

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

*Tribunus*



*Plebis*

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

*Volume XI, Number 7*

*October 2020*

## Finance to Select Board: Let's Fix It

*By Simon Winchester*

At a September 9 meeting with the Select Board early last month, a reinvigorated Finance Committee began a process of demystifying the Town's current \$4.3 million budget.

The Town's financial woes include tens of thousands of dollars in unspent funds; incomplete and long-delayed departmental budgets; a raft of uncounted and uncollected taxes; and an ever-increasing school budget which appears wholly out of the town's control. A 2016 audit of the Town's finances by Deerfield-based accounting firm, Scanlon & Associates, faulted Sandisfield for—among other things—not reporting details about its assets and infrastructure. According to former Finance Committee Chair Kathy Jacobs, the Town lacks any inventory of its own assets like police and DPW vehicles. "Sandisfield does not know what it owns," Jacobs told the Times over the summer.

The Finance Committee, now under the chairmanship of the retired banker Roger Brown, is pledging to alleviate the most egregious of these issues.

And to judge by the tone of last month's meeting, the Select Board is now happy to oblige. "Roger Brown is trying to put some rigor around what we're doing," Town Manager Joanne Grybosh noted after the meeting. "We've got to get ahead of this. We have to own it."

Among the realities the town has to "own" is the fact that for every dollar in taxes raised, only some 85 cents were actually spent last year. The unspent money, currently running to some \$600,000, is not returned to taxpayers, but rather goes into what is known as the Free Cash account, which critics see as little more than a slush fund with few controls on how it is spent.

The pile of unused cash has still more implications. "The town could in theory now lower its tax rate, since it spends so relatively little of what it raises," Brown said at the meeting.

As part of the reforms outlined by the Finance Committee – whose members now include a lawyer, an international hotel designer, and a businessman, as well as Chairman Brown – is a plan to shift from an annual to a quarterly review of department budgets. The Select Board agrees that the quarterly arrangement would help the Town better track its spending.

### **ZEROING IN ON THE SCHOOL BUDGET**

A major and systemic problem for Sandisfield remains the financing of its portion of the Farmington River Regional School. Sandisfield's

*con't p.2*

## Back Home Again

### A NEW CHEF BRINGS NEW IDEAS TO TUCKERS

*By Bill Price*

The sign outside may still read "The Way Things Used To Be" but technically MJ Tuckers isn't quite that way anymore.

The tavern/restaurant, owned by the Cormier family on the south edge of New Boston on Rt. 8, recently reopened for outdoor and limited indoor dining and take-out and is under new management.

But it is still in the family.



New chef/manager Joshua Cormier has brought a Brooklyn/Sandisfield cuisine to the menu, without, he hopes, losing Tuckers' loyal customers. "We want the people who've been coming here for years and supporting us to know that it's still their place. We hope Covid allows us to hold the horseshoe contest in October."

He added, "At the same time, we need to gain as many new customers as we can. Families, locals, part-timers, summer people, winter people. Everyone's welcome."

Tuckers closed last March when the state's pandemic regulations took effect, like most businesses except a few critical services (since when is a tavern not a critical service?).

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**Finance to Select Board: Let's Fix It**  
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contribution is based on its share of enrollment, as well as a complicated state education cost-sharing formula based on three-year averages. For the 2020 financial year, Sandisfield's share of the school bill was around \$1.6 million, almost seven percent higher than the previous year.

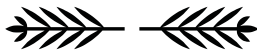
One reason for this, the Finance Committee members believe, is Sandisfield's "hands-off" strategy, refusing to confront the School Committee with the realities of the Town's financial constraints. Roger Brown put it bluntly: "We have to realize that there is nothing first class about Sandisfield infrastructure. If we accept that, then why can we - in terms of our school - afford a Cadillac?"

According to the school district's business manager, Eric Jesner, the reason Sandisfield is paying more for the regional school is simple: Over the past several years Sandisfield's share of the student population has been increasing. According to data provided by Jesner at a School Committee meeting in April, as recently as FY19 Sandisfield students accounted for 37 percent of district enrollment. For the upcoming fiscal year, Sandisfield's share of enrollment hovers around 41 percent of the total.

School committee members have also noted that when it comes to education spending as a portion of the Town's total budget, Sandisfield falls well within the norm. In FY18, the most recent year for which data are available, Sandisfield's education expenditures represented around 43 percent of its total municipal spending, lower than the county average of 45.47 percent.

Still, Roger Brown is taking a hard-line approach.

"The Finance Committee does not determine how much should be spent on schools," Brown continued, "but it's important for Town officials to make it clear that Sandisfield has limited ability to absorb such increases. This is simply not a sustainable arrangement."



**Throw Away That Bulky Waste**

**A FIVE-DAY OPPORTUNITY TO GET RID OF STUFF**

Free bulky waste disposal will be available during regular transfer station hours:

- October 10, Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- October 11, Sunday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- October 14, Wednesday, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
- October 17, Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- October 18, Sunday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Construction debris, tires, and hazardous material are not permitted. Don't bring them, you'll just have to take them back home.

Bulky waste disposal is offered twice a year. You must have a current 2020 transfer station sticker. If you need a current sticker, please complete an application at the Town Hall Annex or find a copy on [www.sandisfieldma.gov/bulkywaste](http://www.sandisfieldma.gov/bulkywaste).

**State and Presidential Election**

**FROM THE OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK**

*Dolores Harasyko* | [TownClerk@sandisfieldma.gov](mailto:TownClerk@sandisfieldma.gov) | 413-258-4711 ext. 2

**The State and Presidential election is Tuesday, November 3.**

By now you should have received an early voting by mail application from the Massachusetts Secretary of State. If you would like to vote from the safety of your home, fill out the application and mail it to me and I will mail your ballot to you. If you have not received an application call me, and I will send one to you.

If you have previously filled out an absentee ballot application or early vote by mail application for the 2020 year you do not need to fill out a new one. I will mail the ballot to you.

When mailing the ballot back try to mail it back a week before the election so that we get it on time. You can always hand deliver your ballot to the Town Hall Annex also.

Early Voting in Person will be at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Sandisfield Road, as follows:

October 17, Saturday, and Sunday the 18th from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

October 19 through the 23rd from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

October 14, Saturday, and Sunday the 25th from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

October 26 through Oct. 30 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Regular polling will be on Tuesday, November 3, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall.

The last day to register to vote for this election is Saturday, October 24 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

We will be following social distancing rules. Please wear a mask when you come in to either early vote or to vote on Election Day. As always call me ahead of time with any questions.

**The Sandisfield Primary Vote**

**DEMOCRATIC PARTY, SANDISFIELD**

**SENATOR:**

Ed Markey 104  
Joseph P. Kennedy, III 91

**US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

Richard Neal 104  
Alex B. Morse 90

**RUNNING UNOPPOSED FOR STATE OFFICES:**

Councillor Mary E. Hurley 169  
Senator Adam G. Hinds 176  
Representative William Pignatelli 178

**REPUBLICAN PARTY, SANDISFIELD**

**SENATOR:**

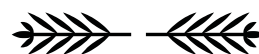
Kevin O'Connor 27  
Shiva Ayyadurai 12

**BERKSHIRE COUNTY**

Markey, 7,783 versus Kennedy, 2,276  
Neal, 17,451 versus Morse, 12,956  
O'Connor, 1,834 versus Shiva, 1,185

**STATEWIDE**

Markey, Neal, and O'Connor won.  
Democrat Markey will face Republican O'Connor in the Statewide and Presidential contest November 3.



# Rt. 57 Finally Ready for Its Closeup

## GRANT FUNDING PERMITS FIRST FACE LIFT IN 34 YEARS

By Seth Kershner

More than a few in Town said it would never happen. “I’ll believe it when I see it,” one Sandisfield Center resident told a Times reporter in early September.

It is easy to understand their skepticism.

Despite being one of the Town’s main thoroughfares, Rt. 57 has not been fully repaved since 1986. Lacking the funds to repave its portion of what had formerly been a state highway, Sandisfield’s nine-mile stretch of Rt. 57 has for years been so potholed that it significantly slows the response times of fire and ambulance crews. During her visit to the area in April 2018, Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito described it as “a public safety issue.”

Last fall, in a win for the Town’s Select Board and State Representative Smitty Pignatelli, Massworks announced a \$2 million grant for full-depth reclamation and culvert replacement along the most badly

damaged stretch of the road. The grant, to be split between Sandisfield and New Marlborough, would finally allow for the road’s much-needed face lift.

