

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume XI, Number 11

March 2021

## Cannabis Project Moving Too Fast for Some

### OPPONENTS SAY “STOP. FOR NOW.”

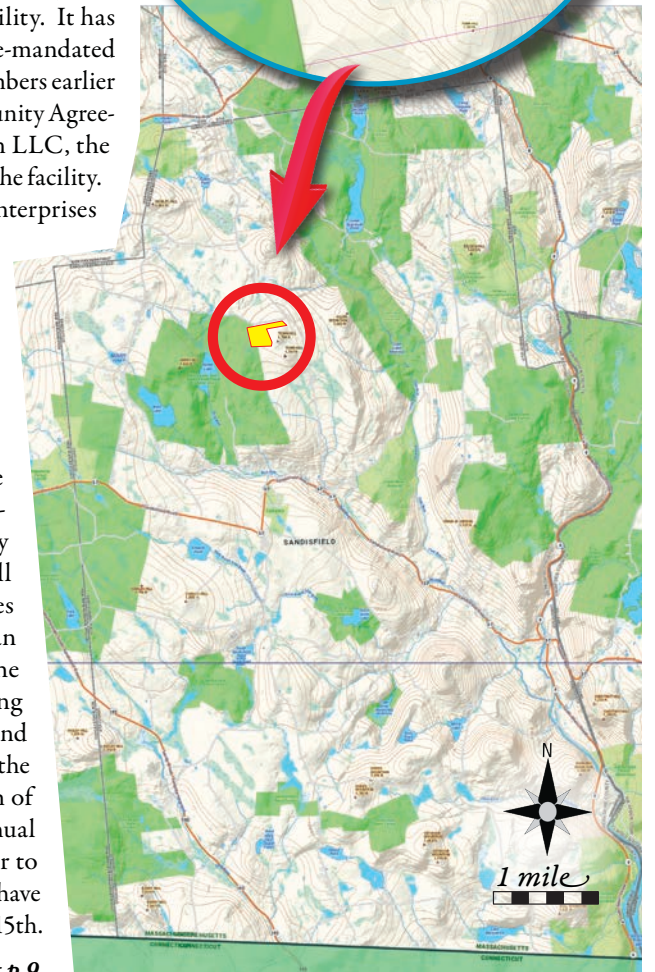
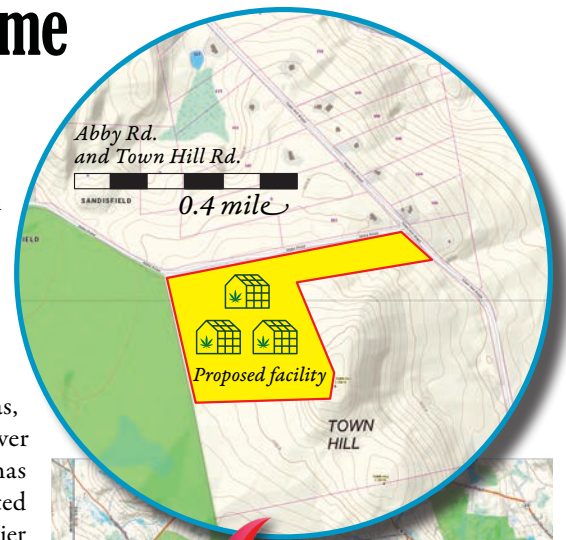
By Sandisfield Times Reporters

Worried Town residents, anxious that a marijuana-producing and -processing facility may soon be built on sixty acres of pristine pine and silver-birch forest near Abby Lake in the far north of town, are racing to head off what they see as an attempt by the Select Board to grant a construction permit before the community as a whole gets to weigh in on the issue.

The fear is growing that even if next May’s Town Meeting approves a new bylaw intended to limit the size and scope of local marijuana facilities, any special permit previously granted by the Board could be grandfathered in, allowing building work to begin, no matter what voters later decide.

The Board – absent any restrictive by-laws – has, after formal state approval, near-absolute power to permit the establishment of the facility. It has already taken the first steps in the state-mandated marijuana-growing process. Board members earlier this year signed a so-called Host Community Agreement (HCA) with SAMA Production LLC, the recently-formed entity that is planning the facility. (SAMA is the successor to Fulcrum Enterprises LLC, which planned a rather smaller growing facility in the Housatonic section of Great Barrington. SAMA opted to abandon its project after encountering furious local opposition.)

Meanwhile our Planning Board has for the past many months been preparing by-laws which would restrict the maximum size of any indoor grow facility to some 20,000 square feet – vastly smaller than SAMA’s plans, which call for the construction of 23 greenhouses on cement pads spread over more than 90,000 square feet of forest floor. The language of the proposed new zoning by-laws has recently been batted back and forth between the Planning Board and the Town’s three Selectmen, with the aim of having a final version ready for the annual Town Meeting on May 15th. In order to make it onto the meeting warrant, items have to be submitted to Town Hall by March 15th.



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

## Native American Presence in Sandisfield PART ONE

### THE STOCKBRIDGE INDIANS

By Ron Bernard

Last month in “Who’s Land is This?” Simon Winchester suggested that we, as the current stewards of this 52 sq. mi. patch in the Berkshires called Sandisfield, now and again publicly reflect on those who lived here for thousands of years before Dutch explorer Henry Hudson sailed up the Hudson and met them near Albany in 1609.

Winchester suggested that at selected community functions the community could – and should – acknowledge the previous inhabitants, the Mohican Indians.

con't p.6

con't p.9

# A Beautiful Place, Even in Winter

## THE NEW BOSTON INN, OPEN IN APRIL

By Times Reporters

The New Boston Inn will reopen April 2, the first Friday in April, with regular dining, but a limited menu. Proprietor Barbara Colorio said, "We're glad to be back."

The Inn will be open for dinner Easter Sunday, April 4, with Trudy and Aimee. Please call for reservations.

The Bed & Breakfast side of the Inn will reopen in May with six guest rooms available. Barbara said, "We'll have the main room and the fireplace open and the Tavern with limited seating. When the weather starts to allow, we'll have tables outside."

Take-out, she added, is always available. Hours at the Inn are 12-9 Friday and Saturday, and Sundays 12-8.



Photo: Cindy Ragusa

Concerts will return this summer along with car shows, the annual tag sale, the lobster bake, and steamers week-end. And outdoor BBQ.

Barbara said, "See you in April. Please wear your masks."

The Inn has been serving guests and travelers since the 1700s. Like every other place in the Berkshires, the Inn struggled through the year since March when the world closed down during the

pandemic. The Inn tried to make do with keeping partially open for take-out and keeping staff and customers safe at the same time. Hard choices were made, none of them perfect.

