

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

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November 2020

Town Landfill in Peril, Says DEP Report

2019 INSPECTION UNDER WRAPS, UNTIL NOW

By Seth Kershner

Sandisfield's aging and leaking former landfill, hidden beneath today's transfer station, is in crisis.

The state's Department of Environmental Protection has claimed it is in "poor condition," has charged the town with failing to perform required environmental monitoring requirements and with only doing "limited" maintenance that is significantly "out of compliance" with state regulations. Fixing the problem is going to cost the Town thousands of dollars.

There has been limited public awareness of the most recent DEP inspection report since it came out in October 2019. The news only came to light after a public records request filed by The Times.

According to the inspection, carried out on behalf of the DEP by Lee-based Berkshire Engineering, some of the most troubling problems were on the western side of the landfill, adjacent to a stream and private residences along Lower West Street. There, where the old landfill is not properly capped, the engineers observed garbage—old appliances, oil buckets and lead-acid batteries—that had seeped out of the landfill "in the immediate vicinity of the stream." In some cases, the report continued, "these materials were observed within the stream itself," although it acknowledges that the waste posed "no imminent risks to public health or the environment."

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

When then-Select Board chair Mark Newman signed off on the DEP report more than a year ago,

on October 15, 2019, it appears that its conclusions and recommendations never reached key officials in Town. Meeting minutes of the Conservation Commission make no mention of the DEP's findings, nor the conditions of the landfill. Contacted by phone, DPW superintendent Brad Curry said that he was unaware of the problems at the landfill and has yet to receive a copy of the DEP's inspection report. (In fall 2019, Curry was Highway Superintendent and thus had little oversight of the transfer station area.) While Curry pointed out that his department has since complied with a Select Board request to cut down trees and other vegetation growing on the landfill, he claims that he never knew that the work had been recommended by the DEP.

During discussion at a recent Select Board meeting, on October 13, the failing landfill cap was cited as a reason to pass a motion to increase, from \$65,000 to \$75,000, the amount of money in the Transfer Station Sticker Revolving Account. As the name of the fund suggests, residents pay into this account when they write checks for their annual dump stickers. The Town has historically used the fund to pay for any upgrades to the transfer station site such as paving, signage, and fencing.

Although the exact cost of repairing the landfill cap is unknown, one thing is certain. "We do need to do some work there next year," Selectman George Riley told the Times in an email. 🐻



Cindy's Bear

This large black bear, well fattened, wandered into Cindy Ragusa's back yard in Otis in October. She's seen him "around and about" for a few years and estimates that this fall "he is going to be three years old. I thought his eyes were telling me, 'You can take pictures of me, but when you're done get me some lunch.'"

Homage for an Apple Tree

A STORY ABOUT LOSS AND HOPE

By Ron Bernard

Twenty-twenty will be long-remembered by most of us as a year of loss. Human lives and livelihoods due to the dreadful Covid as well as widespread destruction from unusually numerous and powerful floods, wildfires, and storms.

Two ice storms and several major wind events including Hurricane Isaias in August and a freak wind storm in late September hit the Berkshires. Many trees here were toppled or damaged. At our place in the Beech Plain, we lost in these storms two huge, magnificent sugar maples that probably dated to the 1780s and the land's original settlers, the Hulets of Connecticut, among other trees in the woods.

And, in the side yard, a special tree was also a victim. A tree that was the last survivor of what was once a robust apple orchard certainly planted by the Hulets.



Our two ancient apple trees, 2004.

In New England, one of the first things pioneers did was to plant orchards, particularly apple, always near the house. They needed a reliable and immediate source of food for themselves and their animals.

Well water for human consumption was a problem because it was easily contaminated due to unsanitary conditions on farms. Apple cider, mildly alcoholic, was therefore a staple at farmsteads. Everyone from young children through the elderly imbibed through the day.

Some families even named their trees, a testament to their importance for survival. Today we see descendants of these old orchards all over town. But very few original trees survive.

We had one of the survivors. Now we have what's left of it.

At 4:32 a.m. on September 30 a tremendous gust from an unnamed storm that had hurricane force winds in parts of the state tore apart this special tree. It is thought to be as much as 240 years old, possibly the oldest of its kind still alive in this area, if not beyond.

Gnarled and twisted, it leaned hard to the southeast, not unlike the Tower of Pisa. The repeated loss of limbs and now whole sections of its trunk has produced the bizarre half-moon silhouette which remains. This stub has survived the perils of Berkshire winters/ice, countless storms and droughts, falling debris, injuries from farming equipment, ferocious black ants and other insects and insatiable woodpeckers.

Then there are the porcupines. They relish nibbling on tender bark, taking just enough to kill young branches. They also like the apples. Curiously, they take only a bite or two from one then move on to do the same to other apples.

One spring I witnessed a large white-ish porky, two porcupettes trailing, ambling out of the woods aiming for that tree, paying no attention to me. She was introducing her kids to the old tree just as her ancestors had done with their young for generations. If porcupines were not so damn destructive, I could appreciate this fascinating ritual.

We were told by former neighbors that previous residents chased porcupines away with blows from a shovel. I cannot do that. Nor can



Jean and I were married under our apple trees, September 2006. The ceremony was performed by Sandisfield justice of the peace, Elaine O'Brien.

I shoot them. We tried every imaginable deterrent – foul-smelling substances, layers of barriers and fences, bright lights. Even water cannons. A lot of shouting. Nothing worked. Eventually in all I managed to round up 17 porcupines for humane relocation (don't tell anyone). Afterwards, Jean's idea of an electric fence solved that problem.

Through all this our tree endured, determined to live on. It provided shade and perches and cover for so many birds. It was beautiful, especially each spring and fall.



