arrived quickly, but it took them half an hour to extricate her from her crushed automobile. They had to clear downed wires, then cut away the tree, before prying open her door. Meanwhile, Barbara said, "I was hurting really bad and couldn't move. The Jaws create a horrible noise, but the guys kept telling me I was okay. I couldn't believe them. It was horrible."

Barbara was taken by ambulance to Fairview Hospital where doctors put her into a full-body brace and told her not to move. "There wasn't much chance of my doing that," she said.

Barbara returned home, also by ambulance, August 21, still in a body brace. She will have a long period of recovery and physical therapy at home. Her doctors believe she will make a full recovery, but, as Barbara said, "It will take time." 🇺🇸 Meanwhile many of Barbara's friends and relatives are coming by to help. 🇺🇸



*At Fairview, Barbara at least could smile.*

*Photo: Carl Codling*



## Correction

Last month the Sandisfield Times reported that the Town spent significantly more to use Tolland police officers on a road detail than it would have cost with Sandisfield's own officers. In fact, a state-mandated wage of \$48 per hour applies to all officers working road detail, whether they are local or imported from another community. The Sandisfield Times regrets the error.

## Morse Announces Rural Coalition

### CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE COMMITS TO RURAL ISSUES


By Seth Kershner

Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse, running in the Democratic primary for the First Congressional District of Massachusetts, recently announced the Rural Coalition, an association of 20 elected officials from Great Barrington, Becket and across the Berkshires who have endorsed Morse for Congress and support his administration's plans for a dedicated Rural Desk.

Morse has committed to creating a dedicated Rural Desk with a staffer that, for the first time, will serve the needs and concerns of rural communities exclusively.

"Our district boasts the largest rural population in the Commonwealth," Morse said. "In hundreds of conversations, residents have shared their frustrations with me about not being able to get in touch with their representative. I believe we must build a government that serves and reflects its people at every level."


Morse has promised to hold 12 town halls within his first year in office, and at least 30 percent will occur in rural areas, moving from county to county in the district he is proud to call home.

A spreadsheet obtained by The Sandisfield Times listing Rep. Neal's events in Berkshire County over the past seven years shows that he has never visited Sandisfield, New Marlborough, or Monterey. He was nearby in April 2013 when he accompanied then-Gov. Patrick to the Farmington River School to announce the "soon-to-arrive" Broadband Internet. Over those seven years, Rep. Neal has held only one Town Hall meeting in the Berkshires. 

## Remember to Vote!

Due to Covid concerns, this year marked the first time in the state's history that all voters were able to cast their ballots via mail without needing to qualify for an absentee ballot.

Over one million Massachusetts residents requested mail-in ballots ahead of the state's September 1 primary and presidential elections in November.

Registered voters who missed the early voting deadline can still vote on Primary Day. The polling location in Sandisfield for the State Primary election will be the Old Town Hall, open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 1. Masks will be required. 

## Otis Gazette Folds

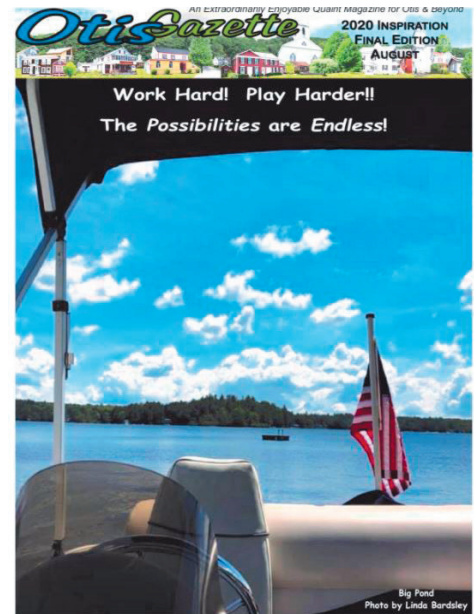
By Ron Bernard

The Otis Gazette, a long-time staple of Otis and many hill town communities, has gone out of business.

Primarily a vehicle for advertisements, the Gazette, in color, was for nearly 20 years packed full of useful ads from local companies, especially for services. It was a resource found on many kitchen tables throughout this area.


The Gazette was known for outstanding availability and it was distributed to seemingly to every public venue and by paid subscription (only \$7 year). Typically running about 30 pages with scores of ads, content also included community information, a sprinkling of nature photos and poems as well as homey family oriented stories and anecdotes about country life and clean living.

The Gazette was published monthly by former Otis resident now living in far northern Maine, Angelina Dubourg. In a farewell message to readers of her "quaint magazine" in a downsized August 2020 issue, its last, she thanked them and numerous advertisers for "(making) the joy of putting the OG together" for some 215 editions.



A one-woman show without full-time employees, this was a remarkable achievement.

"The 2020 pandemic has brought on enormous hardships that force me to print the final edition of my beloved Otis Gazette," she wrote.

Many will be sad to see the end of this reliable, useful old friend with its quirky motto, "What happens in Otis, stays in Otis. Or, it gets published." 

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### *It's All About the Climb*

*con't from p. 1*

Former WMCC president Jeff Squire said, "The amazing rock quality combined with the multi-pitch nature of many of the routes will likely make Hanging Mountain one of the better climbing resources in Southern New England. It will draw folks from five states. The only competitor is Farley Mountain in Erving, Massachusetts."

The coalition, which took title to the 14-acre property last winter, describes Hanging Mountain as possibly "the biggest find in Northeastern climbing in decades. Once fully established, this hidden gem will provide climbers with approximately 150-200 single and multi-pitch traditional, mixed, and sport routes."

Still a largely raw, undeveloped cliff, the site needs road improvements, a parking area, and a short access trail before it can open to the public. The work at the cliff includes climbing route development and trails.

The cliffside, described by Squire as very good-quality granite and schist, is "in some places loose and dirty and we're avoiding those. We're concentrating for the most part on the right half of the wall, leaving the left, or south, side for future years. The routes generally follow weaknesses in the cliff like cracks and corners until they run out. Others wander up rock faces with heights up to 300 feet."

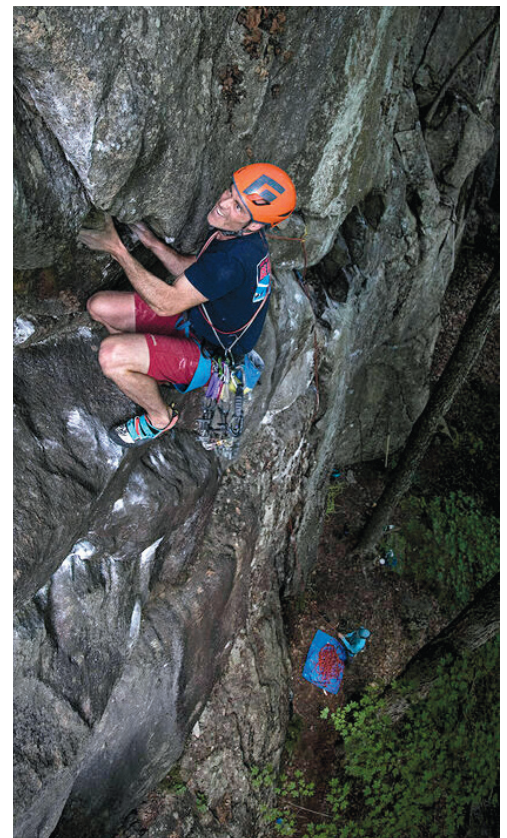
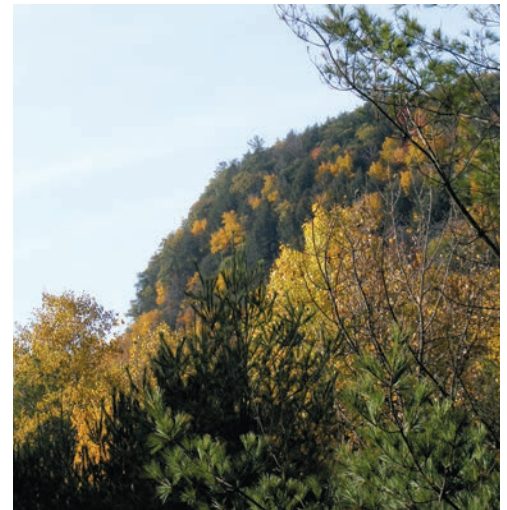
Squire said he hopes the site will be ready for some kind of formal/informal grand opening sometime around Columbus Day, "given the amount of work we still have and the limited availability of folks to pitch in. Like everything else, Covid has slowed us down a bit."