### TWO-PHASE PROJECT

Starting on Wednesday, September 16, workers with Belmont-based Tasco Construction began the first phase of the project—digging drainage trenches along a two-mile section of Rt. 57 in New Marlborough. The drainage work on the Sandisfield portion of Rt. 57 is scheduled to begin on October 5, weather dependent, and will take around two to three weeks to complete. While the work is under way, sections of Rt. 57 will be closed to traffic on weekdays between 7:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

During that time, metal road plates will be in place for emergency vehicles to pass safely over trenches. (Updates about Rt. 57 detours will be posted on the Town website.)

Brad Curry, Sandisfield DPW Superintendent, is confident that the project will stay on schedule. “The work on Rt. 57 is progressing well,” he told the Times. “Over twenty cross drainage installations were done in two weeks in New Marlborough. There are only twelve cross drainage installations that will be replaced in Sandisfield.” A bid for the second phase of the project, which will involve removing the existing asphalt and repaving the roadbed, has been awarded to Lee-based LB Corporation. That portion of the project should begin in mid-October. Area residents should expect detours for at least two to three weeks after work has begun. 🇺🇸



A sign by Gedney Farm warns motorists entering Sandisfield.

Photo: Setsuko Winchester

# Apply Now for 2021 Grant

The Sandisfield Cultural Council is calling for grant applications for the 2021 season. Because of a delay with the Massachusetts State budget, the Local Cultural Council grant cycle timeline will be delayed by one month.

Grant applications must be filed ONLINE ONLY. There are two key dates for this grant cycle:

Thursday, October 1, applications will be available online.

Monday, November 16, deadline for all applications,

The Sandisfield Cultural Council has established the following priorities when considering applications: The venue should reach a large group in the community; school children and activities related to learning are a high priority; and local presenters dealing with the arts, humanities, and science are encouraged.

We are interested in hearing from you as to what you would like us to consider for priorities. Our survey last year reinforced the stated priorities, but

much has changed this year, so please reach out to one of the co-chairs to give us your input. We encourage all residents to do this as we would prefer more local applications.

Applications and more information about the Local Cultural Council Program are available online at [www.mass-culture.org](http://www.mass-culture.org).

Local members include Rosanne Carinci-Hoekstra, Rosanne Skrip, Connie Canty, Jennifer Hibbins, Jennifer Lenzi, Ellen Croibier, and John Skrip. Our council is currently looking for an additional member.

If you are interested in learning about our local council, please contact one of the co-chairs at [culturalcouncil@sandisfieldma.gov](mailto:culturalcouncil@sandisfieldma.gov). 🇺🇸

Jennifer Hibbins, Rosanne Skrip  
Co-Chairs, Sandisfield Cultural Council



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- Easy Access Flexible Check-In/Out Times

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413.258.4968  
[www.hillsidegardeninn.com](http://www.hillsidegardeninn.com)

## Back Home Again

con't from p. 1

At the time, Joshua was living in Brooklyn. After building a Berkshire reputation as an apprentice chef, Josh had left Sandisfield in 2012, starting out as a sous chef at a kitchen in downtown Brooklyn. It was an exciting life for a then 22-year-old Sandisfield native who was working at his chosen field in one of the busiest sections of one of the busiest boroughs of New York City.

Before long, after meeting other chefs in other kitchens, he was hired as a sous chef at *Midnights*, a trendy restaurant in Williamsburg. He worked under Chef Marcellus Coleman, who has a nationwide following. Josh said, "Marcellus invited me to be part of a segment he did on *Iron Chef of America*. That was fantastic."

He had worked his way up to executive chef when suddenly the lights went out. When Covid struck, Brooklyn shut down. Overnight, bars and restaurants were locked tight. There was nowhere for a young learning-the-trade chef to try out his culinary skills.

After a few weeks, outside dining was floated as a way for New York restaurants to stay alive, but *Midnights* lacked enough space outside to make a go of it.

In Sandisfield, though, outside there is nothing but space.

### HOW DID JOSH LEARN TO COOK?

Josh's training started as a kid hanging around the kitchens at Tuckers, watching and learning. Later, as a young wanna-be chef in the Berkshires, he met other chefs at other kitchens. Jon Martin, chef at *Blantyre* in Lenox, took him on as an apprentice. "I worked with Jon a lot," said Josh, "and he taught me how to run a kitchen. After a bit, a colleague of his invited me to Brooklyn as a sous chef in a kitchen near Fort Greene, not far from Junior's Restaurant."



A Bloody Mary for brunch.

at midnight and our whole kitchen staff would go to another restaurant where we'd bump into other chefs and trade notes and cooking ideas."

He added that Covid-19 "has done a lot of damage to New York. Especially for restaurants. The servers really have it the worst because those who do work now only get 12 hours a week and make few or no tips at all."

### LUCKILY FOR JOSH

He had a family ready to welcome him home. Maybe there was an opportunity here for a local kid?

An enthusiastic supporter of the idea was Josh's Uncle Marty, who co-owns *MJ Tuckers* with Jeff Blacker. An arrangement was worked out where Josh would commit to running the restaurant and, in March, he drove home.

He and a small crew rehabbed the inside of the place with new paint and kitchen equipment. Josh has learned skills normally beyond the ken of a chef, such as repairing a broken table leg or rehabbing Tuckers' famous horseshoe pits. "Life at Tuckers," said his Uncle Marty, "goes above and beyond just getting meals out of the kitchen."

When Massachusetts allowed outdoor dining, Josh changed a few things about "the way things used to be." He installed picnic tables beside the horseshoe pits. Offered limited indoor service, with parties no larger than six. Fewer premade frozen items. Specials changed regularly. Seasonal menus with available fresh food. Masks are required inside to visit the bar or the bathrooms. Josh said, "Customers can't really belly-up to the bar yet, but maybe soon."

Praising his crew, Josh said, "I have a very good team who make sure we do everything the proper way during Covid. My sous chef, Aaron Scapin, especially makes my job much easier."

And he has the support of a large family of Sandisfielders, from grandparents to uncles and aunts and no end of cousins.

"I'm very close with my grandparents," he said, "especially my grandmother Barbara. I know

I can count on her at any time. She has always supported me and gave me the courage to go to the next level. My Uncle Marty has given me a very good opportunity to work here and run the place the way I believe it can be." 🍷



Young chef in training

## WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

"We're working on getting brunch going on Sunday mornings, starting at 10," said Josh. "One of my favorite items is chicken and waffles. I've been introducing it to a lot of new people, some I've known since I was a kid."

A menu item Josh brought from Brooklyn is a snack/appetizer of roasted Brussel sprouts. "Hot, a little spicy, good crunch, pickles, and some feta cheese. They go great with any kind of beer. Or anything else, really."

He upgraded the hamburgers, making the patties out of a blend of brisket, short ribs, and beef chuck. Margaret O'Clair, who has dined at the new Tuckers several times, says the hamburgers are "Excellent."

Hours of operation are Wednesday to Saturday, noon to 9 and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6.

# MJ TUCKERS PIZZA & PUB

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OPEN WED THRU SAT, NOON - 9; SUN, 10 AM - 6

# Covid News Reopening Slowly and Gently

## GET SUPPER, PICK APPLES, SEE A MOVIE

By Bill Price

Four places in Sandisfield have opened tenderly to provide opportunities for you and those in your “pod” to get out of the house together. But remember to go masked or with a mask at the ready, socially separated from others taking the same opportunities, and be aware. Don’t get sick.

Roger Kohler of the Board of Health says again that there are no new cases in Sandisfield. Let’s keep it that way.

### EAT AT THE INN OR AT TUCKERS

Two Sandisfield restaurants are providing limited table service, indoors as well as outside (at least outside during warm fall evenings, if there are any). Both are in New Boston, and they both offer take-out.

The New Boston Inn, a restaurant, tavern, and bed & breakfast, owned and operated by Barbara Colorio, is open for limited service. The Inn, one of the oldest in Massachusetts (if not the oldest) is serving meals and take-out on Friday and Saturday from noon to 9:00 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 7:00 p.m. The Inn faces the intersection of Rts. 8 and 57 across a small village green, overlooking the Farmington River. Phone 413-258-4477.

Stay overnight and you can talk to the ghost upstairs. Be sure to be masked or she won’t answer.

MJ Tuckers, featured in this issue of The Times, is open Wednesday to Saturday, noon to 9 and Sunday, 10 a.m. until 6. Come early on Sunday for brunch. Brunch in Sandisfield? You bet.