The surviving apple tree in full bloom made the cover of *The Sandisfield Times*, May 2018, in color, a treat for winter weary readers.

A color photo of the tree in full bloom (May 2017) was featured on the cover of *The Sandisfield Times* the following May. It's fruit, small and green but edible, was abundant nearly every summer. That tree – and now what remains of it – is one of the things we love most about our place.

Our tree had a companion of the same age which stood a few yards away. They seemed like an old married couple, “holding hands” for over two centuries by virtue of their intertwined branches and probably a shared root system. Two trees as one. The

companion tree was toppled – also in the middle of a night – during the memorable ice storm of 2008. It became firewood for the next year, and in death gave us one last measure of devotion. I wondered when – not if – the remaining tree would suffer a similar fate. Now we know.

A few weeks ago, Tom Christopher, our noted horticulturist and gardening writer, visited this tree at our request. Tom – an expert apple cider maker – knows a lot about apples. We asked, “What kind of apple tree is it?” He said he had no idea, but that “back then there were literally thousands of varieties, much fewer today, unfortunately.”

Although the apples from our two companion trees looked a like they were in fact different varieties. How do we know? The porcupines loved the surviving tree but they never bothered with the one that fell in 2008.

John Field's team of tree surgeons was here last month, dismantling, sawing and chipping gigantic piles of tangled broken tree trunks and limbs strewn all over our lawns, including the downed remnants of this apple tree. Amazingly, one section of the tree still stands, apparently healthy.

But it is not attractive. Should we remove it to allow its saplings to emerge, we asked the experts? “Nooo! Don't do it,” they said in alarmed unison. It is still alive and with care may recover. Good advice. There will be no euthanasia for that tree stump.

Old houses and stone walls are direct connections to another time and way of life. But as compelling as they may be, houses and walls are inanimate.

Our tree, however, is a living connection not only to the Hulets who planted it – possibly even before the house was built – but also to the earliest days of this town and the new nation. We will do whatever we can to help it recover and continue its now lonely journey through time. My bet and hope is that this tree will outlast us all. 🍏



Our tree today. Will it make it through another winter?

Select Board Report

The three major issues the Select board has been dealing with lately have been: Route 57, the budget process, and preparing for a Special Town Meeting in November.

Rt. 57 culvert work began on Sept. 14, a month later than planned due to engineering delays. That work should be just finishing as this issue of *The Times* goes to print. We awarded a paving bid on September 16, but the question facing us is whether the weather will permit paving this year, or must we wait until spring to allow a proper job.

Town paving projects were done successfully on Sears, Town Hill, and Beech Plain Roads, and on Rt. 183. We advertised for a new DPW worker, received 27 applications, interviewed five and hired Austin Garrett. We are pleased to welcome him to the DPW crew.

As reported in last month's *Times*, we had a work session with the Finance Committee focusing on the budget process and how quarterly forecasting can enable us to get a better handle on our budget. This was a productive meeting and we look forward to implementing this process. We plan to discuss this at an "All Boards" meeting in November.

Broadband is an ongoing concern, even more so now with remote working and learning. Fiber access is at least a year away – most likely in 2022. (See the latest report on the Town website.) State Representative Smitty Pignatelli advised that parents should ask the school for help with the needed internet connections for their students.

The Special Town Meeting will deal with a few minor bylaw amendments and two new initiatives. No new spending is being proposed, but

we have had to work around this year's election process to set the date. We will hold a Special Town Meeting on Thursday, November 12, at the DPW Garage. 7 p.m.

In other news: we replaced the non-functioning intercom and video cameras at the Town Hall; set procedures for better tracking of grant applications; discussed the issue of coordinating elderly transport (the former provider has ceased service) with neighboring towns; discussed the need for a Webmaster to organize and update the Town website; held a public hearing and granted a special permit to Sunny Rose Farm; accepted with thanks the resignation of John Burrows as Emergency Management Director and appointed Eric Pachulski to that position; and last but by no means least we met with the School Committee to discuss the budget creation process for the school district and the need for more and earlier input from Sandisfield.

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

POINT OF VIEW

In my opinion
There's a room in heaven
With parquet floors.
Maggie presides and my mother
Plays an old brown pipe organ
As my father takes notes.

What I'm trying to say
Is that well done
Casts the play.

*Val Coleman
West New Boston*

Shall We Keep Them on the Front Line?


SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

**November 12, Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
DPW Garage**

Masks and social distancing please.

Purpose of the meeting: To accept the reports of town officers and approve bylaw changes to the Finance Committee, alcoholic beverage sales, and signage.

And whether to extend the employment of members of the Town fire and police departments, including the chiefs, who are nearing or just past the state mandatory retirement age of 65. The Select Board is seeking to petition the legislature to extend the individuals on the job, which is allowed by state law when employees are mentally and physically capable of continuing to perform the duties of the position.

Fire Chief Ralph Morrison, for instance, now 66, said he would continue if allowed, and so would the majority of the Fire Department, many of whom are already 65 or soon will be. If the measure does not pass, the Town could lose the majority of its members due to this state age requirement. 


Covid-19 News Fairly OK in the Berkshires

By Bill Price

After a period of easing of the pandemic, the "fall surge" of Covid-19 has arrived in Massachusetts. The number of statewide new daily cases increased to over 1,000 during a few days late in October, more than the highest number recorded during the height of the pandemic in late May.

Berkshire County is still dodging most of the pandemic, with a total of nearly 800 diagnosed cases since March, when the virus surfaced in the U.S.. Of the diagnosed cases, only eight were reported from Sandisfield, all recovered. The County has suffered 51 deaths as of October 23. The only resident we've known to have lost is Ray Stollerman, who fell ill at his New York home in March; his death would have been included in New York City statistics.