Bird lovers will be glad to know WMCC is protecting the multi-generation family of peregrine falcons that nest on the cliff. The climbers work closely with biologists and Massachusetts

Fish & Wildlife to avoid the nesting site, as well as a number of important plant and animal species and habitats. Squire said that Fish & Wildlife banded two new peregrine chicks this spring, which "caused us to reroute some trail sections and consider limitations in other areas. The implementation of a management plan is certainly welcomed."

To help pay for all this, WMCC has invested its own money along with help from their partner organization in Connecticut, the Ragged Mountain Foundation. Additional money from a Conservation Loan program offered by the Access Fund contributed to making this acquisition possible. 🍷

*Photos by Christopher Beauchamp*



*The cliff of Hanging Mountain, looking across the Farmington River Bridge, Rt. 8.*



# Who Brings You This News?

## TINA SOTIS: DESIGNER, ARTIST

By Bill Price

To celebrate its 10th birthday, *The Sandisfield Times* is profiling a few of the individuals who bring you the paper each month. Every issue of *The Times* since its beginning in April 2010 is available at [www.SandisfieldTimes.org](http://www.SandisfieldTimes.org).

Tina Sotis was at a dinner party at Liana Toscanini's home in Sandisfield Center in the winter of 2009-10 when she volunteered to design a just-proposed monthly newspaper. A graphic designer at KwikPrint in Great Barrington, Tina was the right person at the right time.

She still is.

A phenomenally talented artist, Tina is curious about everything and is ready to learn new things at an age when most of us are settling into slower lanes of life.

Tina designed the paper from its inception, with its first issue in April 2010, and she is still responsible for how the news looks on every page, every month. If *The Times* can be said to have a welcoming warmth to it, Tina is responsible for that, too.

### A Long Road, Some of it Underwater

It helped that before Tina was a designer, she was an artist.

Living in Phoenix in her mid-thirties, Tina worked with other artists who encouraged her to drop her part-time office job and paint full time. Influenced by two films she saw as a child, "Rear Window" and "To Kill a Mockingbird," Tina produced oil paintings with a unique look which she describes as "a small-town night-time feel of secrets behind back-lit lace curtains, a solitary sense of light and shadow on architectural forms." Many buyers told her, she said, that her work reminded them of paintings by Edward Hopper.

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

By 1999, having moved from what was then the center of the art world, Phoenix/

Scottsdale, to, of all places, Sandisfield, which we all know is very close to the center of nowhere, she needed to find a new market for her work while searching for a job. She began to teach herself graphic design in order to build a website to showcase her paintings.

She answered a 2001 ad in the Sandisfield Newsletter for a designer for the Arts Center, just then getting up and running. Liana Toscanini, who was leading the effort, asked Tina to design a website and produce marketing materials. "This was an incentive," Tina said, "to teach myself even more design techniques. Then, in 2008, KwikPrint took me on as a full-time designer, which helped me gain speed and learn graphic design more in depth. I stayed there until 2015."

In 2011, she accepted the job of designing *Sandisfield: Then and Now*, written and published by Ron Bernard for Sandisfield's 250th Sesquicentennial celebration, 512 pages of text and hundreds of photographs.

### ARTIST TO SCUBA DIVER

While developing as a graphic designer, Tina was having difficulty with her painting. Seeking a new direction, she found one underwater.

"In early 2011," she said, "I had an adventure that changed my life."

A nonprofit company offered a volunteer opportunity on the Yucatan coast in Mexico. "They taught me to dive," she said, "while I studied and surveyed coral and fish species to contribute to an international database that was demonstrating the accelerated rate of degradation of the Mesoamerican Barrier reef and the once-teeming life within it."

She fell in love with the sea and its creatures and with diving. Within a few months she had gone from a basic-level diver to instructor.

"I find peace under the waves," she said. "I'm completely alone, hovering above a reef, marveling at the variety and beauty of life down there. I swam with dolphins, snorkeled with whale sharks the size of a city bus. I followed and filmed green turtles, sea horses, barracudas, reef sharks, jellyfish, moray eels, squid that changed color as I watched them. The day I watched five giant eagle rays hover in V-formation over the stern of a sunken minesweeper the ocean became my church."



*Selfie of Tina, taken in January, 2020*

### LEAVING/RETURNING, ACTING, AND A GREAT LOSS

She left Sandisfield in June 2012 to teach diving in the Caribbean, but returned in August, discouraged. "I didn't like the business of diving, the constant pressure to sell classes." KwikPrint offered her job back, and she began taking on private design clients, including Berkshire Playwrights Lab, Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires, Mahaiwe Tent, and the Hotchkiss Library in Sharon, Conn.

Spring, 2013. A new wrinkle.

An ad in *The Sandisfield Times* invited actors to join a fall performance of "Our Town." The ad promised: "No memorization needed." Never having acted before, Tina thought it sounded easy and fun and joined the cast of the Sandisfield Players. In her first performance, she said, "the acting bug bit me." She has appeared in half a dozen performances at the Arts Center, most recently in Val Coleman's "The Stamp Collection." In June 2016, the Players had an opportunity to perform "Our Town" at the Minack Theatre in Cornwall, England, and the cast, including Tina, flew off to present the quintessential small-town American play to sophisticated residents of the Mother Country. It was a hit.

Then.

In May 2015, Tina, whose sister was ill with cancer, had moved to Greenwich, New York, to be near her sister and to help her aging mother. Four days after Tina's return from England, her mother suffered a stroke. She died three days later. Ten days after that, Tina's sister succumbed to the cancer. "Words cannot begin to describe the enormity of that loss to me," she said.

### AGAIN, SAVED BY THE SEA

At the end of that terrible summer, a friend took her to the New England Aquarium as a diversion. She watched with envy as employees clad in wetsuits cared for dozens of penguins. "That's what I want to do," she remembers thinking.



# Keeping Up With Cannabis Control

By Sandisfield Times Reporters

It has been a challenging summer with Covid and hurricanes and power outages keeping our town officials busy. So, while finalizing a Marijuana Establishment Zoning Bylaw has been on the agenda of many Planning Board and Select Board meetings, the final version is still a work in progress.

The current working draft of this bylaw contains definitions of the various types of marijuana businesses, their potential size limits, locations in Sandisfield, required permits, operating regulations, and permit requirements which include a Community Host Agreement. On top of all this, any aspiring marijuana entrepreneur must obtain the appropriate license from the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission has also made recommendations for limits

on the number of operations in Sandisfield, and suggested that the Town create a map of the overlay district where cannabis businesses would be allowed. It is a long process, and many interested parties are working hard to get it right.

It is worth noting the saga currently playing out in Egremont. There, a large corporation is seeking to purchase an already existing commercial building, for purposes of indoor marijuana cultivation. Everything was going fine—until the corporation also submitted a Phase 2 plan to their zoning board, proposing additional commercial building equivalent to the size of Big Y in Great Barrington. Now, a group of neighbors, living in the private subdivision that would be radically altered by such a development, are campaigning to stop this wealthy corporation in their tracks. Who will win out?

Meanwhile, concerned neighbors on West Hubbard Road and the surrounding area want Sandisfield to join the majority of Berkshire county in having cannabis regulations that reflect the needs of the community. 🍓

## Who Brings You This News can't from p. 5

Three days later she walked out of an advisor's office at Berkshire Community College with a class schedule in hand and a future in marine conservation.