Our hope is that both establishments (the only ones we got, until the Silverbrook comes back to life) are able to open fully within a few months and we can once more belly up to the bars and lean back in our chairs and razz whoever is our server for the moment and leave tips like big spenders.

### APPLES AT RIISKA BROOK ORCHARDS

Apples can be carried home from Riiska Brook Orchards, Macs and Cortlands and other varieties as they ripen. Bill Riiska said, “Apples have to hang on the trees and fill up with water and sugar and everything they need to make them apples. If you pick them too soon, all that is interrupted. We want to sell apples people will like, so they’ll come back.”

Not only apples, but pumpkins and fresh home-made cider and their famous donuts. Open Friday through Sunday, 9:00 to 5:00, New Hartford Road in South Sandisfield. Call 413-258-4761 or visit [www.riiskabrookorchard.com](http://www.riiskabrookorchard.com). 🍷



### AND A GOOD MOVIE AT THE GILSON

A bit south of town, in Winsted, the Gilson Theater has opened its doors again. You can smell the popcorn as far north as Rt. 57.

The historic café/cinema on Winsted’s Main Street is showing art-house and classic films and, in its unique manner, serves supper during the show. Owner Alan Nero has accounted for Covid. He simplified the dinner menu to serve mainly appetizer dishes, masks are required at all times, and customer capacity has been reduced.

Shows are once each Friday and Saturday at 7:00 p.m. Doors open at 6. Reservations not necessary. Alan said, “We want to provide a pleasant and safe environment for all moviegoers, with, for now, some of the best old movies.” In fact, his first attraction was “Some Like It Hot” from 1959. If you missed that, too bad. 🍷

## TWO COVID POEMS

By Karen Garfield  
New Hartford Road

### THINGS I MISS

Invitations to parties.  
Dressing up.  
Trying on outfits.  
Make-up.

Planning vacations.  
Dining out.  
Shopping for shoes.  
Being out and about.

Carpools and buses.  
Workplace lunches.  
Friday night services.  
Sunday buffet brunches.

I miss the city  
And its anonymity.  
The back to school bustle,  
The friendship, the civility.

I miss the closeness,  
The hugs, the smiles.  
I’m tired of walking,  
Miles and miles.

What I miss most  
Is life’s predictability.  
The schedules, the certainty  
Of future stability.

### PANDEMIC CITY

People walking,  
Keeping their distance.  
It’s a slightly altered  
City existence.

Reminders everywhere.  
Masks on all ages.  
Outdoor seating  
Replace parking spaces.

The sense of loss seems great  
In a city now tossed.  
Theaters closed  
Crowds lost.

People jostled.  
Preschool kids wait-listed,  
Sorry, not this year.  
The energy has shifted.

Streets are closed.  
Many walking spaces.  
Bicycle lanes.  
More outdoor faces.

The looming threat  
Of closure again.  
The dooming set  
Of human behavior ... when?

People walking,  
Keeping their distance.  
It’s a slightly altered  
City existence.

# Lack of Broadband Hurting Sandisfield Students

By Ron Bernard and Bill Price

Sandisfield was featured in a news story by The Boston Globe on September 2 and not in a good way.

The Globe cited Sandisfield as an example of how underserved communities in Berkshire County have been affected by inadequate internet access. Since The Times rarely reprints articles published elsewhere, this is, therefore, a report of a report. The original article, ironically for those with internet service, may be found at [bostonglobe.com/2020/09/02/business/spotty-broadband-challenges-western-mass-schools](https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/09/02/business/spotty-broadband-challenges-western-mass-schools).

The headline read “Spotty Broadband Challenges Western Mass. Schools.” The 1,200-word story accurately summarized the tortured history of broadband in the Berkshires and the current impact on residents stranded by the State and the policies of the Massachusetts broadband Institute.

The article, written by Globe reporter Hiawatha Bray, pictured our town, with “forests and fields, farmhouses and cabins,” as “a Norman Rockwell image of old New England.”

And then pointed out that “it might as well be, as far as Internet access is concerned. But in a time of pandemic, the lack of reliable high-speed broadband access in Sandisfield and other small western Massachusetts towns has become a serious challenge, especially for

families with school-age children forced to fall back on remote learning.”

The article reported how towns like Sandisfield have been left to fend for themselves in a kind of internet No Man’s Land. Increasingly people need fast, reliable home internet service to work remotely. Sandisfield doesn’t have that yet, despite the fact that efforts to secure the service extend back to 2008 when a technology committee was formed. The lack of adequate internet service is one reason there has been little growth in population or tax base in town and that property values have trailed towns with better service.

Quality of life has also suffered, especially for two groups: the elderly who could benefit from telemedicine innovations and our children who are seriously disadvantaged compared to those from most other places in the state.

Before the pandemic, Sandisfield’s school-age children were already on the internet margins. Families who maintained landlines could subscribe to internet service through Verizon, but even that avenue was recently closed to new subscribers. Others who could afford it bought expensive yet relatively poor service such as satellite or low-speed DSL (not available in all parts of town).

Enter the pandemic and the situation got worse.

The Globe interviewed Sandisfield resident Vanessa Tarasuk, mother of three middle-school children. Because of their frequent absence from Zoom classroom lessons, the school requested a well-being check on the family. Ms. Tarasuk spoke of being overwhelmed because her Verizon DSL connection would crash under the load. “I just gave up,” she told the Globe. Her sons, despite “incomplete” grades last year, were still promoted.

She said that “even before the pandemic, the lack of internet access had put her children at a disadvantage.”

In Sandisfield, a few parents meet daily at the Town Hall Annex where their kids participate in virtual classroom instruction, thanks to a Town-provided hot spot. Some arrive early to claim a place at the picnic table while others park as close by as possible and the kids work from the car. Parking has become so crowded at the Annex that the Town Clerk has requested assigned parking for Town employees. Still other students do homework when the Sandisfield Library is open or while parked outside when it is closed. Imagine that in a Sandisfield winter.

In June the Town’s Broadband Committee reported that Charter Communications, the firm contracted to bring broadband to Sandisfield, had begun its “make-ready” work which could take up to 12 months and that the pandemic may delay the work schedule. An earlier report was in April. For those with internet access, see June: [sandisfieldma.gov/home/news/becoming-broadband-ready](https://www.sandisfieldma.gov/home/news/becoming-broadband-ready) and April: [sandisfieldma.gov/home/news/bringing-broadband-internet-service-sandisfield](https://www.sandisfieldma.gov/home/news/bringing-broadband-internet-service-sandisfield).

Broadband Committee Chairman Jeff Bye said that the June 17 information was “the most current status that has been provided to me.”

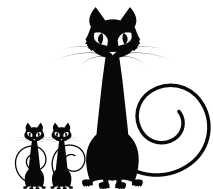
Several surrounding towns, generally ahead of Sandisfield, have or soon will have broadband connections to most homes. Neighboring Otis, for example, has already installed infrastructure which it owns and service which it controls.

The head of the MBI, Peter Larkin, acknowledged in the Globe report that the pandemic had slowed deployment but said, “crews are now working at full capacity.” He also said that the last of the 21 underserved towns will be connected “no later than 2022.” Brian Noyes, MBI Director of Communications confirmed to the Times on September 30 that the “target completion date for the Sandisfield project in the MBI’s planning calendar is Q1-2022.” 🇺🇸

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# Our Readers Are All Over the Place

## BESIDES SANDISFIELD AND TOLLAND AND OTIS

By Ron Bernard

Last month the Times switched to free town-wide distribution to all Sandisfield postal addresses. This prompted the thought that readers might be interested to know who else reads the Times.

Some 400 printed copies are now directly mailed in town. Another 400 (a temporarily reduced number due to pandemic restrictions) are allocated to several points in town and in Otis, Monterey, and Colebrook (see locations on the back page of each issue).

Paid subscriptions by US mail go mainly to addresses in the immediate region, including to other towns in Massachusetts (32), New York (31), Connecticut (26) and other New England states (9).

But our loyal readers are all over the country: Florida (5), California (2), Colorado (2), and New Jersey, the Carolinas, Mississippi, Ohio, Maryland, Georgia, Alabama, Washington, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and even a subscriber in Eagle River, Alaska. Out-of-state readers include former residents keeping up with town events and friends and former neighbors. Others are second-home owners. A growing number are by gift to children from current or former resident Sandisfield parents who still love them.