With the easing of restrictions on most Massachusetts businesses, Barbara is glad to be open again and believes she can safely serve her overnight and weekend guests at the Inn and provide food and beverages three nights a week. For the Sandisfield Times, we're glad to see the lights on again. 🇺🇸

# A Nice Small Business

## WELCOME TO THE "FARMINGTON RIVER GENERAL STORE"

By Bill Price

Nearly a decade after a runaway truck destroyed the New Boston Store, Sandisfield is once again poised to enjoy shopping locally for staples.

Come late spring or early summer, Nick and Megan Smigel of New Boston are opening a grocery/general store in an existing building not far down Route 8 from the site of the original New Boston Store.

"We want to have a nice small business, one we can run by ourselves," said Nick. "We'll sell basic groceries, produce from local farms, fresh brewed coffee, prepackaged food, bottle beverages. The Farmington River General Store."

The building once housed George Lundgren's lamp shop on South Main Street (or Rt. 8), where



Nick and Megan Smigel with their daughters Ava, 7, Hadley, 5, and Ella, 2.

George served a small clientele for many years creating and refurbishing brass lamps. Lundgren lived in the house set back behind the shop. Nick and Megan bought the property in 2017 from George's daughter, Mary Leary, and are raising their young family there.

In March, contractors will begin transforming the old lamp shop into a grocery store.

con't p.4

Affordable computer help for individuals,  
small businesses and non-profits

**BizTech  
Associates**

Jean Atwater-Williams  
help@BizTechAssociates.com  
413-258-8000

# Covid News for Now Sandisfield's Third Covid Death

## AND VACCINES ARE HERE FOR THOSE 65 AND UP

By Bill Price

Sandisfield registered its third death due to Covid-19 at the end of January. Jane Hason, a longtime resident of North Hartford Road, died at Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield after being hospitalized with Covid.

As previously reported, at the beginning of the pandemic last March Ray Stollerman of Viets Road died of Covid. Because he died at his home in New York City he was counted in New York statistics. Sandisfield's second resident to succumb to Covid died in December in Shutsbury. His name has not been publicly reported.

Ironically, as Jane Hason was being hospitalized, the vaccines that could lead to easing and possibly freedom from the year-long pandemic were beginning to be widely distributed across the country.

### SIGNING UP

As of mid-February, the Berkshire County Boards of Health Association reported that nearly three-quarters of county residents 75 and over had received their first and often their second vaccinations. The plan was to soon move to the next round, those aged 65 and older and others with health conditions that put them at high risk for the disease.

The association said that to make contact with those 75 and over who have not yet received the vaccine, including those who are homebound, will require specific outreach efforts in the next few weeks.

Roger Kohler for the Sandisfield Board of Health reported that information about Covid-19 vaccines is available on the Town website and on the ConnectSandisfield Facebook site and that information would be updated if and when the process changes.

**With internet.** Currently, residents 75 and older with access to the internet should go to [www.getvaccinatedberkshires.org](http://www.getvaccinatedberkshires.org) for the link to make an appointment, or go directly to [mimmunizations.org](http://mimmunizations.org) and scroll down looking for clinics at the three Berkshire County sites (Berkshire Community College, W.E.B. Dubois Middle School, and St. Elizabeth's of Hungary Church).

**Without internet.** Residents 75 and older without internet access are asked to call 211 to book an appointment.

Two vaccinations are required for the vaccine to be most effective and, if possible, both appointments should be made during the initial appointment call.

In Sandisfield, volunteers Nina Carr, Linda Riiska, and Lynn Rubenstein, working through the Council on Aging, helped seniors make vaccine appointments. If you need help, call Nina at 259-3314 or Linda at 258-4816. Lynn is the volunteer who brings internet knowledge and access to the process.

A recent change in procedure allows eligibility for one caregiver per resident 75 or older to receive a vaccination at the same appointment. Caregivers will be required to self-attest that they are accompanying a resident who could not otherwise get to or navigate the vaccination site. Schedule both appointments at the same time.

### DR. FAUCI SAYS ...

Asked if he thought he would be able to enjoy his favorite pastime of attending a baseball game this summer, Dr. Anthony S. Fauci was cautiously optimistic. He said that while it looked like "we're heading in the right direction," the success of the vaccines and securing peoples' health depended on the trajectories of the new virus variants and if people continued to wear masks and use precautions in groups.

"The positive aspect of baseball," he said, "is that most of it is outdoors. And if you space people well enough, you get people to wear masks, you have situations that people don't crowd at the concessions near each other to get food and things like that, you can pull it off in a pretty safe way, I believe."

# Town Meeting May 15 ELECTION MAY 17

## SAVE THE DATES

Town Meeting will occur for the 200+ time on May 15, Saturday, at 10 a.m., at the DPW Garage at 3 Silverbrook Road (intersection with Rt. 57).

Nomination papers for registered voters willing to stand for election to Town offices are available until March 25. You will need to collect signatures to be eligible to be nominated for an office. The papers are due back by March 29. Candidates can also be nominated at the Town Caucus on April 8.

In order to vote at the Town Meeting or in the Town election, citizens must be registered voters. The last day for registration is April 27.

Any questions about timing or eligibility, call Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko at 258-4711, ext. 2.

## YEAR 2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Mar. 25 Last day to obtain nomination papers.
- Mar. 29 Last day to submit nomination papers.

- Mar. 31 Dog licenses expire, new licenses due by May 31.
- Apr. 8 Town Caucus – Old Town Hall 7:00p.m.
- Apr. 14 Last day to object or withdraw nomination papers.
- Apr. 27 Last day to register to vote for the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Election.
- May 15 Annual Town Meeting at the DPW Garage Building, 3 Silverbrook Road at 10:00 a.m.
- May 17 Annual Town Election, Old Town Hall 10:00a.m. to 8:00p.m.

## OFFICES UP FOR ELECTION THIS YEAR:

Office	Term	Currently held by
Moderator	1 year	Simon B. A. Winchester
Selectmen	3 years	Brian O'Rourke
Board of Assessors	3 years	Kathy Burrows
School Committee	3 years	Billie Anderson Pachulski
Board of Health	3 years	Roger Kohler
Planning Board	4 years	Vacancy
Planning Board	5 years	John Field
Library Trustees	5 years	Kathy Burrows



# Regional School Review Committee Holds Initial Meetings

## FIRST UP, ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

By Bill Price

The committee was formed to evaluate and make recommendations on whether the Town should continue to participate in the Farmington River Regional School District or find an alternative. The group has met remotely each week since its first meeting Saturday, January 30, and expects to present its findings in approximately three months.

Including Chairperson Joanne Grybosh, who is also Town Manager, six volunteers have been appointed, with one other expected to join by the end of February. As a temporary ad hoc advisory committee, one member can be a non-registered voter.

The Chairperson acknowledged that while most members very likely brought strong opinions to the committee, those opinions so far have been "left at the door."