Throughout the Berkshires, the brunt of the pandemic has been felt by economic hardships, lost business for enterprises, many people out of work with rent and oil deliveries coming due and little or no income, and schools opening with what seems erratic regulations.

Even leaf-peeper season seemed lonely for most of us. 

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Parents as Teachers

WORKING WITH YOUNG MATHEMATICIANS, PART I

By Maxene Kupperman-Guinals

A teacher for 35 years and the parent of a teacher for the last 15, Maxene offers here tips and support for parents helping their kids learn math. Maxene is a resident of Town Hill Road.

"I'm just no good in math!"

If you have said that, you are wrong. You would be amazed at how much math you know and how often you use it, even when you are not dealing with numbers.

The idea of math is scary to a lot of us, but math is such an integral part of our everyday lives that we forget how much we know.

From the youngest children for whom numbers is a game to the oldest high schooler confronted with advanced calculus, math can be daunting, especially if the adults make it so. It is easy to help little ones learn by singing counting songs with them, but as they get to problem sets and logic, parents can provide a secure atmosphere in which to learn.

Math is a language that, like any other language, has its own set of vocabulary and rules. Some of us feel comfortable in some areas of math and not in others, but it is important to be exposed to all of them. Teachers often will tie the areas of math to real life, and parents and other adults can reinforce this at home.

These suggestions are designed to be practical additions to everyday living and learning.

Own a good dictionary everyone can understand. Math words are in there, and sometimes it helps to be able to look up a word in "plain English" to understand the concept.


Decide whether you want your children to BE mathematicians or to know math. There is a difference. If you want to help them be mathematicians, they need to think mathematically, and this can be developed. Think logically, think geometrically, think musically.

List all the math words you use. You will be amazed: dozen, ratio, proportion, addition, measure, divide, length, hour, half, quart, o'clock. Among the members of your family group, there will be well over a hundred — not even including the names of the numbers! Keep a poster on a wall where anyone can add to the list.

Have measuring devices available to the family. There are basic tools that no home needs to be without: 12-inch ruler, yard/meterstick, tape measure, measuring cups and spoons, calendar, clock, piggy bank or counter, datebook. Many of these are free from commercial sites, like the dry cleaners. Allow each child his or her own.

Let children do the measuring for you. With recipes, this is easy. But they can measure the windows when you need new blinds or curtains; they can measure the floor for carpeting. It helps them with visual accuracy as well, which is still in the developmental stage until the teens.

A calculator is a tool, not an end result. Students should own calculators for the level of math they are studying. A student in elementary school needs a simple calculator with big-enough buttons; a high school student will probably need a scientific calculator that performs many functions. But simple arithmetic done in the head and by hand should be encouraged.

On most cell phones and tablets, there are calculator apps. Encourage your child to know how to use this, but not be dependent upon this app for easy calculations. 

MIX AND MINGLE A POEM FOR COVID-19

Life's small pleasures,
Where have they gone?
Will what we took for granted,
Ever return?

People forget,
Think the virus is over.
Getting together,
Crowds in cold weather.

Friends have been posting,
Shoulder to shoulder.
FOMO, FOMO?
I think, OH NO. OH NO!

I'm a bit lost.
Free time, what to do.
At least I can play tennis.
Write a poem ... another sentence.

Should I shop?
Fill a cloud cart?
Retail therapy,
An inedible recipe.

What a cute jumpsuit.
Where am I going?
What a great price.
Will I wear it once ... twice?

To wish to sit at a trendy table,
Order a drink,
A leisurely meal.
Dessert, surreal.

The kisses hello,
Will they return?
The smiles obscured,
A long detour.

Once, we told our children
Shake hands,
Mix and mingle.
Retract! retract! Now stay single.

Life's small pleasures,
Where have they gone?
Will what we took for granted
Ever return?

Karen Garfield
New Hartford Road



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The Librarian's Corner

By Terry Spohnholz

Welcome Back: A "Soft Opening"

The Sandisfield Free Public Library will "soft open" to the public beginning Monday, November 2. We are very excited about this and to help us all stay well and help us stay open, please follow the protocols.

- Masks are required (except children under 2)
- Sanitizer station will be available at the entrance
- Entry is limited to one family at a time
- Time limit is 30 minutes – which includes upstairs adult library and the newly renovated children's section downstairs.
- Although calling the library to schedule an appointment is recommended, walk-ins are welcome provided no one has scheduled a time slot.

LIBRARY HOURS REMAIN THE SAME.

Monday and Tuesday, 9:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.
 Wednesday, 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.
 Thursday, 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.
 Saturday, 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

The Library continues to offer curbside service. Call the library at 258-4966 or contact us by email at sandisfieldlibrary@gmail.com. We also offer access to other Massachusetts libraries so if we don't have the book you're looking for we can find it elsewhere.

NEW BOOKS

- All the Devils are Here* by Louise Penny
- Evening and the Morning* by Ken Follett
- Question of Betrayal* by Anne Perry
- The Guest List* by Lucy Foley
- A Time for Mercy* by John Grisham
- The Once and Future Witches* by Alix Harrow
- Troubles in Paradise* by Erin Hilderbrand
- Magic Lessons* by Alice Hoffman
- Goodnight Beautiful* by Aimee Molloy
- The Aunt Who Wouldn't Die* by S. Mukhopadhyay
- 1st Case* by James Patterson
- I Had a Wolf by the Ears* by Laura Van Den Berg

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

- The Old Truck* by Jarrett and Jerome Pumphrey
- The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld

VACATION DAYS

The Library will be closed Veteran's Day, Wednesday, November 11, and over the Thanksgiving holiday as follows:

- Wednesday November 25
- Thursday, November 26
- Saturday, November 28

Enjoy the beautiful fall weather and stay safe. 🇺🇸

Have You Voted Already?