### Who are the on-line readers?

The Times's free website at [www.sandisfieldtimes.org](http://www.sandisfieldtimes.org), launched in 2011 shortly after the printed edition appeared, has enrolled overall some 700 addresses. The on-line audience is fluid but the number of monthly internet readers has held steady at 450-500.

Since email addresses seldom reveal location, it is difficult to identify where these readers are. It is likely that the distribution pattern is similar to that for the printed edition with perhaps a skew towards the relatively young.

### And some from far-away

A number of subscribers with overseas addresses are very likely followers of The Times' founding editor, Simon Winchester, who has a significant fan-base due to his world travel and non-fiction best sellers, especially in English-speaking countries. It is safe to assume that his "Moreover" column is widely read by these subscribers who, because his observations often concern the peculiarities of life in Sandisfield, are treated to intimate insight about this in-the-middle-of-nowhere New England village.

Recently the Times was contacted by one such follower, Liz Webster, a resident of Tasmania. To

refresh your and my geography, Tasmania is the exotic Australian island state 150 miles southwest of the mainland, which may be even closer to the middle-of-nowhere than Sandisfield.

A dual citizen of the U.S. and Australia, Liz described herself in an email as one who was "...formerly a mere reader of Simon Winchester but recently became a follower." She said, "I read *The Men Who United the States* but hadn't realized that (Simon) lived in America or that he helped to establish a newspaper in the town of Sandisfield. I love small-town newspapers. Our entire Huon Valley, 2,126 sq. mi, has around 16,000 inhabitants, but the only newspaper comes out of our tiny town, Franklin [2011 pop. 337, per Wikipedia] so we're quite proud of that."

Liz asked about getting a mail subscription to the Times but cautioned that it takes about six weeks these days for foreign air mail to reach Tasmania. We suggested she sign up for the email edition instead. She did, and wrote, "Thanks for the September Times. It's a real treat. I like the wide variety of contributors and topics and excellent-quality photos."

You're welcome, Liz, and we hope one day you can drop by our unique community and say "Hi." 



## SO LONG BLUES

Comin' and goin'  
Dressed up in fine black shoes  
Peeking across the room  
To find a way

That I can dance  
These final years away.  
There's a breadbasket over there  
Filled with a fusty kind of vittles  
That will fill me up  
As a bunch of heather  
Would dress an Irish hill.  
Or maybe it's time  
To fast ... to study silence,  
Make the day run slow  
So that the night expected  
Might, at last, forego.

Val Coleman  
South Beech Plain Road



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## WHO BRINGS YOU THIS NEWS?

# Happy Birthday, Val

By Bill Price

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

### VAL'S FIRST POEM FOR THE TIMES APPEARED IN VOL. 1, #1.

SANDISFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS  
You take a small town with five rivers  
And no middle ... You fill it up with honey bees  
And uncorked wine,  
Which means it is ...  
All things considered ... sweet,  
With vinegar not far behind.

After he retired and moved to a comfortable two-story log home on Town Hill Road in 1989, Val Coleman did not stay retired.

Maybe even before he got settled, Val was an active advocate with his Sandisfield friend Sid Pinsky and others for the development of an arts center in a former church and synagogue on Hammertown Road. After a lot of hard work and persuasion, when the Sandisfield Arts Center became a reality Val continued to contribute his physical presence, his booming cheerful voice, and his solid ethical beliefs.

#### AT THE ARTS CENTER

Since then, for the last 25 years, Val filled many roles at the Center: raconteur, actor, author, lecturer, greeter. Even handyman. He was the guy who always knew where the keys were and how the electrical circuits worked.

He was also a playwright: "The Stamp Collection," produced by the Sandisfield Players in 2017, was a very personal creation about Val's mother (played by Tina Sotis), an antique dealer (Charles Fidler), and himself as an 8-year-old boy (Gab Lessor). Ben Luxon directed. The play was performed twice, both times to full houses.

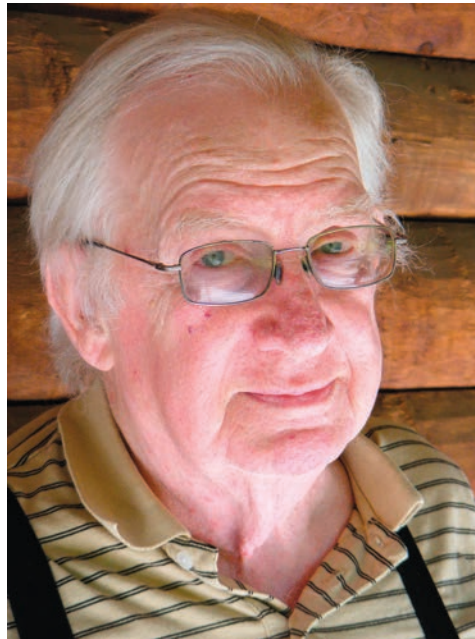
The year before, Val had been elected the Arts Center's "Person of the Years."

#### FOR THE TIMES

Val's birthday is in October. He'll turn 90. He's gently slowing down.

Which he hadn't done ten years ago when he became one of the founding parents of *The Sandisfield Times*.

In his role as *The Times*' "avuncular uncle," Val helped



Val Colman, 2016

ensure our sense of worth and value as a newspaper. He kept us at our chores during times of discouragement. He has been our poet, a reporter, a cheerleader, and from the very first issue he was the guy who physically delivered the paper to distribution points throughout greater Sandisfield. What's more, with his skills as a community builder Val encouraged a sometimes reluctant Sandisfield to accept us as a voice for the Town.

#### AN NYC COMMUNITY BUILDER

Born and raised in a small Illinois town, Val graduated from Antioch College. Following service in the U.S. Army from 1951 to 1953, he worked as a publicist for United Artists Corporation in New York City.

He found his calling after joining the Civil Rights movement in the early 1960s. He became press secretary for the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), where he worked closely with James Farmer, one of the founders. In fact, Val named his son, now a classical composer, Charles Farmer Coleman. That work led Val to communications positions with the New York City Mobilization for Youth, the NYC Commission on Human Rights, and the NYC Housing Authority. He joined the faculty of Columbia University in 1980.

It was at Mobilization for Youth, one of Lyndon Johnson's poverty programs, where Val met a community social worker, Sid Pinsky, along with two others from Sandisfield, Marilyn Gore and Danny Kronenfeld. In 2010 he described how he watched "in awe" as Sid, Marilyn and Danny guided teams "to organize rent strikes and food co-operatives, start small locally owned businesses, and build new and rehabilitated housing in a wave of social and political action unlike

anything New York City had ever seen."

Following the Sixties upheavals, Val wrote, "Several of the people associated with that movement, all friends of Sid, began to drift to Sandisfield." Among them, in 1989, was Val Coleman.

#### FOR THE SANDISFIELD TIMES ...

In *The Times* archives, Val is listed – so far – 124 times. Sandisfield's Poet Laureate, Val has published more than 100 poems in *The Times*, making him famous from Monterey to Tolland to Winsted.

His writing was graced with whimsical notes, too. Anyone who's driven up or down the steep hill on Rt. 57 below the intersection with New Hartford Road will not have missed the Burma Shave-type signs promoting coming attractions at the Arts Center. Those were Val's witticisms, faithfully painted and posted by his friend and neighbor Lauren Paul.

Recently, Val's poems for *The Times* have taken a dark turn, as if having reached a relatively advanced age he keeps searching for the right way to say farewell to old friends. His latest, "So Long Blues," is on page 7.

Last summer Val suffered a series of falls. After a long series of recoveries and recuperation and efforts by heroic Berkshire medical professionals, Val is back again at his current home on South Beech Plain Road. He says he feels like a new man. He doesn't drive anymore, has given up his delivery duties with *The Times*, and is mostly taking things easy. If he's not exactly back in the saddle, he's for sure back on his feet. 🍷

### TWO BIRTHDAY CANDLES

At *The Times*, distribution manager Ron Bernard was Val's "boss." He said that "every month for ten years Val distributed hundreds of copies, regardless of the weather. He took his volunteer responsibility very seriously and his attitude carried over to the rest of us. Thank you, Val, and happy birthday."

At the Sandisfield Arts Center, founder Susie Crofut said Val "was totally involved with us from the start. He was always willing to volunteer and he always delivered, whether it was on the stage or from behind it. The forums he presented always gave us incredible insights into politics, history, poetry, and Lincoln, especially Lincoln. We wish Val a lot more birthdays."