She said, "We decided early that if you don't think you can be open minded, this is not the committee

for you. We're starting off looking at alternatives, exploring options to staying at FRRSD or changing to another district, and we'll reconvene every week to discuss those alternatives and options. Later, when we get to the point of making recommendations, will be the time for opinions and for opinions to be reviewed in light of reasonable alternatives."

She described the committee as "smart people who are willing to work hard. We're looking forward to making some good recommendations for the Town and for the school children."

Committee members so far include Barbara Cormier, Jennifer Hibbins, Carl Nett, Joanne Lazarowitz Olson, and Steve Seddon, Sr. Chairperson Grybosh said as an ad hoc advisory committee the meetings are not open to the public, but she added, "We're not opposed to others joining us later on. Right now we're gathering information that's going to help us down the road."

## A Nice Small Business


con't from p. 2

The parking area will be expanded to accommodate four or five cars.

Nick was brought up in Torrington, and the family lived ten years in Winsted prior to moving to Sandisfield. He was a chef in Connecticut for two decades and, since July, has been head chef at the Cambridge House Brew Pub in Granby, Connecticut. He plans to keep the position even after the store is underway.

Nick is familiar with New Boston and Sandisfield. From Winsted he often drove north to Pete's store to buy Massachusetts lottery tickets. "I never won anything substantial," he said. He and Megan plan to apply for a license to sell lottery tickets. Perhaps they'll sell a big winner to someone from Sandisfield – it could be you.

Because of the store's location in the Farmington River floodplain, they have no plans to install gas pumps, which while widely popular would engender substantial environmental issues. They do plan, however, to ask Town residents through social media and customer interaction what they would like to see in such a store.

Nick and Megan plan to have their store open from 7 in the morning until 6 p.m., seven days a week. Since they live in the home behind the shop, their commute will be easy enough. 

## KWIK<sup>Color</sup> PRINT INCORPORATED

EXPERIENCE • SPEED • QUALITY

- Full Color Digital Printing
- Full Color Envelope Printing
- Large Format Printing
- High Speed Copying
- Laminating
- Inline Bookletmaking
- Perfect Binding
- Folding
- Perforating
- Mailing Services
- Graphic Design Services

35 Bridge Street  
Great Barrington, MA 01230  
Ph: 413.528.2885 Fx: 413.528.9220  
typesetting@kwikprintinc.com  
www.kwikprintinc.com

# Is your mind in the gutter?

Clean those filthy ways  
before it becomes a problem



CONSOLATI

FRANK CONSOLATI INSURANCE

Homeowners Insurance Since 1942  
71 MAIN STREET, LEE MA 413-243-0105

## Second Annual Writing Contest


ON OFFER: TOP PRIZE  
OF \$250

Thanks to its popularity last year - a year when any distraction was probably welcome, was it not? - we are going to stage another Sandisfield Times Writing Contest.

Anyone who lives in Sandisfield, full-time or part-time may enter except Sandisfield Times staff and immediate families.

The topic this year is: *Other than your home, what is your favorite place in Sandisfield, and why?*

Essays should be no more than 600 words long and will be judged on their originality, inventiveness and elegance. The deadline for submissions - to be sent to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org - will be May 31.

We promise to publish the essays by the winner and the first runner-up in our August issue. The winner will receive our congratulations, a signed commemorative book and a cash prize of \$250. 

# Help Needed to Help Each Other

## VOLUNTEERS ACCEPTED

By Sandisfield Fire Department

Mutual Aid: You may have heard this term, but what does it mean exactly?

Mutual aid is when municipalities agree to help one another. The concept is simple, works well, and the benefits are significant. As a Fire Department, we think of it as a force multiplier.

Like many of the towns around us, Sandisfield is dependent on volunteers for Fire and EMTs. Although we always try to have personnel available to cover this very large area, sometimes that is impossible. That is where Mutual Aid comes in.

For example, when a Fire/EMT emergency occurs in Sandisfield, one of our mutual aid partners may arrive first, if they are closer to the location. In this example all responding departments would also be there at a safe/close proximity to the emergency location. Sandisfield Fire/EMTs responds to other towns' calls for mutual aid the same way. You get the same service no matter who responds.

Currently, we are enhancing our system to include five or more Fire/EMT Mutual Aid departments. This way when the emergency call is received, we can count on more equipment and more personnel – better response for every situation in every town. Some of our Northwestern Connecticut neighbors have been doing this with very good results. We fully expect to have the same outcome.

Just remember this: when you call 911 for emergency services, someone will always be there.

### VOLUNTEERS URGENTLY NEEDED FOR SANDISFIELD FIRE AND EMTs AND IN ALL SURROUNDING TOWNS


Volunteers are the heart and soul of our Fire & EMT Department. There are a number of reasons small towns struggle to fill their rosters, but we continue to recruit volunteers and there is a job for everyone. Of course, it seems that calls do not come in only when volunteers are at home relaxing ... The calls come at all times and conditions – cold, snowy nights, weekends, meal time, you name it. But our motto is "When the tones go off – We Go!"

### AUXILIARY SUPPORT TEAM NEEDED

We would like to organize an auxiliary team of volunteers to support our Fire and EMT personnel in extended emergency situations. This support team would be very helpful keeping our emergency



personnel hydrated & nourished during long extended emergency situations. Like we said, there is a job for everyone.

If you wish to serve our community in an exciting and very meaningful way while enjoying the camaraderie of a dedicated and supportive team. We have a job for you. 



## Correction

In its profile of FinComm chair, Roger Brown, in the January-February issue, the Times reported that Sandisfield had around 100 students enrolled at Farmington River Regional School. While Sandisfield does in fact have about 100 total students enrolled in the Farmington River Regional School District, fewer than 50 actually attend the elementary school in Otis. The rest, many of them in grades 7-12, attend school in nearby communities like Great Barrington.

The Times welcomes comments about errors that warrant correction. Comments or complaints may be e-mailed to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org.