She resigned from most of her design work. After earning a liberal arts degree with phi beta kappa honors at BCC, Tina was accepted into an environmental conservation program with a concentration in marine science at UMass Amherst. At the conclusion of her first term there, she was awarded Dean's List honors; in addition, she has just been awarded Outstanding Senior in her major.

The size of the campus was exhilarating, Tina said. "You could smell the science. I loved it and learned more than I thought possible. I hated the stress, but it was manageable even with increasingly heavy class loads and higher expectations." She was in an environment with people decades younger than herself, which, though daunting at first, she learned to accept. She lived in a house with three young roommates to be closer to the college.

Then Covid-19 arrived in March 2020, and classes, which Tina had loved, moved off campus and onto Zoom. "The comfort I had on campus, in classrooms, and in talks with my professors – all gone." And living in lockdown with millennials became even more invasive and stressful than it had been before the quarantine.

To save her sanity, Tina moved to an apartment in North Adams, where she was surprised to find herself painting again. "I've started some new pieces, and I'll have a place to showcase some of them in a new shop opening in South Egremont on September 3."

Meanwhile, Tina continues to design The Sandisfield Times and the Otis Observer. Her responsibilities to her other clients are temporarily halted by the pandemic. She's getting used to student life on Zoom and is looking forward to finish her final semester's work at UMass Amherst, where, if her studies stay on track, she will complete here degree Summa Cum Laude in December.

And then ... and then ... The next beginning ... 🍓



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# Real Estate is Crazy Hot!

## PANDEMIC DRIVING DEMAND

By Ron Bernard

“Crazy hot.” That’s how Sandisfield resident and leading Berkshires real estate broker, Chapin Fish of the Brockman agency described the market for properties in this area right now.

We asked if he could recall other similar high demand periods. “Probably the last time was after 9-11 but this is different. I think it could continue,” he said, hopefully.

Actually, in Sandisfield and other Berkshire hill towns with similar histories, the last true real estate boom was quite a while ago. The 1840s to be precise when the farming economy was strong and mechanization and shops appeared.

Today circumstances are much different. A pandemic and its social disruption, safety concerns and general uncertainty are causing quite a few to reevaluate city lifestyles. This is the chief driver of demand for property – houses *and* building lots – in places like the Berkshires. Low interest rates help too.

Prospective buyers are primarily New Yorkers. The City is experiencing the most dramatic and rapid population shift in the nation. Recent estimates about the number fleeing are upwards of 400,000 and most are permanent moves. Apartments reached 13,000 vacancies in August, an all-time high.

The diaspora includes unemployed 20-somethings returning to lower cost home towns. Corporate types, consultants and lawyers and even some physicians who can now work remotely have left for good. The departure of wealthy New Yorkers has made news too. Lower tax venues like Florida and Texas are reportedly the most popular destinations. Many who still need access to the City are giving the contiguous “tristate area” a hard look. Retirees considering new locales are now acting on that, moving to second homes or purchasing new primary residences.

And there is a phenomenon not seen before. A wave of young families, especially from Brooklyn, has departed in advance of the new school year.

Amanda Wiss, owner of Urban Clarity, a Brooklyn firm that provides project management-type moving services, told the Times, “Move management companies in New York are very busy now. Our volume has increased dramatically and we’re working seven days a week. We assisted 60 clients last month including many families. Most left the city in March then decided not to return. They send the keys; we pack and ship

their belongings, clean the apartments and take care of local formalities so no worries. Everything is done remotely.” She said that 80 percent have been out of state moves, adding, “The main reason people can do this is ability to work from home online.”



In June, the Eagle reported, “Pending sales of single-family homes in the Berkshires at the end of May were up 28 percent from last year, with 187 homes under agreement, compared with 146 at this time in 2019. Only 734 residential homes were on the market at the end of May, compared with 1,122 at this time last year.”

Since then more owners have sensed the moment and listed their places which are selling quickly in many cases. Lisa Crawford of Barnbrook Realty told the Times that last month she was incredulous about new listings which had been running daily in the single digits but popped to over 130 on one day.

The same trends are seen in nearby Litchfield county. According to the community newspaper, Norfolk Now, realtors there say the number of buyers from New York has doubled. Twice as many homes sold in Norfolk in the first six months of 2020 than during all of 2019.

Relative to demand, housing inventory in the Berkshires including Sandisfield remains limited so prices would be expected to rise as buyers compete. And while that has been generally true, Chapin Fish said, “Sandisfield’s demand and prices although good, are lagging other towns that have better internet service. People have to have certainty. This is a problem.”

He believes that there is another factor that may be a relative drag on sales in Sandisfield, a misperception, the legacy image that Sandisfield is too remote and inaccessible. “We are under


appreciated,” he said. Of course that may be just fine with some Sandisfielders who prefer that things remain as is.

Yet, there is substantial buyers’ interest here. Fish pointed to developers ready to sub-divide large parcels for home lots. “One of them is in the upper Town Hill area. Lots for primary and secondary homes are selling very well. Next year we expect another big parcel to come on the market this way,” he said

There is another signal that recorded sales in Sandisfield are set to jump. Fire Chief Ralph Morrison, who performs safety inspections for homes under contracts, told us last month, “I’ve had eleven bookings in just two weeks, which is amazing.”

There is activity all over town. For example, I am aware of three recent Beech Plain section sales including two properties that had been on the market for long times.

The buyer of an open lot on Cold Spring Road intends to build. It would be first new construction in almost 20 years on that street. Two houses, both on sparsely populated, unimproved Hammertown Road, have also changed hands. One, relatively new, sold quickly and well above asking price in a bidding contest. The other is an historic property, a large estate that had been languishing.

It is not clear if the result of this frenzy will be of economic benefit to the town. New construction may beef up the tax rolls and more residents should add vitality to our community. But if young families relocate here, that will impact the school budget. Nevertheless, it seems that the next few years will include the welcomed (or unwelcomed) sights and sounds of new construction and arrival of new neighbors. 







## A Really Big Pumpkin

By Bill Price

Anyone can grow a big pumpkin. Stick the seed in the ground and leave it alone. But to grow a really big pumpkin you have to get serious and provide hands-on care and once your pumpkin starts to expand and then expands faster and faster you'll start talking to it. You might ask the Rain Gods to favor it.

Catherine Layne of Sears Road planted three "Dill's Atlantic Giants" last spring in pig manure produced by her own pigs. About two months ago she hand-pollinated the blossoms. Her family has been watching these three pumpkins grow ever since.

At press time, the largest of the three was 145 centimeters around and weighed about 75 lbs. The next largest is about 55 lbs. The runt is a mere 44.

Because of the dry summer, Catherine has not irrigated but depended on whatever rain fell. She believes, though, that "the pumpkins are happy." She covers them with Duct-taped shopping bags from Big Y so the skins don't dry out, which can cause the pumpkin to split if the inside keeps growing but the skin doesn't. As they grow bigger, she props them up by shoving sand under the expanding parts. She also uses row cover fabric to keep hungry squash beetles away.

Catherine says that 75 lbs. is hardly a giant pumpkin, though this one is the largest she has grown. She said, "A neighbor told me they've seen some grow to 1,500 lbs. and be sold to the Red Lion Inn for display on their porch."

Catherine's pumpkins are not destined for that kind of Berkshire glory. She said it only seems fair to return her pumpkins in edible chunks «to the pigs this fall so they can produce more manure for next year's pumpkins, which might be even bigger.»

## Cold Spring Road Resurfacing

By Ron Bernard

Last month the Times reported that the planned resurfacing of Cold Spring Road by Tennessee Gas Co. was stalled and that the Town had not yet been informed about a work schedule for 2020.

The Select Board had lengthy and frequent discussions starting in early 2019 with the company following botched chip seal repaving in late 2018. That was past the expected seasonal deadline for such work in this area and a year after the pipeline installation had been completed. Over time little information about the progress of the talks was available except that the company had agreed to the Town's terms about the method (asphalt).