By Simon Winchester

## Starting the Solar Journey

### OR, HOW TO DITCH EVERSOURCE

By Simon Winchester

My journey to the sun started just after Christmas. Lift-off began when I tore open my Eversource bill to see an eye-watering demand for three hundred and forty-seven hard-earned dollars and twenty-one cents. I had to sit down for a moment, before writing out the check. This, I thought to myself, is plain crazy.

Now, I don't want to take you into the long grass and discuss the details of the Eversource bill itself – except to ask: how can they possibly know that the average temperature in January was 35 degrees, when January hadn't even started? And, what on earth, among the 34 line items listed for delivering my power, is such an alphabet soup as *Pension/PBOP Adj Mechn PPAM*, or *Lng-Trm Rnwbl Contr Adj*?

But all this is by the way. That chilly winter's morning I just wanted to purge Eversource from my life and at the same time do some small thing for the planet. And so when a call came in from someone wanting to know whether I had ever thought about *going solar*, I said hell yes, come on over. I was ready at last to listen.

Mind you, I was pretty late to the party. Here in what used to be the town center it is like Al Gore's electronic superhighway, with clusters of photovoltaic cells and high-tech metering systems littering roofs and lawns from Daffer's on Route 57 all the way down to the North Silver Brook dam. And all those households that have gone solar – Crofut, Paul,



*The installation begins!* Photo: Simon Winchester

Lutinsky, Kasky among them – profess great delight. “Not an Eversource bill for two years,” says a jubilant Rita Kasky. “Credits, actually.” (Sandisfield more generally is still rather behind the curve: just one percent ‘penetration’ of solar here, compared with seven percent near Boston.)

And so I took the plunge and signed up. I opted for owning the panels rather than renting them – if I were ever to sell up (heaven forbid!) I thought installed panels would add value to the house. All I needed was a south-facing roof, and this I found I had on an old barn. So engineers came and checked that it was strong enough to bear the weight of what had been calculated as the 26 needed solar panels. (At forty pounds each, it came to more than half a ton of glass and aluminum and polycrystalline silicon, which is the active ingredient of a photovoltaic panel.)

Then there were six weeks' worth of behind-the-scenes paperwork, with permits sought from the state (which gives out some \$9,000 in rebates to encourage this kind of sustainable-energy switching-over), from Eversource, from the town building inspector. Come early September all was ready, and a flotilla of vans and trucks with ladders arrived early one Tuesday dawn, and

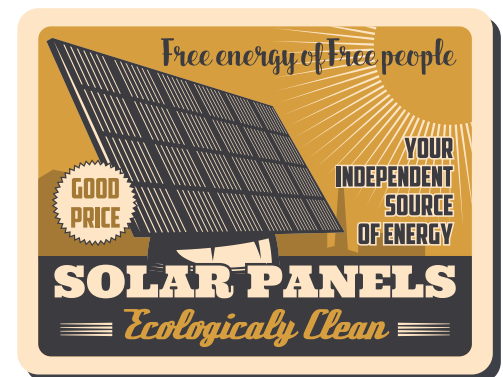
over the next two days strapping men anchored with safety harnesses built a frame on the roof and one-by-one lifted these Arizona-made panels on top and snapped them into place.

Electricians then arrived in other trucks to link everything together. Happily, when I had moved the barn to its present position back in 2001, I had – just in case – sunk four plastic tubes under the lawn between the barn and the house – and so no digging, no ‘trenching’ was needed. A powerful vacuum pump was connected to one of the tubes and with one mighty suck it pulled the slithering cables from the panels across to the house and in a jiffy the linemen connected them to the circuit board in the basement.

All that now remains is for Eversource to install what is called a Net Meter, which will show how much of my power is flowing into the grid – because that is how this deal is worked: you sell Eversource your power and they, all hope, send you a bill for flat-out nothing. You just pray for sunny skies, and henceforth declare the sun your best friend forever.

And the cost? At the very beginning, zero. The sting comes about six months later, when the installer will collect the state's rebate. Then, sometime in May, I will be asked to settle the bill for the panels and the wiring – about \$22,000. I can either write a check, or pay it down over the years, at about two hundred dollars a month. Considerably less than my old monthly power bills – and now I have an asset on my roof, and insofar as I'm not buying power that is generated from fossil fuels or atomic fission, I'm also doing something small to help the planet along.

In a year or so I might buy batteries, after which I should be able to store such power as I make, disconnect from the grid and say farewell to Eversource – forever. That's just a dream for now – a long-term dream, for sure, but in any case, far better than the nightmare of my getting that bill last Christmas, and which started me out on this pleasing little journey, out to the sun. Out into the sunlight of what I hope is a brand-new day. ☀



# Parents as Teachers

## HELPING YOUR KIDS WITH HOMEWORK, PART 4

By Maxene Kupperman-Guiñals

*Over the last four months, Maxene, a teacher for 35 years and the parent of a teacher for the last 15, has offered homework tips and support to parents who are helping their kids at home during Covid-19 and want to encourage study habits that will be helpful to their children their entire lives. Maxene is a resident of Town Hill Road.*

She says: "Consider these tips as a kind of support network as you help your kids with their schoolwork. Remember: nothing is too hard; do whatever works for you, and above all encourage them."

After-school diet is crucial to young bodies working for learning: protein, complex carbohydrates, nutrition-rich foods, and liquids – especially water – help to maintain a good body for this work. Many young people need frequent snacks to do the work of growing and learning, and there are foods that will not interfere with their meals that nonetheless will help them do their work.

As much as possible, let students make certain decisions that influence their own lives and do not interfere with

family values and goals. For example, what color should my backpack be? How many pens and pencils should I have? The question is NOT should I have a backpack? – It is how to make the backpack their own. Additionally, the choice of snack, the color of the day's shirt, which book to read – these can be individual.

In your home, you may decide that there should be no television or computers. This is a family and individual decision. But what are these things used for? If you do not watch TV, then make sure that your family knows the latest news and is up to date with current cultural norms important to young people's community knowledge. (Who, indeed, is Dua Lipa? What sport do the Raiders play?) And your child needs to know how to use a computer to access research information. Indeed, it is a societal imperative to do so and will influence your child's eventual career.

For very few of us, parenting comes easily and without complications. For the rest of us, we make our decisions based on how we were parented and how other adults treated us as we grew up. You can either acquiesce to that or you can develop your own techniques, but you are still the adult in the life of someone whose life is still forming. What you say and what you do has responsibilities attached. 🍷

*This the end of Maxene's series on Tips for Homework. Next month she will present Working With Young Mathematicians.*

# Historic Bridge Demolition Delayed

By Ron Bernard

The removal of the nearly century-old truss bridge that spans the Farmington River on the old Rt. 8 roadway below New Boston has been postponed to next year.

Last August the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that the old bridge would be removed in 2020 and not replaced (see story, The Sandisfield Times, October 2019). Christopher Wray, Operations Manager for the Corps in this region, told The Times that the work has been put off because of the unexpected Covid pandemic.

The iconic bridge is listed as an historical and architectural asset on the Massachusetts Historical Commission's register. The oldest bridge in town, it is the last of a number at this location which for many decades were vital in connecting Sandisfield with Colebrook, Conn., and points south on "old Route 8." That early-1920's roadway was replaced in about 1965 with a new highway section when the reservoir was constructed for flood control purposes.

Some New Boston residents voiced dismay that the bridge had to go in favor of a new approach to the north end of Colebrook River Lake, a popular public space. There was also talk of a citizen's petition or effort to forestall demolition but that did not materialize.

The Sandisfield Historical Commission informed the Select Board that the ageing structure would require significant and expensive renovation deemed impractical by the Corps. Work on the first phase of the project, a new entrance and road directly off of Route 8, was expected to start at about now, followed by removal of the bridge. The Corps indicated it was willing to advertise the bridge as available for relocation if a private party was interested.

Mr. Wray said that the project is moving ahead and that the new road/entrance would be in place by next summer. Engineering specs are being readied for distribution to bidders and the Corps hopes that a demolition contract can be awarded by the end of the year. Theoretically work on the road would start in Spring, 2021. The Corps is still willing to advertise for anyone who would like a bridge in the backyard. 🍷

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# Bulbs and Humans: Rising Above the Squirrel Mentality

By Thomas Christopher

When I spoke to David Burdick several weeks ago, he was in the trenches — literally. He was just back from his growing field in Dalton and the work of digging colchicum bulbs—fall-blooming treasures—for shipment to customers of his company Daffodils and More. He was glad to take time out, though, to discuss his September 20 class being held on-site at Berkshire Botanical Garden, “Bulbs and Humans: Rising Above the Squirrel Mentality.”