NOT A PRIMARY, THE REAL VOTE IS NOW

By Bill Price

If you didn't vote on one of the early voting days or send your ballot by mail or hand-delivered it to the Town Hall Annex, November 3 is your last opportunity to show up and be counted.

Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko said that more people had voted early or by mail this election season than any she had witnessed before. "It's been an incredible turnout already," she said. "I don't know who's left to show up on Election Day, but I hope a few people will come in in person. We'll have poll workers there and we don't want to have to play Scrabble all day."

Polls will be open at the Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road, next to the DPW Garage, on Election Day, Tuesday, November 3, from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Dolores reminded voters to wear masks and social distance while at the polls. 🇺🇸



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historia (Greek) - "Inquiry, knowledge acquired by investigation." The discovery, collection, organization, and presentation of information about past events.

Historia

Why Hanging Mountain?

IS IT BECAUSE IT JUST "HANGS THERE?"

By Ron Bernard

The towering cliff that greets northbound travelers on Route 8 south of New Boston has long been known as Hanging Mountain. The southern gateway to Sandisfield and to the Berkshires, Hanging Mountain is a thrilling sight that never gets old and never ceases to thrill anyone passing underneath.

The cliffside, Sandisfield's most prominent feature, has been discovered by an enthusiastic group of rock climbers, the Western Massachusetts Climbers Coalition, who see its more than 1,200-foot elevation with 300 to nearly 500 feet of sheer walls on its eastern face as a challenge to climb and recreational opportunity as well as a beauty to look at.

The Coalition has purchased 14 acres at the foot of the mountain and this summer carved a parking area and staging site out of the woods. They created trails and identified climbing routes. The WMCC had planned a "soft" Covid-restricted opening in October only to postpone it until all the state permits are in their backpacks.

Why is it Called Hanging Mountain?

The mountain was named a topographical feature by 1858 in the so-called Walling Atlas map of the Berkshires, the first comprehensive collection of town maps with named features.

Who coined the name is lost to the historical mists and we may never know. But a good guess about the "why" is right in front of our faces.



c. 1906 DeMars image depicts old Route 8 looking north through Roosterville labeled as "The Cobble" probably owing to stone quarrying in the vicinity.

Local historian Bernard Drew contributed a chapter on this very topic to my book, *Sandisfield: Then and Now*. There, he explained: "Hanging Rock is one of Sandisfield's natural curiosities. It was so-named for no criminous reason; it is a rock formation that just hangs there. 'It is a perpendicular mass of ragged rocks, rising about 450 feet above the bed of the Farmington river, and projecting at many points,' a writer in the Pittsfield Sun said Dec. 4, 1872."

In his definitive history of Sandisfield, published in 1873, George Shepard wrote: "The most remarkable elevation is 'Hanging Mountain,' in the southeasterly section of the town, bordering Farmington River, and rising above the same about 450 feet, the front presenting an almost perpendicular mass of bare, jagged, granitic rocks, in places projecting beyond their base line, seemingly ready to break from their fastness and come crashing down. This appearance gives rise to the name, Hanging Mountain."

I think there we have it. George knew it 150 years ago.

John Hoyt Lockwood in his treatise, *Western Massachusetts; a History, 1636-1925* (Vol II) agreed with earlier writers and added this about the site. "The Farmington River affords excellent water power, which has been but slightly developed. A grist

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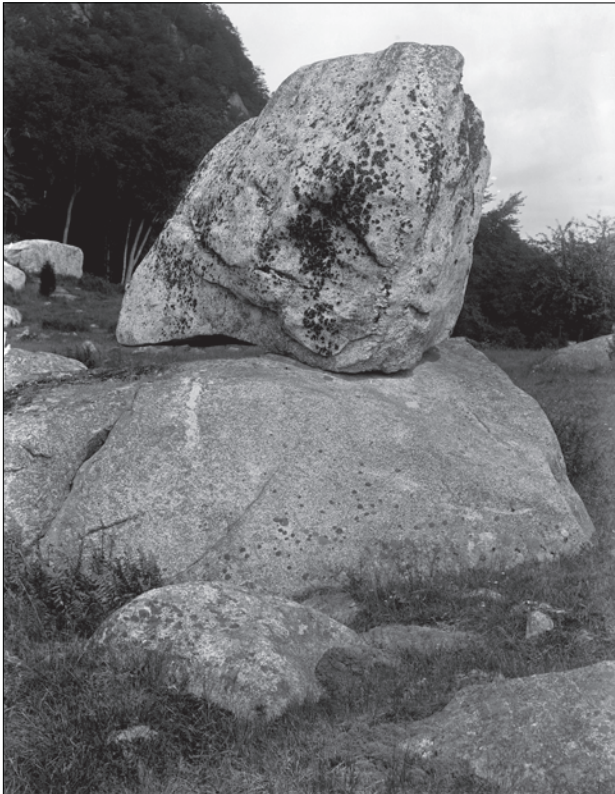
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mill was erected by the first settlers near Hanging Mountain. Other mounts are to be seen within the town but none so elevated and striking.”

He was referring to the founders of New Boston in the 1750s, the Browns, Smiths and Demings, who understood the importance of the high-quality granite there. Today its cut granite is found in the foundations of surviving 18th and early 19th century homes and in the ruins of mills and long-defunct houses all over town.

In the 20th century up to WWII there was a resurgence of mining in the vicinity by a number of companies for public works projects in the region. At one of the sites, time-warped machinery remains, ghost like, scattered in the brush among slag rubble. 



c. 1906 DeMars images of Hanging Mountain courtesy of the Great Barrington Historical Society. Left, “tipping rock;” top right, view from the Farmington River; bottom right, unidentified location, probably view from current north entrance to Colebrook River Lake. Buildings defunct.