State Rep. Pignatelli informed The Times that the hold-up of the repaving has been on account of its inclusion in a list of unresolved issues that the State has been negotiating with Tennessee Gas/Kinder Morgan, the parent company. Fully involved in the discussions which now include the state Attorney General's office, Rep. Pignatelli said on August 13 that the negotiations with a comprehensive agreement were near an end.

Smitty said that the repaving of Cold Spring Road is not in question and the work will be done according to the Town's preference. Moreover, all parties are aware that timing is once again a factor and that the project must be completed before colder conditions set in, he said.

He was highly complementary of the Town's role in these protracted talks particularly that of Selectman Brian O'Rourke who has led the effort.

As of publishing time, there was no news about timing of the paving. Check the Town's web site for posting. 🍷



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# Vandals Target Road Signs, Yanner Park

## BLIGHT ON OUR TOWN

By Sandisfield Times Reporters

In the last three months, the Department of Public Works has spent hundreds of dollars fixing vandalized road signs, money that could have been better spent on improving services.



In all parts of Town, the DPW has seen road signs “tagged” with spray paint, ripped completely from their posts, and—in several cases—apparently used for target practice. In one instance, a bullet-riddled sign was found close to a house at the corner of Sears and New Hartford roads, demonstrating how the vandals may pose a threat to public safety.

Besides worrying about people firing guns near homes, DPW Superintendent Brad Curry is concerned with how these scofflaws are draining his budget.

In an interview with the Times, Curry explained that there was limited money in the DPW’s sign budget. “Every time someone shoots up these signs, we have to replace them for up to \$65 each, plus the cost of labor.”

Town Manager Joanne Grybosh told The Times that vandalized public property was not just a problem of wasted public resources. “We are working hard every day to make Sandisfield better. A lot of hours go into DPW projects and to see it destroyed months later is very sad.”

Grybosh added that the upkeep of other infrastructure in Town would take longer to complete as long as DPW staff continue to be diverted to address the vandalism.

### TEARING UP YANNER PARK

This summer, the volunteer-run Yanner Park Committee used proceeds from a timber harvest to make improvements to the Town Hill Road recreational area. At considerable cost, they hired a company to grade a gravel driveway and create an adjacent ten-car parking area. Last month, the committee’s chairman, Adam Brown, was excited that the park was “really starting to look like a place people might want to come visit.”

Shortly after the company finished its job, vandals made the first of several visits to the park and performed “donuts,” tearing up the area’s new gravel parking lot.

Funds for the repairs will have to be drawn from the Yanner Park Committee’s coffers. “It’s sad,” Curry said of the vandals, “because the parking area was brand-new and not even a month hold. “At a time of tighter budgets, we need to as residents



Mark of the vandal: shot-up road sign at the Otis town line and torn-up parking area at Yanner Park.

Photos: Brad Curry

and people in community not to destroy what we have,” Curry added. “I don’t want to waste the taxpayers’ money.”

The crimes have been reported to the Sandisfield Police Department. Anyone with information on these incidents should contact the police at 258-4742 or [policechief@sandisfieldma.gov](mailto:policechief@sandisfieldma.gov).

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# The Pandemic Right Here

## YOUR NEIGHBORS DURING TOUGH TIMES

Gathered by Bill Price

**TED GOLDSMITH,**  
NORTH BEECH PLAIN ROAD

It's been too long. A year has passed since Judy has been to the Berkshires. Last August and September she underwent two brain surgeries, followed by partial recovery at a rehab center. She came home last November, but to our place in New York, not to Amen Farm in Sandisfield.

Her mobility has been severely restricted. Her speech is getting better, but not to the point of carrying on a conversation. While I am excited by every new thing she says or does, I realize that these are little steps on a long journey and don't know how far it will go. I take it one day at a time. I read The Sandisfield Times to her and she watches classical music videos, opera, and Broadway shows on Amazon Prime.

We both miss our friends in Sandisfield. During Columbus Day weekend, I spent two nights at North Beach Plain Road with our daughter, Margie and her friends. In June our son, Kenny, decided I needed a change of scene, and we drove up to Amen Farm for an overnight stay. Boy, do I miss our town up there!

Since Covid-19 became a threat in the New York area, Margie and our grandson, Max and his girlfriend have been staying and working up on the hill. Although Judy and I cannot visit, we're glad our home is being put to good use, for sure a lot more than in the 34 years we used it. It's my hope one day to bring Judy back.

**ZOE NELSON, LOOKING GLASS GARDENS, DODD ROAD**



Zoe Nelson with Honey Bee.

Our gardens are open to visit and walk through and all are welcome to come and enjoy.

Everything was uncertain in the spring and business was slow, but as the season progressed phone, email, and texts started to come in



A Velvet Queen sunflower at Looking Glass Gardens is enjoyed by a bee AND a wasp.

from customers. We were at an advantage, having an outside business.

We are having a good year, despite (1) communication with customers necessarily being over the internet or phone, (2) outside distancing, (3) everyone talking through masks, and (4) most of us smelling like hand sanitizer. But we've kept all our customers and employees safe. In the middle of the pandemic we are doing business as usual.

Rose's Sunny Rose Farm slowed down considerably, but then the weather turned beautiful and people started coming out. Horses, like gardening and landscaping, are an outdoor business, and Rose has safely resumed and is doing well.

I'm still an on-call EMT and we've been answering calls, taking all precautions necessary. Our team in Sandisfield is amazing and compassionate to everyone in need.

Mondays and Fridays I work at Southern Berkshire Regional in the kitchen, helping with children whose families need assistance. After 20 years on the job I can see that things are changing. We're still unsure when school will open this fall.

We all have unanswered questions and concerns, and everyone I know is working very hard. Retirement is starting to look pretty good, but the thought of not being there for the kids is very unsettling for me. As for Chuck, personally he's not ready to

retire, but with the crazy heat and weather this summer, fall will be a welcome season.

**JENNIFER HIBBINS, MOTHER OF TWO, SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER**

This has certainly been a summer like no other.

With my husband furloughed from his job due to the pandemic, I returned to the workplace while he stayed home with our kids. It has been an adjustment for our whole family, especially for me to return to a workplace that includes daily health screenings, face masks, social distancing from colleagues, and an office closed to visitors. But we all seem to be quite adaptable.

While we could not pursue many of our usual summer adventures, we still swam at York Lake, hiked in our backyard (most of Sandisfield is a backyard), and walked the grounds of The Mount. We held regular family movie nights sharing a big bowl of popcorn. My kids learned to play Monopoly and Clue board games. We grew a vegetable garden together and produced an abundant crop of cucumbers, zucchini, and tomatoes.

My daughter and son (ages 9 and 6) have become good friends, regularly playing video games together, having sleepovers in each other's rooms, and squirting each other with the hose in our yard. I talk to my mother



Henry and Julia at The Mount, Covid summer of 2020.

## OUR TOWN, SO FAR

From Roger Kohler,  
Sandisfield Board of Health

As of Aug 23, there are no reported positive cases of Covid-19 in town. As mentioned earlier, all positive cases are reported to the patient's hometown. Since we do have occasional isolated cases of the virus from time to time, please continue to wear your face coverings and maintain appropriate social distancing.

If you experience any symptoms, self-quarantine and call the Berkshire Health System's Covid-19 hotline at 855-262-5465. Also, if you are returning from a high-risk area, follow the Governor's travel order and self-quarantine for 14 days or until you can produce a negative test result from a lab.



daily instead of monthly and have attended more alumni events (virtually) this year than in all my years since graduating college.

There is a feeling of connectedness, even though we must keep a physical distance. And it's still a summer full of memories, just not the memories we might have envisioned a year ago.

The return of cooler temperatures brings thoughts of school. As a member of the School Committee, I am working with the administration to ensure the health and safety of students and staff while providing a high-quality education. With a delayed start date, school will resume in a hybrid model of in-person instruction and remote learning or an all-remote learning option. It's a lot to consider and there are still many uncertainties.

This will certainly be a fall like no other.