I had to know what the “squirrel mentality” was and received from David a fair description of my own condition. Like most other garden enthusiasts, I admire hardy bulbs when they bloom in spring, and I make mental notes about which ones I should purchase in the fall. Maybe I even write them down and put the list in a safe place. In any case, I soon forget what I wanted to buy and where I put that list. I’m forced to fall back on looking at pictures in the catalogs that arrive in summertime and making up an order on that basis. But I forget where I store the catalogs, and when the orders in due course arrive, I haven’t a clue as to how the bulbs in their little sacks are going to turn out next spring.

That’s when I resort to truly squirrel-like behavior, scampering around the yard looking for soft spots in flower beds where I can tuck in the bulbs a few at a time. The results are, as David Burdick pointed out, less than impressive.

David espouses a more methodical and effective approach. Spring to late spring is a time for observing not only what hardy bulbs please you with their blossoms, but also how they can function effectively as a part of a garden design. Burdick cites as an example a willow-leaved magnolia with an underplanting of *chionodoxa*—commonly known as Glory of the Snow—bulbs that flourished at Berkshire Botanical Garden when Burdick was the horticulturist there years ago. The magnolia produced a cloud of white blossoms just when the *chionodoxa* created a pool of blue flowers underneath—a combination greater than the sum of its parts.

This situation also suited the bulbs’ unique needs: *chionodoxas* need sun when they are in active growth, and they get that before the magnolia leaves out. But the thick foliage of the magnolia, once it unfurls, shades the bulbs when they have gone dormant later in the spring and the summer, creating the cool, dry habitat they need then.

Burdick also describes as an opportunity a cornelian cherry (actually a type of Old World dogwood known botanically as *Cornus mas*) near to that magnolia. It, too, blooms at the same time as the *chionodoxas*. Imagine, he suggests, the yellow blossoms of the cornelian cherry juxtaposed to the *chionodoxas*’ blue.

Plant in substantial numbers, adds Burdick, if you want to have an impact. Half a dozen bulbs dotted here and there are easily overlooked. No one can miss, though, a hundred or two hundred bulbs of a single kind strategically placed. That, says, Burdick, is “a real garden moment.”

When making such purchases, Burdick adds, shop wisely. Buying bulbs at a local garden center has the advantage of giving you the chance to check the merchandise before purchasing. Check the bottom of the bulb first. Look at the “basal plate,” the spot where the roots will emerge. You should see a circle of white tissue on most kinds of bulbs. A dark color at this spot suggests that the bulb is afflicted with basal rot disease and is a bad buy. After checking the bottom, Burdick recommends, check the upper tip of the bulb; it should be hard and crisp. Then squeeze the bulb at the center; that, too, should be firm, not soft.



There are advantages to ordering from a catalog, however. In them, you’ll find a greater selection of bulb types and sometimes bargain prices, especially if you are ordering in bulk. However, you should check the bulbs’ health as soon as they arrive. Do not hesitate, Burdick adds, to return to the vendor any that do not fit the criteria outlined above. 🍷

*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.*

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## The Cardillos of Sandisfield, 1930s

*Last month we included a 1933 report from the North Adams Transcript about young Nicholas Cardillo who built a box sled, hitched up a bull to pull it, and hauled himself and six siblings to a County Health Exam. This month we have two other reports referring to the Cardillos, neither this time with a happy ending.*

*The Cardillos were the largest known family in Berkshire County, with seventeen children, all of whom attended school in Sandisfield. Dominick and Laura Cardillo bought a working farm on Hubbard Road in 1926 and operated the farm, with the help of their sons and daughters, until 1948 when they moved to Stockbridge where they operated a dairy farm. An obituary for one of their sons, Herman, born in 1931, was published in The Sandisfield Times in January/February 2016 after his death at the age of 84. At the time he still had five living brothers and sisters, one of whom, Julia, is featured in the following 1930 report and at the time of Herman's death was living in California.*

M.T. Cavanaugh who attended the child, believes that the leg may be saved, although the bone was shattered and much of it had to be removed.

## Child Loses Life in Shallow Pond

Orlando Cardillo, 15 Months, of Sandisfield Found by Father

North Adams Transcript, 21 June 1934. Orlando Cardillo, 15 months, was drowned late yesterday afternoon in a shallow pool of water in the backyard of his home on West Street in the village of Sandisfield. The child had been in the yard at play and when he failed to appear for supper the father made a search. A short distance from the house he found the child lying in a pool of water not more than a foot deep.

The father, Dominic Cardillo, took the child in his automobile to Dr. M.T. Cavanaugh's office at Great Barrington, where he was pronounced dead. Medical examiner Dr. John B. Beebe pronounced death due to accidental drowning.

Besides the parents the boy leaves seven brothers and five sisters. The body was taken to the Birches on South Street and funeral arrangements will be made later.

The pool of water in the back yard of the Cardillo home was the result of the heavy rain. It is supposed that the child in playing stumbled into the pool.

## Girl's Leg is Shattered by Gunshot

Berkshire County Eagle. Jan .22, 1930. Julia Cardillo, five years old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dominick Cardillo of Sandisfield, was brought to Fairview hospital yesterday with her right leg badly shattered and torn from a gunshot.

A brother got hold of a shotgun and began playing with it. The muzzle was close to his sister's leg when the gun discharged. The full charge of bird shot entered the girl's leg. Dr.

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# Good News for Hanging Mountain

By Bill Price



Local bikers, snowmobilers, hikers, and cliff climbers were rewarded for their passion, expertise, and hard work by the Massachusetts Trails Grants program in July. Eleven Berkshire projects involving all those outdoor activities received cash grants to cover new or repaired equipment, upgrade trails, build new nature pathways, and improve access to trailheads.

Locally, the awards meant \$25,000 to the Western Massachusetts Climbers Coalition whose members have been working all summer and fall to develop a public rock-climbing area off Rt. 8 south of New Boston in Sandisfield. The money will help the WMCC expand and improve public access to the land below the Hanging Mountain cliffside.

The trails and hiking routes are nearly completed, but are not yet open to the public. A gentle, private "opening" is tentatively planned for the site over the Columbus Day weekend. Jeff Squire, former WMCC president, said that in order "to avoid attracting a lot of folks from outside the town during the pandemic we will probably schedule a big ribbon-cutting event next spring. That will give us all something to look forward to as we hunker down at home over the winter. Then we'll give it all we got come spring."



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"This Story in History" is selected from the archives of *The Berkshire Eagle* by Jeannie Maschino. This column was published this year.

# Town of Sandisfield Recalls When it Was Berkshire's Queen

From *The Berkshire Eagle*, February 27, 1937


One day a month or so ago, Mrs. Eva Granger, assistant town clerk of Sandisfield, happened to look for the first time at the town seal with which she has stamped many an official paper. The seal read "Incorporated March 6, 1762." Doing a little rapid calculation, she discovered that the town was 175 years old. So she turned to Jason Sears, town clerk, for whom she keeps house, and said, "Jason, don't you think we should have a celebration?"

So this year Sandisfield will mark the 175th anniversary of its incorporation. The celebration will take place the latter part of August. Fifty dollars was appropriated for the purpose at the last town meeting, and it was voted to make the recently-formed Historical and Betterment Society responsible for the arrangements. Mrs. Frederick P. Whitney, former minister of the Baptist Church, is chairman of the society.

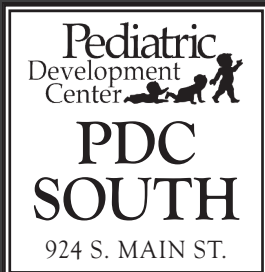
Actually Sandisfield is more than 175 years old. In 1735 it was purchased by Nahum Ward and Ephraim Williams from the Housatonic Indians for 300 pounds. The agent for the Indians in the transaction bore the resounding name, "John Pophnohonnawok alias Konkapot." The Township, one of four granted at the same time, was merely labelled "No. 3." It was baptized Sandisfield at its incorporation, in honor of Samuel, Lord Sandys, then Lord of Trades and the Plantations for the Crown of England.

Sandisfield's population has had its ups and downs. For 15 years no one at all settled there. Then in 1750 Thomas Brown moved over from Enfield. By 1791, when the first census was taken, the population was 1581. Mr. Sears believes that early in the next century it reached its peak, about 2500. For a time it was the fourth most populous town in the county, far larger than Pittsfield.