BEER ★ WINE ★ LIQUOR

# Domaney's




Fine Wine ★ Unique Beer ★ Discount Liquors  
Temperature Controlled Wine Room ★ Cigar Humidor

---

66 Main St. Great Barrington, MA 01230  
p. (413) 528-0024 ★ f. (413) 528-6093

---

[www.domaney.com](http://www.domaney.com)



Sunny Rose

Farm

**Now accepting new students!**

Group or private riding lessons available at your home or on our Sandisfield farm

Boarding and Leasing Horses Available

Specializing in Eventing, Dressage, and Hunter-Jumper lessons

Lessons available for all ages

**Rose Nelson, Instructor and Owner**

•

Massachusetts certified,  
Pony club eventing participant and USEA eventer

Email: [sunnyrosefarm@yahoo.com](mailto:sunnyrosefarm@yahoo.com)  
Phone: (413) 446-4944

## Native American Presence in Sandisfield

con't from p. 1

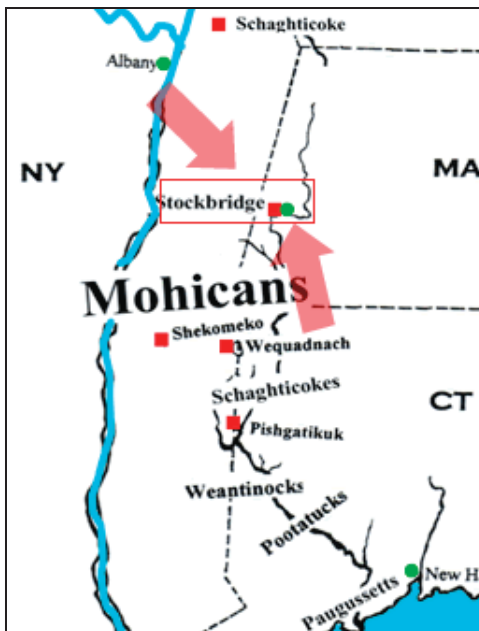
When this proposition surfaced a few years ago some – including me – were nonplussed. “Why?” But I kept an open mind.

While there is no evidence of Native American settlement in the Berkshires’ interior prior to European contact, I resolved to learn more and have since come to agree with Simon’s idea. In this two-part article, I’ll attempt to explain why I now agree that it is appropriate that the role and legacy of native people here be finally recognized.

This is simply a matter of acknowledgement and respect. It is not political correctness. My hope is that at least some readers will also be fascinated about this long overdue story. I hope they’ll agree that it greatly enriches the heritage and wonder of Sandisfield.

### WHO WERE THE MOHICANS?

The Mohicans were part of the far-ranging Eastern Algonquin people (Carolinas to Canada). For centuries or much longer the Mohicans occupied villages in the upper tidal Hudson River Valley and eastward to the upper Housatonic watershed and south to Litchfield County, Conn. Tribal land boundaries in this vast region were vaguely designated and fluctuated.



Map: Donna Heap

Displaced by the Mohawks of upstate New York by 1680, the Mohicans (Housatonics) reestablished along the Massachusetts border and the Taconic mountains with settlements from Great Barrington to Stockbridge. Hunting grounds in the Berkshires may therefore have increased in importance.



### Chief Konkapot Meets With John Sergeant

*“From the west window of his South Street studio, Rockwell could view the area along the Housatonic River that had once been hunting and fishing grounds of the Stockbridge Indians. Inspired by his town’s history, Rockwell painted a meeting of Chief Konkapot with John Sergeant. The setting is Sergeant’s home. Sergeant’s wife Abigail, known to harbor contempt for the Indians, is seen peering around a corner. Because it was not a commissioned piece and had no deadline, Rockwell worked on Sergeant & Konkapot intermittently. Poor health prevented his completing it to his satisfaction.” – Norman Rockwell Museum.*

By the 1730s, the population, once in the thousands, had been decimated by conflict, European-imported diseases, and relentless colonist expansion. And alcohol. Squeezed between Dutch on the west and the advancing English to the east, in 1734 they agreed to a proposal by the General Court in Boston to settle on a reserve of about 9,000 acres (of their own ancestral land) they called the Great Meadow which would include a mission, Indian Town. When the relocation was completed in 1736, the indigenous community numbered no more than 200, including members from other tribes.

### SERGEANT AND KONKAPOT

John Sergeant (1710-49), a protégé of John Edwards, arrived to Christianize the Indians and to teach them English. Fluent in the Mohican language, Sergeant earned the tribe’s respect and trust. The appearance of the village and its administration were patterned after English tradition, but the Mohicans managed to retain their culture and identity and most of all their integrity.

Their leader, or sachem, Chief Konkapot, welcomed white settlers including some Dutch and the two groups jointly administered the village, initially with the aid of an interpreter. However, by 1738-39 colonists were a majority and controlled civic affairs. The village was renamed Stockbridge after a town in England. Since then, the Mohicans have been known as the Stockbridge Indians.

In 1737, Massachusetts proprietors (Royal land grant holders) negotiated with Konkapot and ten other Housatonic signatories, including a woman, Naunowsquah, for a large amount of land in the southwestern Bay colony. The tribe debated for four days in a council-of-fire before accepting the “offer” of £450, cider and rum. The land was immediately divided into four “plantations” to facilitate settlement. They were Tyringham/Monterey (1); New Marlborough (2); Sandisfield (3); and Becket (4).

The coexistence between the English and the Stockbridge proved beneficial to the former, particularly because the Indians provided a buffer between them and the French during the French and Indian War of 1754-63. (That story was immortalized in James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*, published in 1826).

### THE MOHICANS, HEROIC ALLIES IN TWO COLONIAL WARS

A debt of gratitude is owed by this country to the Stockbridge Mohicans who fought in Rogers Rangers militia and with others in the vicious and bloody French and Indian War and again with the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. They participated in the Siege of Boston, in the battles of Saratoga and Monmouth, and they helped to capture Fort Ticonderoga in the company of Col. John Brown, a native son of Sandisfield. About 15 Stockbridge were killed in 1778 in a British ambush at the Bronx, New York.

For this and more the tribe received commendation from George Washington in 1783 and by the U.S. government in 1794.

Certainly some of the 240 Sandisfield men and boys who fought for Independence would have served alongside Stockbridge Indians.

The Stockbridge are said to be the only Native Americans to serve with the colonists in both wars. They were also first to be granted citizenship. Nevertheless, the abuse of the Mohicans because of the perfidy and greed of Dutch and English colonial overseers followed by American westward expansion is deplorable.

**DISPLACED AGAIN AND AGAIN**

After 50 years at Stockbridge, by 1784 the population and land holdings of the Stockbridge Indians were greatly reduced. The tribe's situation was dire and trending badly. The only practical option was to move. The Iroquois Oneida invited them to their reservation in central New York. But in the 1820s/1830s the tribes were again uprooted to the west. The Stockbridge and the Munsee eventually landed in northeastern Wisconsin under the federal Indian Removal program.

Today the tribe is federally recognized as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. The Community maintains a strong affinity for their Berkshires roots. They visit often and recently relocated an office to Williamstown to promote preservation and public awareness of Stockbridge-Munsee heritage.

**CONNECTION BETWEEN THE STOCKBRIDGE INDIANS AND SANDISFIELD**

"This town was originally Indian hunting ground, [and] was never an Indian settlement," wrote the Rev. Levi White in his history of Sandisfield (1829). Other than this observation subsequent major histories of the county and Sandisfield make virtually no mention of Native Americans. It is as if they had never been here.