### **THE LEMON KIDS, SOUTH SANDISFIELD ROAD**

The two Lemon kids – and their parents – have resumed almost all normal activities pre-Covid-19.

Ethan and Olivia, 9 and 7, attended camp and all has gone really well. They're healthy, there was no sickness at camp, they've been hanging with friends, socializing, enjoying the summer days and – most importantly – being kids!! We were lucky to be able to send them to camp.

When camp wasn't in session, we spent time at York Lake (the parking lot often flooded with out-of-state license plates) and with friends.

I strongly support returning to school full time this fall, where all kids need to be, to learn and thrive. The kids at camp for two months, interacting with other kids and no health issues, supports my opinion that school can reopen full time with precautions in place. We have to be optimistic, focus on our children's education, instead of fearing the worse and trying to control the unknown.

### **NOT EVERYONE CAN HANDLE A MASK**

*By Anonymous*

Is a repairman required to wear a mask when making a service call to a private home?

In late July a well-repair serviceman from a neighboring town responded to a call from a Sandisfield homeowner regarding a problem with the water pump. The serviceman was not wearing a mask. The homeowner asked if he had one in the truck. The reply was, "I'll skip it."

The repairman would have had to enter the house to access the basement. Volunteering that he had extra masks in the house, the homeowner again asked the serviceman if he could wear one.

The reply again was, "I'll skip it" with which the serviceman got back into his truck and drove off.

Miffed, the homeowner called the Otis Board of Health to complain. His call was returned right away. But the Board of Health said it had no jurisdiction over private businesses and could not interfere. Perhaps the caller would like to ask the state health department?

The call to the state remains unanswered. In the meantime, the pump has been repaired by a serviceman wearing a mask, and all's well in the well. 🍷

## **LIFE AS WE KNEW IT**

*By Karen Garfield  
New Hartford Road*

Finally sinking in.  
Life as knew it  
Has disappeared.

Shaking hands  
Please abort.

Talking face to face  
Keep it short.

Sharing a meal  
A risky sport.

Finally sinking in.  
Life as we knew it,  
Replaced with fear.

Friends and family,  
Don't come near.

Salad bars,  
Belong to yesteryear.

Clubs and pubs,  
Just steer clear.

Finally sinking in,  
Life as we knew it  
We can only recall.

Doctor's waiting room  
Empty of all.

Weddings and funerals,  
Please just call.

Sleepovers, parties—  
Not for y'all.

Finally sinking in,  
Life as knew it  
Deleted and cleared.



# **Police/Fire/ EMS Logs**

**Police/EMS/Fire Calls Log will return in October with statistics for July and August.**

## **Berkshire Pottery Tour**

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# Be a Better Gardener

## PRESERVING STONE FRUIT HERITAGE, EXAMPLES FROM NEW YORK STATE

By Thomas Christopher

Sometimes we follow a strange route to reach the garden. Sam Van Aken, for example, had made a career as a sculptor, winning all sorts of awards and fellowships and securing a position as a professor of studio art at Syracuse University. Yet always informing his art was Sam's childhood experiences growing up on a Pennsylvania dairy farm. In particular, there were the stories of his great grandfather, who made his living grafting peach trees. Sam never met this gifted individual, but the stories stuck in his head. About ten

years ago, he decided to take up this craft himself, and began to assemble what he called his "Tree of 40 Fruit," by grafting scions of forty different stone fruits (peaches, plums, cherries, nectarines and apricots) onto a single rootstock tree.

Sam's intention had been to arrest viewers with a tree composed of a patchwork of different colored blossoms and fruits. What he fell into, however, was a project in horticultural conservation. He had hoped to use fruit cultivars that had grown in the upstate New York region for his project, yet despite the fact that New York had once been the second state in the nation for stone fruit production, Sam had trouble assembling the requisite diversity of types because so few were still grown there. Indeed,

his research uncovered that this was part of a very troubling trend. In the 19th century, American orchardists and farmers had grown some 2,000 different types of peaches, for example. Yet Sam could find no more than two-dozen types still in cultivation nationwide.


Eventually, by contacting growers with an enthusiasm for heirloom fruits, Sam did collect the scionwood (the materials he needed for grafting onto his tree.) Such enthusiasts were glad to share, Sam notes, but he was troubled by the fact that most of them had no one to carry on their work. Indeed, the orchards with more interesting fruits were disappearing at a troubling rate. For Sam, what had been the mechanics of an art project became a passion. He began collecting and grafting more scionwood, not only creating more "Trees of 40 Fruit" for other locations but also creating a fruit collection of his own.

Currently, he is creating on Governors Island a historic "Open Orchard" for the city of New York, grafting onto a collection of 50 trees the peaches, plums, apricots, nectarines, cherries and apples that were historically grown in the five boroughs before they were overrun with buildings. According to Sam, at least one relic of this past is still visible in the highway system of the city. The veer to the west that Broadway makes on its way north from lower Manhattan was originally designed to avoid a prized orchard growing in the Bowery (which is an Anglicization of an old Dutch word for "farm").

The public will be invited to sample the fruits borne by Sam's Open Orchard (the trees are due to be planted out in fall of 2021). The fruits out of reach from the ground will be shared with local chefs, for

Sam has also developed an interest in reproducing recipes originally created with the heirloom fruits. The heirloom flavors, he says can be remarkable. He cites in particular a fruit with a Manhattan origin, the Washington Gage Plum. Supposedly originating with a shoot that sprouted from a lightning-struck tree, the Washington Gage has a flavor, according to Sam, as complex as that of a fine wine, with a rich smell when tree-ripened, followed by a sweet explosion in the mouth and then a fine and memorable finish.

As well as the 50 trees destined for the Open Orchard, Sam is growing 150 more in the Governors Island nursery. These, onto which have been grafted fruits from particular neighborhoods, will be distributed to appropriate community gardens. Sam's seeking a home for a specimen of a 'Newtown Pippin' apple, for example, near the former location of the estate in Queens on which this apple originated around the turn of the eighteenth century. In this way, residents throughout the city will be able to explore the flavors that once nourished their neighborhoods. The original "boweries" may be long gone, but in this way their histories will live on.

For more information about Sam Van Aken and his work with fruit trees, visit my website: [www.thomaschristophergardens.com](http://www.thomaschristophergardens.com). 

*Thomas Christopher serves on the board of the Sandisfield Times. His 'Be a Better Gardener' column is a community service of Berkshire Botanical Garden, located in Stockbridge.*



Plum fruit tree blossoms.  
Photo Sam Van Aken.  
Used with permission.

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## The Librarian's Corner

By Terry Spohnholz

### Library Hours for Curbside Service:

Mon. and Tues., 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Wed., 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Thurs., 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Sat., 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

The Good News: We have lots of new books available. About sixty titles.

The Bad News: The library remains closed to public access.

But fear not, we can still get books to you.

The Library continues to offer curbside service. Call the library at 258-4966 or contact us by email at sandisfieldlibrary@gmail.com.

Delivery service has begun again between other Massachusetts libraries so if we don't have the book you're looking for we can find it elsewhere.

Don't know exactly what you want to read? Let us know your favorite authors or genre and we'll put together some books you might enjoy.

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Another way to read books is to go Tech! If you have a smart phone, you have access to books, magazines, and most anything else in print. You will need your library card number and your PIN (it's the last four digits of your card number). To access the E-book collection on Libby/Overdrive, you will need to download the free OverDrive Libby app from the Apple/Google Play store. Follow the prompts to access OverDrive. If you're confused, stop by the library for instructions.

Once you're comfortable with the OverDrive Libby app, you can add all of the other public library network collections as well as the Boston Public Library.

### NEW BOOKS

The library has purchased fifty fiction and eight non-fiction titles and five books for children.

New nonfiction titles include *Men on Horseback* by David A. Bell, *The Room Where It Happened* by John Bolton, and *Too Much and Never Enough* by Mary Trump.