The town was the money center of the Berkshires in its early days. Its residents still recall with pride a loan of \$300 made to Pittsfield during the 1760's for the erection of the First Church of Christ Congregational.

Then a scheme to lay a railroad through the town fell through. Pittsfield was chosen as a junction instead, and the once-lively industrial center gradually died. Today Sandisfield numbers about 400 inhabitants, to Pittsfield's 50,000. 

Concerned about your infant or toddler's development?



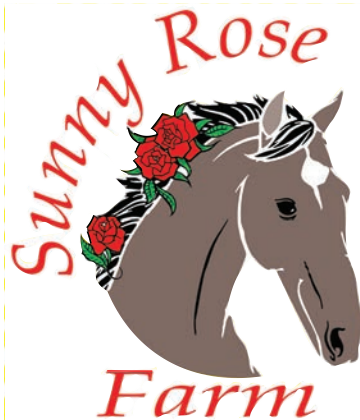
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# Police/Fire/EMS Logs

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



## POLICE

**Police statistics for July were unavailable last month due to family emergency.**

### July 2020 Incidents

- July 1 . . . . . 911 hang-up, West Street
- July 2 . . . . . Disabled motor vehicle, South Main Street
- July 3 . . . . . Assault and battery, South Main Street
- July 4 . . . . . Motor vehicle accident, N. Main Street
- July 4 . . . . . Medical call, Sandisfield Toa
- July 4 . . . . . Assist citizen, Silverbrook Road
- July 4 . . . . . 911 hang-up, Cold Spring Road
- July 4 . . . . . Domestic disturbance, South Sandisfield Road
- July 4 . . . . . Erratic motor vehicle operator, South Main Street
- July 6 . . . . . Well-being check, Sandisfield Road
- July 6 . . . . . Burglar alarm, Sage Road
- July 8 . . . . . Fire alarm, Dodd Road
- July 8 . . . . . Medical call, Tolland
- July 8 . . . . . Medical call, Sandisfield Road
- July 8 . . . . . Resident dispute, West Street
- July 9 . . . . . 911 hang-up, Otis Woodlands
- July 9 . . . . . Medical call, South Beech Plain Road
- July 9 . . . . . Fire alarm, Sandisfield Road
- July 10 . . . . . Medical call, Tolland
- July 10 . . . . . Medical call, South Beech Plain Road
- July 12 . . . . . Medical call, Tolland
- July 12 . . . . . Animal call, Sandisfield Road
- July 13 . . . . . Medical call, South Beech Plain Road
- July 13 . . . . . Domestic dispute, South Sandisfield Road
- July 14 . . . . . Medical call, Tannery Road
- July 14 . . . . . Wires down, Fox Road
- July 15 . . . . . Fire alarm, Sandybrook Turnpike
- July 15 . . . . . Motor vehicle accident, North Main Street
- July 15 . . . . . Medical call, North Main Street
- July 16 . . . . . 911 hang-up, North Main Street
- July 17 . . . . . Medical call, Sandisfield Road
- July 18 . . . . . Motor vehicle accident, Sandybrook Turnpike
- July 19 . . . . . Fire alarm, Sandybrook Road
- July 19 . . . . . 911 Hang-up, Sandisfield Rd
- July 19 . . . . . Fire alarm, Sandisfield Rd
- July 20 . . . . . 911 Hang-up Silverbrook
- July 21 . . . . . Abandoned motor vehicle, West Street
- July 21 . . . . . Animal complaint, Sears Road
- July 23 . . . . . Tree down, South Main Street
- July 23 . . . . . Medical call, North Beech Plain Road
- July 23 . . . . . 911 hang-up, Otis Woodland
- July 24 . . . . . Erratic motor vehicle operator, Sandisfield Road
- July 25 . . . . . Domestic complaint, Silverbrook Road
- July 25 . . . . . Medical call, Sandisfield
- July 25 . . . . . Medical, Sandisfield Road
- July 25 . . . . . Traffic complaint, Sears Rd

- July 26 . . . . . Medical call, South Beech Plain Road
- July 26 . . . . . Domestic issue, Silverbrook road
- July 27 . . . . . Fire alarm, Otis Woodlands
- July 28 . . . . . Motor vehicle accident, Sandisfield Road
- July 28 . . . . . Medical call, Tolland
- July 29 . . . . . Well-being Check, Dodd Road
- July 31 . . . . . Medical call, Tolland
- July 31 . . . . . Medical call, Tolland

### August 2020 Incidents

- Aug 1 . . . . . Noise complaint, New Hartford Road
- Aug 1 . . . . . Medical call, Dodd Rd
- Aug 1 . . . . . Missing Person, Norfolk
- Aug 1 . . . . . Fire Alarm, New Hartford Road
- Aug 2 . . . . . Medical call, Sandisfield Road
- Aug 2 . . . . . Tree down, South Main Street
- Aug 2 . . . . . Power and tree damage, Carpenter Lane
- Aug 4 . . . . . Trees down on wires: Cold Spring Road, West Street, North Main Street, South Main Street, Town Hill Road, Sullivan Road, Fox Road, Dodd Road
- Aug 4 . . . . . Tree down on wires/car, Town Hill Road
- Aug 4 . . . . . Trees down on wires, fire: Sandisfield Road, South Beech Plain Road, Silverbrook Road
- Aug 4 . . . . . Trees down, blocking road, North Main Street
- Aug 4 . . . . . Well-being check, West Street
- Aug 5 . . . . . Motor vehicle accident, South Main Street
- Aug 5 . . . . . Wires down, Cold Spring Road
- Aug 6 . . . . . Panic alarm, Hammertown Road
- Aug 6 . . . . . Well-being check, Otis Woodlands
- Aug 6 . . . . . Well-being check, West St
- Aug 7 . . . . . Medical call, Tolland
- Aug 7 . . . . . Tree down, North Main Street
- Aug 9 . . . . . Medical call, Sandisfield Road
- Aug 9 . . . . . 911 hang-up, Sandisfield Road
- Aug 9 . . . . . Medical call, Tolland
- Aug 10 . . . . . 911 hang-up, Otis Woodlands
- Aug 10 . . . . . Well-being check, North Beech Plain Road
- Aug 11 . . . . . Resident dispute, Sandybrook Road
- Aug 11 . . . . . Vehicle break-in, Sandisfield Road
- Aug 11 . . . . . Vehicle break-in, New Hartford Road
- Aug 11 . . . . . Vehicle stolen, New Hartford Road
- Aug 11 . . . . . Burglar alarm, Sandisfield Road
- Aug 13 . . . . . Medical call, Bosworth Road
- Aug 13 . . . . . Well-being check, West Street
- Aug 13 . . . . . Medical call, Sandisfield Road
- Aug 14 . . . . . Medical call, Sandisfield Road
- Aug 14 . . . . . Well-being check, Sears Road
- Aug 14 . . . . . Burglar alarm, Hammertown Road
- Aug 15 . . . . . Burglar alarm, South Beech Plain Road
- Aug 15 . . . . . 911 hang-up, Sandisfield Road
- Aug 15 . . . . . Fire alarm, Sandybrook Road
- Aug 16 . . . . . Disabled motor vehicle, South Main Street
- Aug 16 . . . . . Disabled motor vehicle, Sandisfield Road
- Aug 16 . . . . . Fire alarm, Hammertown Road
- Aug 19 . . . . . Medical call, Sandisfield Road
- Aug 22 . . . . . Suspicious activity, Sears Road
- Aug 23 . . . . . Medical call, South Sandisfield Road
- Aug 23 . . . . . Medical call, Otis Woodlands
- Aug 24 . . . . . Erratic motor vehicle operator, North Main Street
- Aug 24 . . . . . Fire call, Sandisfield Road
- Aug 27 . . . . . Fire call, North Main Street
- Aug 27 . . . . . Burglar alarm, Hammertown Road
- Aug 27 . . . . . Burglar alarm, Sage Road
- Aug 28 . . . . . Well-being check, South Main Street
- Aug 30 . . . . . Suspicious motor vehicle, Town Hill Road
- Aug 31 . . . . . Animal complaint, South Beech Plain Road