The founding families of Sandisfield in the early 1750s may not have had to deal with the Stockbridge as direct neighbors. But for the next 35 years, growing political and social rancor between the Indians and the colonists in Stockbridge would have reached the ears of anyone living 20 miles away then in Sandisfield.

**HISTORIC TRAIL CONNECTED MOHICAN NATION WITH SANDISFIELD**

During the 17th century a trail existed – some observers believe it had been in use (for trading) for centuries – from the Hudson River Valley through the Berkshires to at least Westfield. The first account of its existence was by the Rev. Benjamin Wadsworth of Boston who led a delegation in 1694 for discussions with the "Five Nations" near Albany about trade and relationships. Known by many names, today it is the Knox Trail.

It snaked through five miles of the Beech Plain including Otis State Forest near upper Spectacle Pond. This was a choice location for encampments and hunting and fishing, with open meadows for farming. The Housatonics no doubt enjoyed the abundant fresh water clams found in Spectacle Pond at that time.

In her 1998 history of Sandisfield, local historian Anne Hoffman wrote, "Prior to 1725 there were no indications of native settlements but evidence of hunting activities existed. Arrowheads were strewn about with a cache of them found hidden between two boulders [from Levi White, 1829]. For feasting during the hunt they built their campfire on a large slab of rock. Several 'roasting rocks' have been located in Sandisfield."

The most compelling evidence of long-term indigenous presence in Sandisfield are the many ceremonial stone landscapes (CSLs) such as mounds, enclosures, walls, and cairns, particularly in the vicinity of protective Otis State Forest. Tribal experts and archeologists cannot definitively date or attribute such structures to the Mohicans per se, but it is logical – at least to me – that they should be of Mohican origin. Curiously, the conventional historical record of early America is devoid of mentions these native-built stone landscapes.

*Next month – Part Two of Native American Presence in Sandisfield: Ceremonial Stone Landscapes.*

*I am grateful to Bonney Hartley and Heather Bruegl of the Stockbridge-Munsee Community of Williamstown and Bowler, Wisconsin, respectively, for assistance in the preparation of this article.*

**MOHICAN OR MAHICAN?**

Mahican is a common alternate. Mohican should not be confused with Mohegan (Connecticut) or Mohawk (Iroquois), which are different major tribes with intertwined histories. Hausatonic is a common variation for the Mohican subgroup.

**JOHN FIELD**  
TREE SERVICE, INC.

QUALITY TREE CARE...SAFELY DELIVERED

fieldtreeservice.com 413-329-6519











*The Hillside  
Garden Inn*  
*An Intimate B&B*

*The perfect place for your out-of-town guests!*

*Offering gracious, warm hospitality and charming, immaculate accommodations in the historic c. 1784 Elijah Twining house.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

- Five-Star Trip Advisor® Rating
- Sumptuous, Multiple-Course Homemade Breakfast
- Screened-In Patio Overlooking Tranquil, Park-like Grounds and Beautiful Lush Gardens
- Welcoming Wraparound Porch Overlooking the Farmington River
- Easy Access Flexible Check-In/Out Times

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

3 Tolland Road  
Sandisfield, Mass.  
413.258.4968  
www.hillsidegardeninn.com

# PRIFTI MOTORS, INC.

**MA STATE INSPECTIONS  
COMMERCIAL STATE INSPECTIONS**



Monday - Friday 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

(413) 569-3666 ~ (800) PRIFTIS (774-3847)



**529 College Highway Southwick MA 01077**



# Monterey Food Pantry Serves All of South County

By Andrea DuBrow

A new service based in Monterey, Pantry PickUp is open to all residents of South Berkshire County. There are no income guidelines and shoppers are welcome to visit every week all year. Food is distributed on a first come first served basis.



When: Pantry PickUps are on Saturdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m.


Where: Monterey United Church of Christ, 449 Main Road, Monterey.

What: The Pantry offers a pre-packed bag of fresh fruit and vegetables as well as milk, eggs, and cheese.

Due to Covid-19, shoppers must wear masks and knock on the church basement door located at the corner of Tyringham and Main Road. Your bag will be brought to your car for contactless delivery.

Those who need their food delivered can call the Council on Aging at 528-1443 ext. 247 to make arrangements.

If you would like to make a monetary contribution, checks can be made out to "Monterey Church" with a note in the memo line that the gift is for the Pantry or MCP. Checks should be mailed to PO Box 182, Monterey MA 01245.

You can also give online via the church website, montereychurch.org, clicking on the "Donate" button at the top of the screen and making a note that the gift is intended for the Food Pantry or MCP. 



Fully licensed and insured with over 40 years of experience. Our team has the skill and knowledge to take you project from bare lot to Landscape you will love.

**Patios Walls and Walkways,  
Foundations and Septic installation,  
Water Features of all sizes, Garden  
Planning and planting**



**Contact Us Today!**  
Office 413-258-3375  
cwnelson.com  
lookingglassgardens.com  
19 Dodd Rd., Sandisfield, MA  
01255  
chuckwnelson@earthlink.net



## Cannabis Project Moving Too Fast for Some

con't from p. 1

The meeting may then give the first accurate idea of how the town's public opinion divides over the proposed facility, with advocates and opponents only lately gathering themselves into their various camps. (Details of the planned facility, together with arguments for and against, are to be found on pages 10-13.)

It seems that those who favor the facility, many of them long-time residents, are largely persuaded by the financial promise of the operation. They welcome the notion that hundreds of thousands of dollars in new tax revenues may course into our cash-strapped community coffers. Select Board Chairman Brian O'Rourke even predicts that such a sum would equate to the property taxes from as many as 110 new homes built locally.


Opponents – many of them relative newcomers and second-home owners – are highly skeptical of the promised financial windfall and are concerned also about smell, noise, security, environmental damage and ground- and lake-water pollution.

Their concern has been heightened lately by the behavior of the current Select Board Chairman, Brian O'Rourke. At a recent Board meeting due to discuss the marijuana by-law, O'Rourke left for "vacation" after a single vote on an unrelated matter, leaving his bewildered colleague board members to table the cannabis proposal for a later work session and depriving the public of a chance to comment.

The opposition appears to mean business.

Under the lead of a New York-based psychotherapist and second-home owner, Leslie Garwood, who helped campaign successfully to stop a much smaller proposed operation on West Hubbard Road, concerned citizens have formed Sandisfield Neighbors for Pot-Free Forests. The neighbors' coalition has so far distributed lawn signs and fliers and even hired a lawyer, Jesse Belcher-Timme of the Springfield firm of Doherty, Wallace, Pillsbury and Murphy, PC. They plan a GoFundMe campaign to pay for it all.

Garwood's group say they are preparing an all-out campaign to halt what they regard as the Select Board's power-grab and to return the decision making on this critical issue, as they see it, to the town's vote.