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Who Brings You This News?

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES A DECADE REPORTING ON ONE TOWN

By Bill Price

Just in time for our 5th birthday – five years ago – your hometown newspaper was lauded in an article published by Harvard's Nieman Journal. The author, Barbara Selvin, described Sandisfield as having “no village green, town center, general store, coffee shop or diner; in short, there are few places to hang out and gather local tidings.”

To a large degree, she added, The Sandisfield Times was filling that void.

Now, ten years old and out of short pants, we're still doing it – bringing the news of Our Town to our town.

It takes a village to report on one.

The editors of The Times have always depended on a full raft of volunteers to make the paper happen: reporters, photographers, pitchers of story ideas, printers, friends, neighbors, family.

Over the past few months, in honor of our 10th anniversary, The Times has celebrated five of our volunteers. Among them: **Laura Rogers-Castro**, who has edited the Town Calendar for six years; **Jean Atwater-Williams**, our webmaster since the beginning; **Tom Christopher**, a gardening author and columnist who doubles as a town reporter; **Tina Sotis**, our design genius who has created the look of every one of our 110 issues; and **Val Coleman**, who until he hit 90 years last month and came through a recent spate of bad health was our faithful distributor.

And a cast of many.

Ron Bernard, our advertising manager, distribution boss, and chief proofreader, is, in effect, the paper's managing editor. For a decade, Ron has dedicated possibly more time and thought and management skills to the production of The Times than anyone else. Ron contributes news stories and a historical column titled “Historia” and helps to keep us generally on track. He is both our rock and a hard place, making those of us who dwell between them more confident in our chores.

Our founding editor, **Simon Winchester**, contributes news stories on often complicated subjects as well as sometimes curious ruminations in his regular “Moreover” column. He has been known to dish up occasional antagonistic notions guaranteed

to stir controversy and some grumbling around Town. As one of The Times' professional reporters, Simon brings a British press perspective to our corner of the Berkshires. He is unique and we're lucky to have him.

One of our other professional reporters and photographers is **Setsuko Winchester**, a former NPR producer in New York who brings her own unique perspectives to the paper. Another reporter, **Brigitte Ruthman**, has covered the news for the Waterbury Republican-American for over 20 years as well as owning and operating Joshua's Farm, one of the few farms still working in Town.

We have several columnists who report on different Town niches: Selectman **George Riley** reports on the Select Board; **Hilde Weisert** writes on the Arts Center and **Barbara Penn** reviews Arts Center performances; **Nina Carr** covers the Council on Aging; **Ann Wald** brings news of the Historical Society; **Terry Spohnholz** keeps us up to date on the Library; **John Burrows** sends the Fire/EMS statistics; and **Chief Mike Morrison** provides the police stats.

We've had contributions from neighbors who say something when they see it and write about it or take a picture of it. This list includes **Bogart Muller**, **Rita Kasky**, **Larry Dwyer**, and photographers **Cindy Ragusa**, **Peter Baiamonte** and **Tom Jacobs**.

There are others and we hope there will be more. We recently lost reporter **Tim Brooks**, who just sold his place next to the Library and moved to Columbus, Ohio. We could use some help. If you'd like to report or write for The Times, get in touch with us at editor@sandisfieldtimes.org and we'll sign you up.

But Who's in Charge Around Here?

The first editors were Simon and Setsuko Winchester, who were uniquely qualified to start a newspaper. As the initial editor-in-chief, Simon stole time from writing best-sellers to help form and guide the contents and tone of the first issues. The front page of Vol. I, #1 was a story on the Town's efforts to buy and demolish the long abandoned and collapsing Wilbur and Gross houses across Route 8 from the former New Boston Store.

After five months, when Simon had to leave for a book tour, **Patricia Hubbard** volunteered to serve as editor even though she'd only been in Sandisfield three years. Working with **Tina Sotis** as co-editor, Patricia kept the paper going for several months.

She was followed by a gently revolving door of editors who stepped up to keep the fledgling newspaper afloat: **Debbie Harris**, Setsuko and Tina again, Simon. The paper flourished and never missed a deadline.

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The Founding Team, February 2010.

The initial editorial team of *The Sandisfield Times* met at the Winchester's home on Silverbrook Road. Back row, Val Coleman, Rita Kasky, Jean Atwater-Williams, Jerry Herman, Ron Bernard, Simon Winchester. Front row, Patricia Hubbard, Tina Sotis, Dassy Herman, Liana Toscanini, Courtney Maum Ongaro, and Setsuko Winchester.

All of these individuals were important to the founding of *The Times* and many are still involved in its production.

Photo by Richard B. Migot

In April and May 2012, as the sesquicentennial of Sandisfield's founding was approaching, Jean Atwater-Williams and Ron Bernard were co-editors. The paper reported on the many faceted planning for the 250th celebration, led by Liana Toscanini, Barbara Cormier, and others, informing readers of who was doing what and how and that there was room for everyone to help. And everyone in town did pitch in, either with time and hard work or contributions.

The celebration was an important time for the town, and the paper helped put the right face on it.

Earlier that year, Ron had issued a call for volunteer proofreaders to *Sandisfield: Then & Now*, the town history he had written for the anniversary celebration. I'd been coming to my summer place on River Road since 1985, had been an editor in a former life, and offered to help. After all, Sandisfield is a small town. How big a book could it be? I hadn't reckoned on Ron filling more than 500 pages. But we had a good time and worked well together with Tina Sotis, who designed the book's layout.