New fiction includes *A Burning* by Megha Majumdar, *The Boy From the Woods* by Harlan Coben, *Redhead by the Side of the Road* by Anne Tyler, *Wrath of Poseidon* by Clive Cussler, *If It Bleeds* by Stephen King, *How Much of These Hills are Gold* by C Pam Zhang, *The Mountains Sing* by Nguyen Phan Que Mai, and *Half Moon Bay* by Jonathan Kellerman.

Also, four mystery novels with *Murder* in the title by Jude Deveraux and four new books by James Patterson. Jude and James must be great typists to produce that much work.

Our new children's books include *Have You Seen Elephant* by David Barrow, *I Love Mom With the Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle, and *The Boggart and the Monster* by Susan Cooper. 🐉



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# Council on Aging



## What We Did in July and Are Doing in September

By Nina Carr

Photos: Lynn Rubenstein

We had a very successful networking picnic July 29 at York Lake. Over twenty people showed up, some old friends, some new friends, and even some friends from the Monterey COA. We were all glad to see each other after not having our weekly meetings and some of us hardly having gotten out of the house since mid-March. It's hard being cooped up, as well as being labelled a target of a pandemic, what with several of us with underlying illnesses and, for sure, all of us on the elderly side.

But we managed to have a good time. The food was fantastic. Our thanks to organizers Ann Wald and Barbara Cormier.


We discussed the mutual and frequent problems of the needs of seniors, including transportation, which we agreed should be fixed promptly.

For this fall (it's September already!!), we're still unable to meet as a group

at the Annex. We're trying to schedule Chair Yoga classes again, at least for September. For the schedule, check ConnectSandisfield on Facebook.

We'll offer a Foot Care Clinic at the Annex on Friday, September 18. You will have to schedule an appointment in advance for the clinic. Call Linda (258-4816).

We'll meet again at Tuckers on Wednesday, September 16, at noon for pizza and Bingo.

Please take care of yourself, and each other. 



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

## Visiting a Lonely Grave

Bill Porteous of eastern Massachusetts visited the solitary grave of his 4th great-grandfather Joshua Smith deep in the Sandisfield State Forest in June. He had earlier written to Joshua Farm owner Brigitte Ruthman on Dodd Road to ask if she knew the location of the gravesite. Yes, she answered, and she would lead him there. The owner of much of the former Joshua Smith farm, Brigitte had named her farming operation in honor of Mr. Smith. The grave had earlier been visited by other descendants who found the site thanks to Brigitte (November 2015 SandisfieldTimes.org, see Archives)). Mr. Porteous, who has done significant genealogical research, believes the body in the grave might be that of Joshua Smith, Jr., rather than the original Joshua. In any event, the date of death on the tombstone is November 18, 1793. As a participant in the Revolutionary War, Joshua is honored every Memorial Day with flags from Sandisfield American Legion Post #456.





# Social Distancing on the Clam River Trails

Courtesy of the Berkshire Natural Resources Council.

By Bill Price

A lot of work went into the building of the three trails through Sandisfield's Clam River Reserve, work provided by volunteers, Greenagers, Appalachian Mountain Club trail crews, BNRC interns and staff – all with varying trail building experience but plenty of sweat and heart and determination.

The trails are the Clam River Loop, the Clam River, and the Hammertown Loop. The proximity of the trails to the Clam River makes for incredibly scenic walks.

Planning is underway for a trail beginning at Town Hill Road through Yanner Park to connect with the Clam River trails. Estimates Adam Brown of the Yanner Park Committee, "Maybe the summer of '22 for a start date for that trail. I hope once it starts that construction goes faster than the planning of it."

The Hammertown Loop allows for a loop option from the Hammertown Road kiosk, passing old

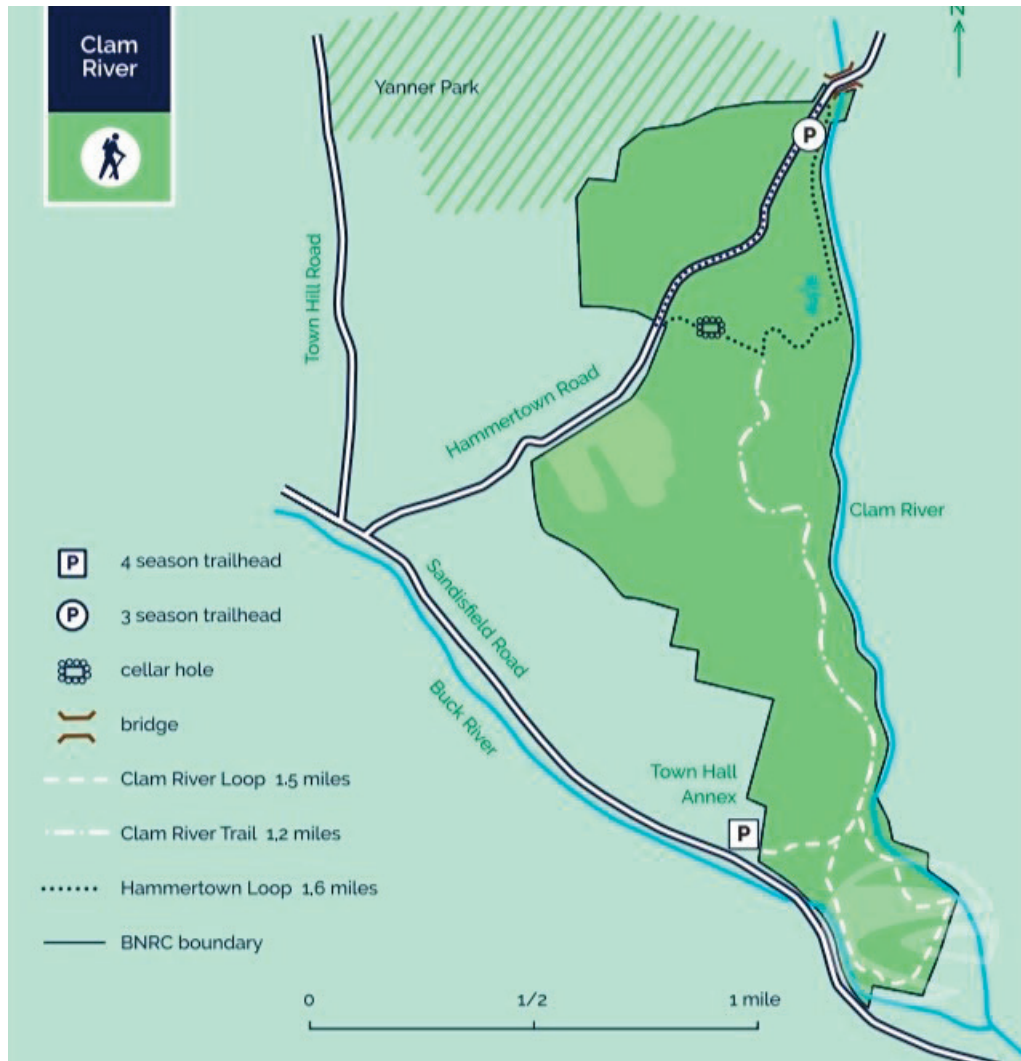
foundations along the existing woods road, cutting gradually downslope on new single-track trail, and then following the river upstream before reconnecting with Hammertown Road and a short walk back to the kiosk.

The Clam River Loop Trail, starting at the Town Hall Annex, runs along the Clam River and takes hikers through tall cathedral pines.

The Clam River Trail connects the two loops with moderate elevation gains from south to north.

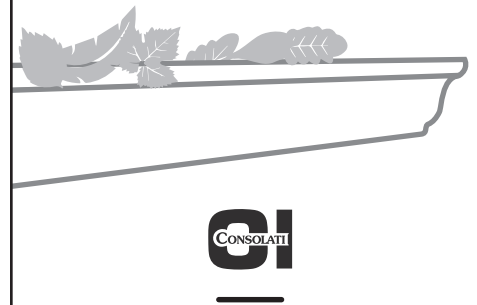
From the south, access the trails via the Town Hill Annex. From the north, access the trails via Hammertown Road (basically a 3-season trailhead, occasionally inaccessible in winter). A trail map is provided there, and the trails are marked by clearly posted tree signs.