## FIRE

- ### August 2020 Incidents
- Aug 1 . . . . . Missing persons, stage at SAstation #2 per Mass. State Police
  - Aug 1 . . . . . Fire alarm activation, investigate, no fire
  - Aug 2 . . . . . Tornado in New Boston area, multiple trees/power lines down
  - Aug 4 . . . . . Tropical storm Isaias, multiple trees/power lines down across entire town, roads blocked and not passable, work with Eversource and Highway Department
  - Aug 4 . . . . . Tree on car, driver trapped. Unable to reach scene due to trees on roadway, Monterey Fire Department responded/extricated the driver
  - Aug 5 . . . . . Meet Eversource supervisors at Station #1, review list of downed power lines, poles, and transformers to be repaired. Open Station #2s for water and residents without power
  - Aug 6 . . . . . Open Station #2 command center, meet with Eversource, follow-up on progress. Station open for water, staging area for tree crews
  - Aug 7 . . . . . Follow-up with Eversource supervisors to energize balance of town
  - Aug 15 . . . . . Smoke alarm, investigate, defective alarm
  - Aug 16 . . . . . Fire alarm activation, investigate, no fire
  - Aug 24 . . . . . Investigate smoke in area, unfounded
  - Aug 27 . . . . . Possible electrical fire, investigate, no fire, shut-off power to house



## EMS

- ### August 2020 Incidents
- Aug 1 . . . . . Medical call, transport to Berkshire Medical Center
  - Aug 1 . . . . . Missing person, stage at Station #2 per Massachusetts State Police
  - Aug 2 . . . . . Medical call, no transport
  - Aug 4 . . . . . Tree fell on car, driver trapped. Unable to reach scene due to trrs blocking roadway, Otis Ambulance responded, transported patient to Fairview Hospital
  - Aug 7 . . . . . Medical call, Tolland. Granville responded, Sandisfield had no crew
  - Aug 9 . . . . . Medical call, Tolland, transport to Winsted to meet Lifestar
  - Aug 10 . . . . . Medical call, no transport
  - Aug 12 . . . . . Medical call, Tolland. Granville responded as Sandisfield had no crew
  - Aug 13 . . . . . Medical alert called by alarm company, unfounded
  - Aug 13 . . . . . Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital, Great Barrington
  - Aug 14 . . . . . Medical call, transported to Fairview Hospital
  - Aug 19 . . . . . Medical call, Otis Ambulance responded, Sandisfield had no crew
  - Aug 23 . . . . . Medical call, mutual aid to New Marlboro, no transport
  - Aug 23 . . . . . Medical call, no transport



## Cindy's Moose

*Cindy Ragusa, our local contributor of nature photos, makes the most of her camera opportunities. Her latest is this magnificent moose which she made friends with on September 16 on Route 23 in West Otis. "I saw him walking on the side of the road and drove alongside of him for some distance," she said. He was heading toward the upper Town Hill Road section as nonchalant as moose are said to be.*

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## OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



The fall issue of Berkshire Magazine features the "net-zero" home of Alex Bowman and Jess Cofrin of New Hartford Road. Author Hannah Van Sickle (also from Sandisfield, Rood Road) describes net zero as "effectively producing more energy than they consume." Alex and Jess have designed their home around that idea and are succeeding. They have not paid an electric bill since their project was completed. The article was illustrated by beautiful photographs, some taken by Peter Baiamonte, (also of Sandisfield, New Hartford Road). Copies of Berkshire Magazine are available at many locations or at [www.berkshiragemagazine.com](http://www.berkshiragemagazine.com).



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# Comings and Goings



## DONNA FREDSELL

1952-2020

Donna Fredsall died unexpectedly at her home this summer during the 4th of July weekend. When she did not appear at a holiday party, friends asked the Sandisfield EMS to make a well-being visit to her home on Sandisfield Road where she lived alone. She died of natural causes.

Born in Amsterdam, New York, in 1952, Donna was the daughter of Lorraine and Earl Glenar. After graduation from Lee High School in 1971, she worked as a seamstress at Anderson Little in Pittsfield and later at Country Curtains in Stockbridge.

About the year 2000, she married Robert Fredsall and moved with him to his home on Sandisfield Road. Rob was the owner/operator of Berkshire Crane Service and Donna became the small firm's bookkeeper and office administrator. The business closed in 2011. Rob died in 2016.

Donna is remembered by her friends as a generous person who was "a great cook who loved to have guests at the house and prepare meals for them." Another friend, Judy Arnold, remembered Donna's love of country music. "Donna would go anywhere to hear it. She never missed the dances at the Steak Roasts.



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*A resident of lower Silverbrook Road holds a handmade sign warning motorists to take personal precautions for the rough road ahead.*

*Photo: Simon Winchester*



# Troopers in Town

## POLICE POOCH TRACKS DOWN VERMONT WOMAN

*By Sandisfield Times Reporters*

A woman who fled on foot from Massachusetts State Police was apprehended Wednesday, September 30, in Sandisfield Center after extended pursuit by a police K9 unit.



*Multiple police agencies descend on Shade Road.*

*Photo: Liana Toscanini*



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At 3:57 p.m., State Police were advised to be on the look-out for a gold Chevy Avalanche that had been involved in a crash that caused property damage in New Marlborough about 20 minutes prior.

Shortly after 4 p.m., a Trooper spotted a vehicle matching the description on Rt. 57 at the New Marlborough/Sandisfield line. When the Trooper stopped the vehicle, they managed to detain a male, while the female occupant of the car ran into the woods.

Jason Fuller, a Connecticut resident, was helping friends renovate a building on the former Daffer's property when he witnessed the woman frantically running along Rt. 57, ducking in and out of bushes and eventually scampering off into the woods through a swamp.

At around 5:47 p.m. the State Police K9 team located the woman, a 29-year-old Burlington, Vermont, resident, in the vicinity of Shade Road. In addition to the State Police, officers from Tolland and Monterey responded to the scene.

In an email to the Times, a spokesman for the State Police said that the woman was transported to Berkshire Medical Center for an evaluation and that there were no charges against the woman listed in the State Police log.

Although New Marlborough Police are the primary investigating agency, a police dispatcher in New Marlborough declined to release any information concerning the case to reporters. 

# NOW HEAR THIS!

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

## OCTOBER 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*

*Sandisfield Select Board Meetings are by telephone conference. Please visit sandisfieldma.gov or call 258-4711 for call-in information.*

**Chair Yoga** on Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. sponsored by the Council on Aging. Free. This activity was held outdoors in September. Plans are underway to potentially host this outdoors again or possibly indoors. For more information, contact Nina Carr (258-3314).

**COA Business Meeting** on Wednesday, October 7 at 10:00 a.m., at the Council on Aging, basement level at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex on Route 57.

**New Boston Church Service** on Sunday, October 11 at 10:00 a.m., at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. Please wear a mask and socially distance.

**Early Voting** on Saturday, October 17 and Sunday, October 18 from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.; Monday, October 19 through Friday, October 23 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.; Saturday, October 24 and Sunday, October 25 from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.; and Monday, October 26 through October 30 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex on 66 Sandisfield Road. *Please wear a mask and practice social distancing. Call Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko at 258-4711, ext. 2 with questions or concerns.*

**Pizza and Bingo** – a COA event – on Wednesday, October 21 at 12:00 p.m., at Tucker’s Restaurant on Route 8 south of New Boston

### SAVE THE DATE

**Presidential & State Election on Tuesday, November 3 from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m., at the Old Town Hall** on Silverbrook Road. Please wear a mask and practice social distancing. Call Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko at 258-4711, ext. 2 with questions or concerns.

### 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. You can bring your own paddle or use one of theirs, disinfected and with nitrile gloves. For information, call 413-528-3600.

**A Walk Through History** on the Bidwell Museum Grounds on Saturday, October 3, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Join Rob Hoogs for an historical hike along two old colonial roads on the Bidwell House property and BNRC’s Hudson Howard Preserve. Participants will investigate four cellar holes, a charcoal hearth, and beautiful old stone walls, ending on a hillside overlooking Stedman Pond with filtered views into the Tyringham Valley. The hike is approximately 3 miles round trip, with some rough woods, roads, and trails; wear good hiking shoes, bring water, and a snack if you want. Walk begins and ends at the Bidwell House Museum parking area. A mask is required and hike is limited to 10 participants so pre-registration at bidwellhousemuseum.org is also required. Free!

**Roll On In Music** in Lee Featuring Max Creek on Friday, October 2 and Saturday, October 3. Parking begins at 5:00 p.m. Each car will be socially distanced. Food truck and restrooms available but you must wear a mask. Tickets available at rolloninshows.com. Meadow Street 987, off Tyringham Road.

### 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. **Mat Yoga** with Connie Wilson on Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. Visit townofotisma.com for more information.



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*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.*