As we finished, Ron asked if I'd take on the job of editing *The Times*. He thought the paper would flourish with editorial consistency. I met with Ron, Liana, and Bernard Drew at the Railroad Street Café in Great Barrington for what I considered a kind of interview. They made an offer – all work and no pay – and I said, "Okay." Having been in and around Sandisfield for 25 years, I thought I knew enough to edit the town's monthly newspaper. It's a small town. What did I have to know?

The first thing I discovered was that I did not know a whole lot about Sandisfield. I soon began

meeting people who had lived here "forever." It was an up-hill learning curve, and I enjoyed the climb.

All of the individuals who had previously edited the paper – and those on the editorial board who continued to guide it – had given it a firm foundation. I was lucky and didn't have to invent much.

I edited the paper from July 2012 until the combined January/February issue of 2020. Suddenly eight years had gone by. Enough of me already.

Now I get to "look back" and contribute now and then and am having fun. Now the job of editor and the hard work falls to young **Seth Kershner**, who may edge the paper in a direction of his own while keeping *The Times* *The Times*.

Co-editor since September 2018, Seth is a small-town guy himself and nearly local. He graduated from Monument Mountain High School before attending college in the south. He returned to live in Lee and moved to Sandisfield with his partner in 2015 to be closer to his day job as a librarian at Northwestern Connecticut Community College in Winsted, where he teaches research skills and advises the school's writers' club. He is also a gifted reporter who has been published in magazines and newspapers.

Editing a 20-page newspaper every month is no small potatoes, but the fact is Seth is already rockin' 'n' rollin', has the same volunteers on board the raft, and we're all still working together to bring you news of your town. We're aided and abetted every issue by our advertisers, our subscribers, and our contributors.

So here's to *The Times* at age 10, and here's to the 10 years to come, 🍷

TURKEY TAKE-OUT DINNER

Saturday, November 7, from
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Sponsored by the
New Boston
Congregational Church.

Take-out only at
Firehouse #2 on Route 57.

Turkey, mashed potatoes,
gravy, green beans, cranberry
sauce, roll, apple crisp.

Tickets available at the door:
\$12, adults
\$6 kids 12 and under.

Face masks and
social distancing
required.





Fundraiser for 2020 *The mid-October road blockade on Rt 8 was the only fundraiser held by the Sandisfield Fire Company this year – because of Covid. Of this year's event, said Chief Ralph Morrison, "We had a great fall day, the weather was beautiful, nobody objected to being stopped in the middle of the road, and we had a great fundraiser."*

ROADSIDE STORE AND CAFÉ



What's for Dinner? Meatloaf – Mac and Cheese – Beef Stew

By Bill Price

No need to go to Mom's anymore. All you need to keep skin and bones together is available at the Roadside. Route 28, just west of downtown Monterey.


Order and pay online on the café's website: www.roadsidestoreandcafe.com.

Pick up your ready-to-eat at the pick-up window (where their front door used to be) or have it delivered to your car.

When you place your order, you'll be given a time to pick it up, usually 15-30 minutes later.

The Café says, "If the Internet is tricky, as if can be in Monterey, we can take orders by phone (528-2633) during our open hours, Wednesday through Saturday, 7:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m."


New menu items include a farm sausage and biscuit sandwich and a bacon-avocado breakfast sandwich.

Beef chili and soup are available by cup, bowl, or pint. Take-out options for dinner include meatloaf, mac and cheese, and beef stew. Dinners are served in aluminum containers. If you heat them in a microwave, be sure to move your supper into a dish and out of the aluminum. It's a mistake you'll only make once, but better to read it here than experience it at all. Aluminum and microwaves don't mix. 

Police, as well as the Sandisfield police and fire departments.


Sandisfield's Police Chief, Mike Morrison, and the Town's fire department were on the scene when the State Police, who had been searching for the woman near the New Marlborough line, arrived with sirens blowing and lights flashing.

Firemen Eric and Mac Pachulski and Alec Morrison, who searched the woods with the State Patrol officer and a rescue dog, helped locate the woman and bring her to the roadside. She was transported to a local hospital by Sandisfield EMS.

Fire Station #2 was used as the staging area for the State Police and Ralph reported that the station provided plenty of water for the rescue dog. 



Sean Carr, Deceased

Sean Carr of Sandisfield Road, West New Boston, died at home Saturday, October 24. Sean was a son of James and Elois Carr who owned and operated Carr Metal Products located in the red barn on Carr Field. An obituary will be included in The Times in December. 


Local Man Arrested, Held

By Bill Price

Brian Hohman of Sandisfield was arrested by Winsted police in October, accused of stalking and attempting to lure a 15-year-old Winsted boy into his car while the boy was riding his bicycle on Rt. 8 last summer. The stalking charge was related to a pattern of behavior that included Hohman later stopping at the boy's house where he pretended to be a former owner and asked about the children who lived there.

As reported by Brigitte Ruthman in the Waterbury Republican-American, Hohman, 65, was arraigned in Torrington and is being held on \$250,000 bond. In order to post the bond, someone would need to pay a fee of 10 percent of the amount to a bondsman who would then guarantee Hohman's future appearance.

A registered sex offender in several states, as well as Scotland, Hohman was imprisoned for six years following a 1993 conviction for assaulting eight minors. He has a history of 29 convictions and a record in New York, Florida, and California.

Hohman is classified in Massachusetts as a level 3 offender, meaning he is at high risk to reoffend. In Sandisfield, he was living at his sister's weekend home on Lower West Street. 

Drama at Fire Station #2

By Bill Price

Had Lori Wilkinson not bothered to say something after she'd seen something, the story would have had a different ending.

Instead, when Lori saw a woman running along Route 57 near Shade Road, she called Fire Chief Ralph Morrison that something was up.