Opponents also hope the Town Meeting will approve an outright ban on local large-scale marijuana cultivation. Selectman George Riley doubts the state Attorney-General would approve such a measure, since Sandisfield has already voted in favor of cannabis consumption. The opponents' lawyer believes otherwise. 

# Rec Update

## BUNNY HOP AROUND ON SUNDAY, MARCH 28

By Lynn Rubenstein

Our Valentine Card "Make and Take" was a hit. Not only did we hand out all the fixings to make a couple of cards and candy for your sweetheart, your mother, or your own sweet tooth, we also spread the love and warmth you find in our town. Thanks to all who participated.

Our next event will have you hopping happy: Sandisfield's first Bunny Hop Around.


Sunday, March 28 at Firehouse #2 on Rt. 57. 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. Starting point: Firehouse #2 on Sandisfield Road (Rt. 57).

One of our hippest/happiest hoppers will be on call at the #2 Firehouse to hand out your Easter egg "basket" and directions to the rest of the bunny stops. At each stop you will receive surprises from the Easter Bunny's helpers. If your own rabbit's foot is in your favor, you may even get to see the Easter Bunny.

Due to the pandemic, we ask that you and your kids remain in your vehicles. We will happily hop on over to you.

Remember: the first hop is at Firehouse #2.

We hope to see you then. Happy Hopping.

Your Rec Committee wishes you and your families a Happy Easter and a Happy Passover. 

Dawn Lemon, Roger Kohler, Laura Messina, Chrissy O'Brien, Lynn Rubenstein

### NEW BOSTON CRANE SERVICE & SLEDS

Snowmobiles, ATV's, Generators, Trailers,  
Lawn & Garden Equipment, Log Splitters

Parts & Service available for most  
bikes, ATV's & snowmobiles



Husqvarna

Timberwolf



STIHL



OPEN: Tues - Fri 9am - 6pm / Sat & Mon 9am - 3pm  
Sun 9am - 1pm / closed Mon (Nov 1-April 1)

Route 8 / P.O. Box 691  
Sandisfield, MA 01255

www.newbostoncrane.com

413-258-4653

fax 413-258-2884

nbcss@verizon.net

## MJ TUCKERS PIZZA & PUB

ROUTE 8 / 61 S. MAIN ST., NEW BOSTON, MASS

"THE WAY THINGS USED TO BE"

a FAMILY FRIENDLY RESTAURANT WITH A RUSTIC ATMOSPHERE

ABOUT  
FAMOUS  
RESHOE  
URNAMENTS

HOSTING PARTIES AND EVENTS | see us on FACEBOOK  
FOR INFORMATION AND TAKE-OUT CALL 413 258-4040

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

# CANNABIS FORUM

*The Times has received many letters from concerned citizens regarding the proposed marijuana growth facility to be built at the intersection of Town Hill Road and Abby Road.*

## CANNABIS AGAIN

*By Leslie Garwood,  
Sandisfield Neighbors for Pot-Free Forests*

Sandisfield is besieged by a dilemma: preserve the bucolic, pristine woods cherished by residents and visitors? Or open the town to industrial cannabis cultivation?

Some investors seek the latter on land abutting Sandisfield State Forest, west of Town Hill Road along an unmarked, unpaved lane called Abby Road. The Select Board seeks to approve a Special Permit for the factory, arguing it will bring needed revenue to the town. Residents are distressed that our elected officials have neglected to bring the choice of either regulating cannabis through bylaws, or banning it outright, to a town vote. Since Massachusetts legalized marijuana businesses in 2018, Sandisfield remains one of only 22 municipalities out of 351, that has not voted, leaving a monumental decision solely in the hands of the three Selectmen.

Sandisfield has now received its first request, from SAMA Productions, LLC, to grow cannabis in a facility with 23 commercial greenhouses and a 5,000 square foot manufacturing building. The initial plan was presented at a "Community Outreach Meeting" held December 16, 2020. Few attended due to poor notice, frigid weather, a weekday evening date, excluding part-time residents (who are also taxpayers.) However, holding the meeting allowed SAMA to proceed to the next step of submitting a Host Community Agreement, or HCA.

As clearly stated in the Cannabis Control Commission Guidelines for Municipalities, the HCA "must stipulate the responsibilities of the community and the marijuana establishment." The agreement may include a Community Impact Fee of up to three percent of gross sales to offset "costs imposed on the municipality due to the establishment operating there." The proposal is for a cultivator (not retailer) which would limit the CIF to that three percent.

How much could the Town expect in revenue? According to Cannabis Business Times of June

2020, just 11 percent of cultivators nationwide grossed \$5 million or more. In over five years of tracking since 2016, only about 30 percent of all growers grossed over \$1 million with the rest grossing much less than that. The trade publication also cited "competition/declining prices" as the primary "challenge among cultivators." With New York and Connecticut likely to legalize marijuana in 2021, their own retail and cultivation will soon cut into Bay State business.



*Grievances are aired at the corner of Abbey and Town Hill Roads.*

### THE KEY PLAYERS

SAMA Productions, LLC is comprised of an Allston-based attorney, two investors from out of state, and a pair of cannabis consultants from Oregon.

This is not their first rodeo in the Berkshires. In 2019 this same group, (then Fulcrum Enterprises), pitched a similar project on Van Deusenville Road in Great Barrington. The COM was dubbed the "Community Outrage Meeting" by the media. Residents determined to protect their environment and their property values, self-funded independent studies on odor, noise, light, water and more, casting doubt on the "safe" studies presented by SAMA. The Berkshire Edge quoted a former Great Barrington selectman as stating "Fulcrum lied to us" and had "no integrity." The opposition forced Fulcrum to withdraw their application.

These are the same individuals with whom Sandisfield would be doing business.

This property is closely situated to a full-time family with a child, a couple hoping to retire there, and others. Now, marked by pink ribbons, SAMA owns 61 acres and five separate buyers own other lots, all purchased in September 2019 from Franklin Woods, LLC a real estate investor. Reached for comments, several owners are upset at this potential disturbance to an otherwise serene environment.

### WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once enacted, bylaws would determine the size and location of facilities, ideally to areas where they would have the least impact (visual, odor, noise, light, water, traffic) on residential areas. The Town's Select Board and Planning Board have had this on their agendas many times since 2019, yet the process was never completed. Even with requests from residents concerned about the possibility of a grow facility near them, the process just stalled.

Recent Select Board meetings inviting public comments leave many residents feeling that their concerns will be ignored. In one month, on March 15, the articles for the next Town Meeting warrant are due. The Town Meeting will occur May 15. Will the SAMA permit be rushed through before the town can have its say?



*(The following column represents Roger Brown's personal views and not those of the Finance Committee, of which he is the chair. – Editor)*

### WE NEED THE MONEY!

*By Roger Brown, West Street*

With so much heard and reported from a vocal segment in opposition to the proposed cannabis cultivation and manufacturing facility on Abby Road in Sandisfield, I would like to provide unemotional conceptual support of grow facilities in town.