Visit [BNRC.org](http://BNRC.org) for more information about this and other hiking opportunities. 🇺🇸



## Is your mind in the gutter?

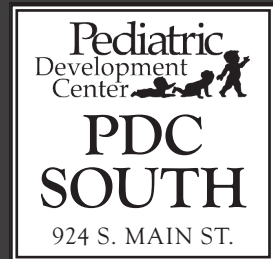
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# Parents as Teachers

## HELPING YOUR KIDS WITH HOMEWORK, PART 3

By Maxene Kupperman-Guñals

*A teacher for 35 years and the parent of a teacher for the last 15, Maxene Kupperman-Guñals of Town Hill Road offers monthly tips and support to parents who want to help their kids learn study habits that will be useful to them their entire lives. The Times is publishing a few of her tips per issue.*


Most beginning students were not born with good study skills but need to learn and refine them. Much of that learning comes from parents and becomes ingrained in part by parents' attitudes toward school. Lessons learned will last a lifetime and contribute to your child's well-being long after today's tribulations are sweet memories. Consider these monthly tips as a kind of support network for you as you help your kids do well. Nothing is too hard; do whatever works for you. Encourage them.

Work toward a 20-minute (more or less) family reading time during which you read, too. You are

a busy person; setting that time for yourself – even just to read the comics in the local paper or a recipe or a joke book – shows by example that reading is pleasurable, and you do it, too. (In addition, it compels you to take your own “down time,” something you might not normally allow yourself.)

Let your kids pick what they want to read – magazines, newspapers, books, comics. This is for enjoyment, and it reiterates what teachers and schools instill.

And where your family members do its pleasure reading ought to be individual, too. This is where your kid can sit upside down on the family lounge chair and read, since pleasure reading is done in comfort and for a different reason from knowledge-based reading.

Try to organize your family's time so that your students can study at about the same time each day. This can be difficult, but over weeks, you can develop this organizational pattern. Some children will gravitate to their homework immediately after school; some will want to wait till after dinner, and some will need to be pushed to do it at all. But you can set the pace and the time frame and make sure it happens. 

# OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

On a recent morning, **Hilde Weisert** was skimming the online Washington Post when she saw a headline, “Marie Tharp’s Maps Revolutionized Knowledge of the Seafloor.” Her first thought was that **Suzanne O’Connell**, her Sandisfield friend and a professor of earth and environmental sciences, would like to see this article. Then she looked again. “Well, of course,” she said. Suzanne was the author of the article.



The **New Boston Inn** will reopen Labor Day week-end, announced **Barbara Colorio**, the innkeeper. “We’ll open for the Fall season and, hopefully, forever. Please come support us. Take-out or dine in on our screened porch. It’s been a long road back.” Open Friday and Saturday, 12-9, and Sunday, 12-6. Call for reservations: 258-4477.



**Zoe Nelson** posted on ConnectSandisfield Facebook a “thank you” to **Carl Codling** of Roosterville. “I want to thank Carl for the over 500 masks he made to keep us all safe. Unsung heroes are all around us. We just have to be aware.”

Zoe’s post was answered by:

**Lauren Pease:** Yes, thank you, Carl! They are fantastic!

**Lisa Leavenworth:** Thank you, Carl. We appreciate what you did for all of us!

**Katherine Hein:** 500 masks! He is amazing.

**Barbara Cormier:** He is the best, thank you, Carl.

**Anina Carr:** Aren’t we lucky that he lives in Sandisfield!


**Billiejo Baxter:** Yes, thank you!

**Lorie Smigel** sent along a GIF with a big colorful “Thank You.”

**Laurie Loring:** Thank you, with a heart and thumbs up

**Eileen Flynn Folmer:** Thank you for helping keep my family safe!!!

**Steve/Lorraine German:** Thank you, Carl. You’re a hometown hero.

**Michael Downer:** I have one. Everyone asks where I got it. 

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# Comings and Goings



**NICHOLAS MOORE**

1982-2020

Nicholas Edward Moore, 38, died August 13 at Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington.

The son of Lori (Murphy) Wilkinson and the late Terrance E. Moore, Nicholas was a graduate of Crotched Mountain Rehabilitation Center and Preparation School in Greenfield, New Hampshire.

He worked as an administrative assistant for Social Development Center Manager Kristie Cullison. The SDC is a day program for the mentally and physically challenged.

Nicholas was a Nintendo Master Trainer and a member of Planet Fitness.

He is survived by his mother, Lori Wilkinson and her fiancé Larry Davis III of Sandisfield; his stepfather, William Wilkinson; one aunt, Denise LaGasse of Torrington, Connecticut; two cousins, Craig and Brandon LaGasse; and second cousin, Sophia LaGasse.

In keeping with Nicholas' wishes, there were no funeral services. Arrangement was conducted by Birches-Roy Funeral Home, Great Barrington. Expressions of sympathy in Nicholas' memory may be made to Berkshire County ARC@BCARC.org and/or Children's Tumor Foundation@ctf.org. Condolences may be made through Birches-Roy at [biroyfh@gmail.com](mailto:biroyfh@gmail.com).



**MARTY CLARK**

1928-2020

Thomas Martin Clark died peacefully at the age of 92, with his family at his side, on Saturday evening, July 25. Known to everyone as Marty, Mr. Clark died at the home of his daughter, Tracy Hadsell of Sandisfield, where he had lived for several years.

His daughter said, "Not everyone can live with a parent, but my Dad was special. He was always happy, always friendly. He was just a sweetheart."

A logger all his life, Marty often said that if he is reincarnated he hoped it would be as a logger. Despite his 70-plus-year career in the woods, he said, he "never got enough of it."

He first went to the woods at age 16 in 1944 cutting blackberry brambles with a scythe so loggers could get to the base of the trees with crosscut saws. As Marty explained to The Sandisfield Times in 2016, he worked with a six-man team with double-bitted axes and saws.

Drafted into the U.S. Army in 1950, he served in the Korean War, taking part in the battle of Heartbreak Ridge in Sept-Oct 1951. He was discharged in 1952.

Marty returned to Sandisfield, "and the first day back I went to work for my brother cutting logs." By then his brother had a chainsaw, a hard transition for many. Marty remembered one Sandisfield logger of his generation who reached to grab a running two-man chainsaw the same way he would have grasped a two-man crosscut saw and cut the fingers off his hand.

Marty said the old ways were hard, but he liked them best. He preferred hauling logs with horses rather than tractors. When asked if things weren't a lot slower before mechanization, Marty said, "We were all slower in them days."

Becoming a generalist logger, Marty learned every aspect of practical forestry necessary to knowing how to accurately calculate the potential yield of a woodlot. He became an expert sawyer, tuning a sawmill to get the most out of every log.

When he slowed down as a logger, Marty served as animal control officer for Southern Berkshire County towns for many years, including Sandisfield. He also delivered newspapers for The Berkshire Eagle. A customer, Simon Winchester, recalled recently that during Hurricane Sandy in 2012, when wind and rain were washing out roads all over Sandisfield, Marty Clark, in his mid-80s, delivered the daily newspaper from his car on time and on target.

Although he officially retired at the age of 88, Marty never really stopped logging. He was pictured in the 2016 Times article feeding sawed logs into Billy Carr's sawmill. Billy said, "Marty was like a father to me. We were very close friends for many years. He was a loyal friend, a great teacher, and a fellow lover of Kentucky Fried Chicken."

Marty was born in Tyringham to Wilbur S. and Carrie L. McCarthy Clark on June 25, 1928. The fifth of eight children, he was educated in local schools. He was predeceased by his wife, Joan E. Bradway Clark and his seven siblings, Duffy, Frank, Jim, Don, Cliff, Robert Clark and Betty Smith.

Cherishing his memory are his four children: Ann M. Clark of Pittsfield, Suzan L. (Michael) McCauley of Tyringham, Thomas M. Clark (Marie) of Great Barrington and Tracy E. (Peter) Hadsell of Sandisfield, ten grandchildren, ten great grandchildren.