Ralph knew the Massachusetts State Police were searching for a woman who had fled into the woods following a hit-and-run accident in New Marlborough. He alerted the State

Police/Fire/EMS Logs

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



September 2020 Incidents

- Sept 3 Tree down, South Main
- Sept 3 911 hang up, Otis Woodlands
- Sept 5 Keep peace, Sears Road
- Sept 6 Dispute, Sandisfield
- Sept 7 911 hang up, South Sandisfield Road
- Sept 7 Disturbance, Dodd Road
- Sept 12 Keep peace, Sears Road
- Sept 12 Medical, Clark Road, Tolland
- Sept 13 911 hang up, Otis Woodlands
- Sept 14 Fire alarm, South Beech Plain Road
- Sept 15 Medical, Sandisfield Road
- Sept 16 Animal call, South Main Street
- Sept 16 Burglar alarm, Sandisfield Road
- Sept 16 911 hang up, Otis Woodlands
- Sept 17 Medical, Sandisfield
- Sept 19 Medical, Rood Hill Road
- Sept 19 Keep Peace, Sears Road
- Sept 19 CO alarm, Sears Road
- Sept 22 Motor vehicle accident, Town Hill Road
- Sept 24 Wires down, Sandybrook Turnpike
- Sept 25 Well-being check, Sandisfield Road
- Sept 26 Keep Peace, Sears Road
- Sept 26 Medical, Sandisfield Road
- Sept 26 911 hang up, Roberts Road
- Sept 26 Explosion, Hammertown Road
- Sept 27 Trespassing, New Hartford Road
- Sept 27 Fire call Otis Woodlands
- Sept 28 911 hang up, Otis Woodlands
- Sept 30 Tree down, Sandybrook Turnpike
- Sept 30 911 hang up, Sandisfield Road
- Sept 30 911 hang up, Otis Woodlands
- Sept 30 Motor vehicle accident Sandisfield Road



September 2020 Incidents

- Sept 1 Medical call, Otis ambulance responded, mutual aid
- Sept 1 Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital, Great Barrington
- Sept 2 Medical call, transport to Charlotte Hungerford Hospital
- Sept 7 Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital
- Sept 8 Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital
- Sept 12 Medical call, accidental medical alarm
- Sept 12 Medical call, Tolland, transport to Noble Hospital, Westfield
- Sept 15 Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital
- Sept 17 Medical call, Otis ambulance responded, mutual aid
- Sept 19 Medical call, transport to Fairview Hospital with ALS
- Sept 25 Medical call, Otis ambulance responded, mutual aid
- Sept 26 Extricate injured hiker from woods, transport to Fairview Hospital
- Sept 30 Meet Mass. State Police at Fire Station #2, transport person to Berkshire Medical Center, Pittsfield



September 2020 Incidents

- Aug 1 Missing persons, stage at Station #2 per Mass.
- Sept 14 Fire alarm activation, set off by cooking smoke
- Sept 19 CO alarm, faulty alarm to be replaced
- Sept 22 Motor vehicle accident, no injuries
- Sept 24 Report of wires down, investigated, notified Verizon re phone line
- Sept 27 Fire alarm activation, faulty alarm
- Sept 30 Assist state and local police, search for missing person



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Letters to the Editors

WE LOVE TO GET LETTERS LIKE THESE

I discovered Sandisfield when my daughter moved there from Lee. Coming from a big city (Montreal), and now living in a city of 63,000, I am fascinated by small town life, as I have never experienced it. The Sandisfield Times is a wonderful way to learn about the workings, problems, people and culture of Sandisfield.

When I learned that the house that my daughter and her partner bought appeared in Ronald M. Bernard's book *Sandisfield Then and Now, 1762-2012*, I bought a copy of this amazing work, a treasure of information about the history and houses of Sandisfield.

Appearing in the two-page spread devoted to their house was a photo of houses in the Swiss town from

which the original owner had come. That town is one valley away from the town in which my daughter and her partner spent time at our Swiss friend's vacation rental. Our Swiss friend had a school friend with the same surname, Cena, as the original owner of the Sandisfield house. It is a small world indeed.

Anyone with any interest in Sandisfield would enjoy reading *Sandisfield Then and Now*. I highly recommend it.

*Susan Potashner
West Hartford, Conn.*



TO THE EDITOR:

I came to Sandisfield for the weekend with a few reporter friends and the rental where we stayed had a copy of your paper (August edition).

It has brought us SO much joy—honestly the best kind of local paper.

Thank you. I cannot wait to subscribe.

*Amber Jamieson, reporter for Buzzfeed
New York, NY*



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NOW HEAR THIS!

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

NOVEMBER 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. For more information, contact Nina Carr (258-3314).

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.

COA Business Meeting on Wednesday, November 4 at 10:00 a.m. at the Council on Aging, basement level at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex on Route 57. Postponed due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Turkey Take-Out Dinner on Saturday, November 7, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Sponsored by the New Boston Congregational Church. Take-out only at Firehouse # 2 on Route 57. Turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, cranberry sauce, roll, apple crisp. Tickets available at the door. \$12, adults; \$6, kids 12 and under. Face masks and social distancing required.

New Boston Church Service on Sunday, November 8 at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. Please wear a mask and socially distance.

Special Town Meeting on Thursday, November 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the DPW garage. Bylaw changes/two new initiatives. No new spending proposed. Masks and social distancing required.

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 more information, please call 413-528-3600.

Free Days at The Trustees for Reservations. For Veterans on Wednesday, November 11 and Free for Frontline Workers on Monday, November 16, at all properties that normally have a fee. Visit thetrustees.org/freedays for full details.

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



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Until pandemic regulations are eased, official Town meetings will take place remotely. See individual departments and committees for virtual participation instructions and check the Town website for coming agendas and minutes of previous meetings. Admittance to Town Hall Annex is restricted.