It's a good thing that the Select Board is actively in discussions with grow businesses. I commend them for engaging positively with businesspeople willing to invest in the town and evaluating the opportunities and risks when making decisions for the Town. Sandisfield should be a place with a reputation of encouraging businesses that provide financial benefits and not one that closes the doors to opportunities. Specifically, I am in favor of the Select Board's approval of the Sama HCS for the following reasons:

# CANNABIS FORUM

- Sandisfield needs revenue: From a budget financed overwhelmingly by residential property taxes, Sandisfield has poor roads, poor town facilities and provides limited services for residents. There is no clear path to fund much needed internet services as well as fixing/maintaining roads and improving town facilities without seeking diversification of revenue beyond residential real estate tax. This proposal would provide an opportunity for revenue diversification.
- The proposal is relatively low impact: Grow facilities currently are one of the lowest-impact commercial enterprise with the highest revenue to the town for minimal expenditure. I did not say “no impact” because there will be some impact. But versus the noise, visual impact and expenses involved in clean energy generation or the environmental, road wear and noise issues of gravel quarries or sights and smell of a chicken or pig farm ... the impact of a daylight, seasonal grow facility proposed seem small. (Note: I support animal husbandry and feel any potential commercial opportunity should be carefully considered along with the associated impact on Sandisfield.)
- It has revenue potential: Besides the agreed contributions to the town and property taxes, most of the town’s opportunity would be tied to the gross revenue of the facility which can’t be guaranteed. But that’s the same for any unsubsidized commercial enterprise. I see many beneficial provisions in the proposed HCA and no substantial downside risks for the town. The worst-case scenario would be the facility would generate no revenue for the town and the town is out some gravel and grading of a town road. The upside potential revenue could be considerable.
- It works within the current rules: The Commonwealth allows for the cultivation, manufacture and distribution of cannabis. Sandisfield can limit or prohibit growth, manufacture and retail distribution of cannabis beyond the Commonwealth’s regulation but to-date the town has not. The facility should be evaluated based on the zoning and other restrictions currently in place. Let’s observe the basic fairness issue and not change the rules in the middle of the game.

The proposed facility, as it will not be a retail dispensary, may not generate the “millions” that towns such as Great Barrington have seen. But it will also not present the sizable impact to the Town that a retail facility would make. As a

substantially smaller community, Sandisfield does not need the facility to generate millions to make a positive impact—\$100,000 would be substantial improvement to the town’s finances. It’s time for the town to move forward with this opportunity.



*Local resident Lorraine Greenwell walks near the proposed site of the pot farm.*

*Photos: Setsuko Winchester*



*(The following column represents George Riley’s personal views and not those of the Select Board, of which he is a member. – Editor)*

## WHAT IS BEST FOR THE TOWN?

*By George Riley*

The information contained in Leslie Garwood’s article last month was misleading in many respects. Here are the facts: A company named SAMA Productions has purchased 60 acres of land in Sandisfield, three out of eight recently subdivided lots bordered by Town Hill Road, Abby Road and Sandisfield State Forest. In December, SAMA held a community outreach meeting to inform residents of their intention to build a marijuana cultivation site on that property.

SAMA had in 2019 applied to build a similar facility on six acres in Great Barrington, on an industrial site which was, however, closely surrounded by residential homes. That site was problematic, and it’s understandable why SAMA decided to withdraw its application there.

Some of the concerns that the article brings up are legitimate but most of the concerns expressed in

that article have already been addressed, and the others will be addressed in the Special Permit process, assuming that SAMA does apply, which has not yet happened.

The article, to name just one example, states that the revenue – roughly estimated at about \$350,000 per year - would not cover the Town’s expenses for road maintenance. This is absurd. (SAMA is also donating an additional \$15,000 per year, \$10,000 of that designated for road maintenance - which alone is enough to pay for graveling Abby Road, a Town road which we are required to maintain.)

To put this into perspective, this revenue is equivalent to building over 100 houses in town. How would people feel if a developer wanted to build 100 houses on Town Hill Road? Each house built destroys trees, consumes water and energy, pollutes, adds traffic and burdens Town services, and (perhaps the greatest impact) often adds children to our school district, further raising our tax expenses.

What about our responsibility to our many neighbors on fixed or limited incomes, for whom our tax burden is oppressive? The Town of Sandisfield voted 2-1 to legalize cannabis in Massachusetts. But not here? We must beware of the attitude that says, “I’m here now, so I want to close the door behind me.” Of course, we all cherish our rural environment, which is a precious gift not only for us to enjoy, but to pass on to future generations. And yet I never heard any objections when the Town decided to log Yanner Park, cutting down thousands of century-old climate-preserving trees for a one-time-only compensation of about one-fourth of SAMA’s yearly revenue.

And could it be that cannabis – so-called “pot” - itself is the hidden issue behind the objections expressed? How would folks feel if SAMA wanted to establish a vineyard instead, or to grow lettuce?

This Select Board takes seriously its responsibility to act in the best interests of the entire town. In their dealings up to now with the Select Board, SAMA has been transparent and willing so far to accept the many restrictions and conditions we intend to impose on them. We have to and will work to protect our environment and natural resources.

# CANNABIS FORUM

If we can do this and at the same time bring in much-needed business revenue for the Town, then we all will benefit.

So, I ask you to keep an open mind as we sort through this process. I personally believe that we have taken into account every reasonable objection and concern that has been brought to us on this issue, and I do not intend to compromise on the very strict requirements we will impose on SAMA's operation if they want to apply for a Special Permit.



## CANNABIS CULTIVATOR WEIGHS IN

As a cannabis cultivator with five years of experience in the industry, I focus on growing medicinal marijuana. It is great that Sandisfield has this opportunity, but the Host Community Agreement concerns me.

First, the claim that "drip irrigation will be used [...] so there will not be any runoff" is false. They are either lying or do not know how to grow cannabis. This should be addressed for both this project and our Town bylaws to protect our land and water. We must require a proper waste disposal system. Water will always go down, we can't control what it takes with it, so it must be properly disposed of.

Next, the photo of their proposed plans clearly shows where they will be cutting trees down to build greenhouses but why do that when there's space on that property without trees? We are a big beautiful

wooded town, it's something we should cherish and maintain, instead of letting greed continue to get in the way of protecting the environment.

The most important thing we can do as residents is create town bylaws to protect our forests and waterways from environmental damage or pollution. I believe we should also create a stipulation that trees shouldn't be cut down for building; this would encourage already clear-cut land to be bought instead. The Town could also consider adding another cannabis bylaw to require an annual environmental conservation "voluntary contribution" from the cannabis company.