He also leaves his special friends Mike Carlotto, Billy Carr, and his card playing "Angels" Chrissy Bragdon, Janey Longgerato, and Marlene Morris.

Marty's funeral was held at the Tyringham Union Church, followed by burial with full military honors at the Tyringham Cemetery. The house where Marty was born and lived as a child with his seven siblings is within sight of his grave.

Memorial donations may be made to Tyringham Union Church or the Berkshire Humane Society in c/o the Kelly Funeral Home, 3 Main Street, Lee, MA 01238.



## Letters to the Editors

### POLICE PRESENCE NEEDED, BUT NOT NOTED

To the Editor:

re: Simon Winchester's column ("Do We Really Need Our Own Police Force?" July 2020).

It's not if we need a police department or not. The fact is we have one already. What we need is police presence. However, if we don't have that then we don't need a police department.

A police department should not be a decoration or a line item on the annual budget, it is to be present in the community.

*Iqri Wilkinson  
Sandisfield Center*

To the Editor:

In the July Sandisfield Times, Simon Winchester asked a rational question: for a community of our size, do we really need a police force?

Four responses appeared in the August edition. One wasted our time with name-calling and irrational scaremongering, while two others supported the "feeling" of security a police department gives. But, how can one feel secure unless one can actually see law enforcement being present on the streets? One person—from Connecticut—pointed out that communities in Connecticut larger than ours don't spend money for their own police departments.

Ironically, the August Sandisfield Times also covered the repaving of Rt. 183 and Town Hill Road. They noted that traffic support came from Tolland, that "none of Sandisfield's four police officers were available to work traffic detail" on either of those projects. One police officer was on disability and the other three were in "full-time employment elsewhere during daytime hours".

Tell me again how funding a police department makes financial sense, if it isn't available when and where it's needed.

Kudos to Mr. Winchester for raising the issue. I look forward to more rational discussion on this subject in the coming months.

*David Fleer  
South Sandisfield*

### STILL MISSING COMMUNITY FEEL IN ARTS CENTER

To the Editor:

re: Hilde Weisert's letter concerning the Sandisfield Arts Center (Aug. 2020).

Hilde should be reminded that the Arts Center has had a great many hardworking volunteers, since its founding, not just in the last few years. Also, one could argue that photography and crossword puzzles are not the average child's idea of fun activities. In addition, let's not assume only second-homers enjoy music other than Chopin and Jazz.

I empathize with the feelings expressed in Will's letter. My family participated in several, and attended many, performances over the first twenty years, but less in the more recent ones. Going to the Arts Center was one of only a handful of community activities that a young family could enjoy together. The community, however, and the Arts Center, now seems to be in the process of gentrification.

*Tina deManbey  
South Sandisfield*

### IN PRAISE OF WHAT WE DO

To the Editor

I have enjoyed the Sandisfield Times for years and during those years the quality of writing, selection of stories and the neighborly voice have been top-notch.

I was worried that Bill Price stepping down as editor might affect the high quality of the paper but Seth Kershner's work is excellent and the paper I have come to love over the last 10 years is as strong as ever.

It is no easy task to report accurately and fairly, but the Times does so admirably.

What is more is that even the most contentious issues are treated like honorable disagreements among friends.

And where else could I find such wonderful writers? Brigitte Ruthman's "Mothers and Sons" (Aug. 2020) for example, was unlike any bit of writing I have ever seen in a newspaper. A bit of real-life farming, tender, vivid description and subtle, persuasive prose.

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication

*Alan Boye  
Barnet, Vermont*

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# NOW HEAR THIS!

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

## SEPTEMBER 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**

**New Outdoor Playgroup** beginning Tuesday, September 8, from 10:00-11:00 a.m. At the gazebo behind Otis Town Hall. Will be repeated each Tuesday, same time, through the end of September. Weather permitting. Suitable for children up to the age of 5, accompanied by caregiver. Led by Nina Carr. No registration necessary. Free.

**Wednesday Weekly Gatherings** from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging, basement level at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex on Route 57. Indoor events at the COA are cancelled until further notice but picnics and other outdoor events are being considered.

**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. Cancelled until further notice. Plans are underway to potentially host this outdoors.

**Sandisfield Select Board Meetings** during a Summer Schedule on select Tuesdays, in September at 7:00 p.m., by telephone conference. Visit sandisfieldma.gov or call 258-4711 for call-in information.

**State Primary on Tuesday, September 1, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road.** Please wear a mask and practice social distancing. Call Dolores at 258-4711, ext. 2 if you have any questions or concerns.

**New Boston Church Service** on Sunday, September 13 at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. Please wear a mask and socially distance.

**Pizza and Bingo** at Tuckers, COA, Wednesday, September 16, at noon.

**Foot Care Clinic** at COA, Town Hall Annex. Face masks please. Call to schedule an appointment with Linda at 258-4816

## EVENTS/OUTDOOR FUN IN OTHER TOWNS

**Pingpong** every Saturday from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Monterey Community Center. Hosted by Dennis Lynch. Bring your own paddle or use one of theirs, disinfected and with nitrile gloves. For more information, please call 413-528-3600.

**Ashintully Gardens** in Tyringham open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on 27-1 Sodem Road in Tyringham. Follow a half-mile woodland

## PRESENTS FOR BACK TO SCHOOL



Back-to-school supplies, lunch-box snacks, and a free ice cream cone were offered to Sandisfield students during a drive-through event in mid-August at Yanner Park.

Scholarship Committee members Nina Carr, Elaine O'Brien, Laura Rogers-Castro, and Lynn Rubenstein donned facial masks while parents of twenty school

children accepted the giveaways sponsored by an anonymous donor to the Sandisfield Scholarship Fund. Watch for news of a Scholarship Penny Auction fundraiser coming this fall. ♡

*Far right: Mascot Obie O'Brien was in charge.*



trail to the ruins of the Marble Palace and look north over the valley. For more information, visit thetrustees.org. Free.

**Mahaiwe Drive-in Movies** at Bard College at Simon's Rock, Daniel Arts Center parking lot on Thurs, Fri, and Sat on September 3, 4, and 5. Gate opens at 7:45 p.m. and tickets must be purchased in advance. Also on Sunday, September 6, in partnership with the Berkshire International Film Festival: "Jimmy Carter, Rock & Roll President" on Sunday, September 6 at 8:30 p.m. For tickets, visit mahaiwe.org.

## ONLINE EVENTS!

**Otis Recreation Center** offers online fitness classes, including **Cardio Blast** with Heather Rufo Bilotta on Mondays at 9:00 a.m., **Chair Yoga** with Connie Wilson on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m., **Pilates** with Cynthia Khoury Badrak on Thursdays at 6:00 p.m., and **Mat Yoga** with Connie Wilson on Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. Visit townofotisma.com for more information.



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*The Times is grateful to readers who  
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Paul & Barbara Jacoby  
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Will & Lindsay Pennington  
Susan Potashner  
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Donations of any amount are needed to ensure the continuation of this newspaper. Please send checks to: The Sandisfield Times, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or donate online at our website: www.sandisfieldtimes.org. 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.

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Times is also available in West Otis at the laundromat, the Farmington River Diner and Fratelli's; in East Otis at Katies, Pappas, and the Knox Trail Inn. Also at the Monterey library (outside box) and in Colebrook at the post office and the general store. Distribution is currently limited due to pandemic restrictions but former and/or new locations will be restored or added to distribution service as soon as restrictions are eased. Back copies 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.

## **Editorial Staff**

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Website: Jean Atwater-Williams  
Now Hear This!: Laura Rogers-Castro  
Founding Editor: Simon Winchester*

## **How to Contact Us**

*Mail can be directed to  
The Sandisfield Times, PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255.  
If internet accessible, all letters, news events and tips, ideas,  
obituary and family announcements, photos (600 dpi if possible)  
and advertisement queries to editor@SandisfieldTimes.org.*

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