TOWN WEBSITE: www.sandisfieldma.gov

AMBULANCE: 911. Non-Emergency: 258-4742

AMERICAN LEGION Post 456: Maria Domato,
Commander: 258-4578 (April-October)
or rainbow2498@embarqmail.com

ASSESSORS OFFICE: 258-4711 x 6
Office Hours: Tues, Wed, Thurs. 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
Meets 2nd Tues: 5 p.m.

BOARD OF HEALTH: Victor Hyrckvich, 413-717-0592.
Meets 2nd Tues: 7 p.m., Old Town Hall.

BROADBAND COMMITTEE: Jeff Bye: 258-4711
Meets as needed. Check for schedule.

BUILDING INSPECTOR: Matthew Kollmer, 413-358-8509

CEMETERY COMMITTEE:
Kathie Burrows: 258-4943. Meets as needed.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION: Meets 3rd Tues: 7 p.m.
Email: concom@sandisfieldma.gov.

CONSTABLES:
Nazario Sanchez: 258-4705 John Burrows: 258-4943

COUNCIL ON AGING: Linda Riiska, Nina Carr: 258-4711 x 8
Wed: 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Senior Center/Town Hall Annex
Business Meeting 1st and 3rd Wed: 10 a.m.

DPW SUPERINTENDENT: Brad Curry:
Emergency, 717-7627 cell. Office 258-4711 x 7

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Fire Chief: 258-4742

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR: Eric Pachulski, 258-4931

FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOL:
North Main Street, Otis, 413 269-4466; Thomas Nadolny, Principal

FRRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEE meets 1st Mon: 7 p.m.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Roger Brown, Chair.
Meets as needed. Check for schedule.

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

HISTORICAL SOCIETY: Ann Wald, President
258-4415 or annaw2@verizon.net.
Meets 2nd Saturday, Apr-Nov. Sandy Brook Turnpike/Rt. 183.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE: John Skrip: 258-4788

LIBRARY: Librarian: Theresa Spohnholz: 258-4966;
sandisfieldlibrary@gmail.com
Mon/Tues: 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Wed: 2-5 p.m.
Thurs: 5 - 7 p.m., Sat: 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

NOTARY: John Skrip: 258-4788
Theresa Spohnholz: 258-4966 or 258-4711 x 4

PLANNING BOARD: Roger Kohler: 258-4711 x 5
Meets 2nd Tues: 6 p.m., Old Town Hall

POLICE-STATE: Lee Barracks: 413 243-0600

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RECREATION COMMITTEE: Christine O'Brien
christyk2720@gmail.com

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258-4100; www.sandisfieldartscenter.org

SANDISFIELD TIMES: Seth Kershner, editor
editor@sandisfieldtimes.org
Published monthly (Jan/Feb combined)
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SELECT BOARD: 258-4711 x 2
Meets Monday, regular meeting, 7 p.m. Town Hall Annex.
See posted agendas for changes in meeting times.

STATE OFFICIALS:
Smitty Pignatelli, State Representative
413 637-0631; rep.smitty@mahouse.gov
Adam Hinds, State Senator; 413 344-4561; adam.hinds@masenate.gov

TAX COLLECTOR: Theresa Spohnholz
258-4711 x 4; Mon/Tues, 11:30-4 p.m.; Wed/Thurs, 9 - 2 p.m.

TOWN ACCOUNTANT: Margaret McClellan
by appointment; 258-4711 x 5 or accountant@sandisfieldma.gov

TOWN CLERK: Dolores Harasyko, 258-4711 x 2
Town Clerk Assistant: Pauline Bakunis
PO Box 163, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or townclerk@sandisfieldma.gov
Mon: 8 a.m.-2 p.m./ 6 p.m.-7 p.m.
Tuesday - Thursday 8 - 4 pm or by appt.

TOWN HALL: At Town Hall Annex
66 Sandisfield Road, PO Box 90, 01255
Open Mon-Thurs: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Mon: 6-7 p.m. or by appt.

TOWN MANAGER: Joanne Grybosh, Town Hall Annex, 258-4711, x 1
townmanager@sandisfieldma.gov
Tues, Wed, Thurs: 10-2, or by appointment

TOWN TREASURER: Theresa Spohnholz, 258-4711 x 4
treasurer@sandisfieldma.gov
Mon/Tues, 11:30 - 4 p.m.; Wed/Thurs, 9 - 2.
Treasurer assistant: Christina O'Brien, 258-4711 x 4

TRANSFER STATION: Keith Larson
Wed: 12 noon - 5 p.m., Sat/Sun: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

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Picnic Tables at Yanner Park

Adam Brown reports that four tables were installed by a local Boy Scout from Monterey as his Eagle project. "We'd eventually like to install a playground and pavilion," Adam said. "The Yanner Park Committee is trying for a walking trail to span Town Hill Road and Hammertown Road, connecting to the BNRC Clam River trails and the Town Hall Annex. That will take a while, but should work out eventually."

Photo and heads up by Lynn Rubenstein on ConnectSandisfield,



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*The Times is grateful to readers who
donated in October:*

Carl Codling

Fred & Janet Van Horn



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*Please see enclosed letter
and donation form. Thank You!*

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

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

The Times is distributed free of charge to all Sandisfield postal address and boxes. Free copies are available at the following town locations: The transfer station (Wed/Sat/Sun), the Library, When Pigs Fly Farm, and in New Boston at A & M Auto and Tucker's Restaurant,

and the New Boston Inn. The 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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email: editor@sandisfieldtimes.org

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Website: Jean Atwater-Williams

Now Hear This!: Laura Rogers-Castro

Founding Editor: Simon Winchester

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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.