We should cherish and maintain our diverse and nearly pristine environment. We can protect our Town and benefit from this proposed business if we make it a symbiotic relationship without letting greed get in the way.

*Samantha Chamberlain  
South Sandisfield*



## BYLAWS NEEDED

When I voted to legalize recreational use of cannabis (in California where I lived at the time), I was voting so people using it or small growers who were getting harassed, raided, fined and even imprisoned in some places could be free of such abuse. I was not voting for the establishment of an any-size, any-location industry. I imagine most Sandisfield residents had similar motivations. Therefore, to allow such an anything-goes-as-long-as-it-benefits-the-town-financially attitude is wrong. For that

reason I request that the Select Board delay any approval of any cannabis business special permit until they pass bylaws to govern how we permit growers and other related businesses in our town, as many Massachusetts cities and towns have done, and incorporate residents' input about those bylaws as part of the approval process. That way this issue may be resolved better without further dividing our town.

*Bill Taylor  
New Hartford Road*



## SELLING OUT SANDISFIELD?

Our town has been financially struggling for some time. Now, a business is tempting us with promises of easy tax revenue. Is it a perfect match for Sandisfield, or just an exploitive corporation taking advantage of a small town?

Even in the best-case scenario, it does not solve Sandisfield's underlying mismanagement problems, but most certainly endangers the bucolic environment our neighbors have enjoyed for ages.

With a total footprint equivalent to our Route 57 fire station 18 times over, it will be, by far, the largest complex in all of Sandisfield. It's within a quarter mile of a pocket of homes and a handful of brand-new abutting landowners who were unaware of this project. The proposal will add lighting to facilitate 24-hour surveillance and will likely create workday traffic where there had never been before.

All this talk about revenue, when we have over \$1,000,000 sitting in the bank without any capital improvement plan. Sandisfield failed its last full audit and has not resolved the deficiencies. We remain one of only a handful of towns that has failed to put forth any marijuana bylaws for discussion or vote.

Instead of doing the hard work and listening to the townspeople, our selectmen are shutting down debate and hanging up on meetings. They are selling out an established neighborhood for unrestricted revenue equivalent to a small fraction of the annual budget.

I'm not against all cannabis projects in Sandisfield, but I am against this one.

*Alex Bowman  
South Sandisfield*

See how much you could save by going solar. Call or text today for a free consultation.

**CHARLEY GIAIMO**  
(212) 495-9945  
charley.giaimo@vivintsolar.com

Copyright © 2020 Vivint Solar Developer, LLC. All rights reserved. Vivint Solar Developer, LLC (EIN: 80-0756438) is a licensed contractor in each state in which we operate. [Massachusetts License: 170848; 15688 A; SS-002342]



# CANNABIS FORUM



## IN MY FRONT YARD

My wife and I own land on Abby road, directly across from the proposed Sama marijuana production facility. We bought the land several years ago and have been saving up to build a small house on this beautiful property. The top of Town Hill is a quiet, peaceful neighborhood, and we have been looking forward to being part of this community.

Abby road is quiet and tranquil, but not for long if Sama is given permission to build their facility. The plans for their proposal indicate that their greenhouses will be just across the road, literally a few yards from my property.

I am not opposed to marijuana farming, and I certainly understand the importance of the money this project could potentially bring to the town, but I just think this is a terrible location for such a massive facility.

Twenty-three greenhouses, security fencing, security lighting, security cameras, traffic – it's hard to really label this a farm. This is an industrial facility. I think the residents of this neighborhood have a very legitimate concern about allowing this facility to be built in their back yard. Or in my case, front yard.

I hope the town considers this proposal very carefully and pays close attention to the concerns of the residents, especially those who will be directly impacted by the effects on public safety, quality of life, property values, destruction to the environment, crime, odors, and increased traffic.

*Jon Riedeman  
Abby Road*



## WANTS PROMISES IN WRITING

Having just moved from an area in Northern California that is widely known as the "Emerald Triangle," I can tell you that unless a cannabis business is a small "mom and pop" operation, the effects upon a location are great.

Our former community in Mendocino County is still struggling with how to regulate such large-scale cannabis grows. My husband and I had friends and neighbors who had moved onto property that had once been farmland. Then

large-scale growers moved in next door. What happened next was predictable: large unattractive privacy fences were installed and security dogs patrolled the area. Folks were coming in and out at all hours of the day and night, not interested in being neighborly. Not to mention damage to the ground and water resources.

A great point was made in the article about the small contribution of taxes (estimated to be around three percent) that would come to the town from their operation. That's not much when you factor in potential amelioration of the soil, roads and water should they not be good stewards of the land.

People always imagine that their towns will get millions from these grows, that there will be job creation. But most large-scale growers are in one grower's words "cheap." They take their earnings and put them far away, mostly where they are from. The idea that profits from cannabis cultivation trickle down to help a community is a fantasy. Better to have these folks write out exactly what they intend to do, how they intend to do it. How will they protect local waterways? What's their plan for hiring local folks? Make them stick to the plan, if you can, make it legally binding and short of that, take it with a big grain of salt.

*Jaye Alison Moscariello  
Sandisfield Center*



## WARY OF 'POTROPOLIS'

As a Rehabilitation Counsellor with more than 20 years of experience working with many disabilities, most prominently substance abuse, I consider with trepidation any action that might make of Sandisfield a "Potropolis."

Has anyone in authority read and/or summarized, say, the last 10 years (or more) of the published information concerning the use, abuse, and treatment and legal and law enforcement issues raised by a marijuana business in a small town like ours? There are many interrelated issues for all of us to evaluate.

*Daniel S. Keener  
South Sandisfield*



## RETIRING IN TOWN? NOT SO SURE ANYMORE

After spending decades coming to the Berkshires, we had fallen completely in love with this beautiful part of the country and knew we wanted a permanent residence here. We purchased our home in Sandisfield five years ago after an exhaustive search throughout the area. During a three-year period, we looked at more than 60 homes.

Sandisfield was appealing for several reasons. Our close friends had already purchased a home in Sandisfield and were very happy. We had the good fortune to be their repeat guests for many weekends, down to having our own set of sheets and towels in the linen closet. Hiking, snow shoeing, cross-country skiing, canoeing, fishing, fresh veggies and eggs from the farm down the road, a beautiful, serene place to take a breath ... we knew this was where we wanted to live.

The growing threat of a large-scale cannabis facility in our residential area is alarming. We have no argument against a facility being built and benefitting the Town financially if it were built in an industrial zone, away from families and those seeking the peace and quiet that Sandisfield offers its residents. We bought our house with the intention of retiring here, which to be honest, looms nearer than farther away. With multiple entities seeking to house cannabis facilities in Sandisfield, this prospect is become less and less appealing.

We are asking the Select Board to please consider the pleas of its residents and maintain the tranquility and charm of this special place.

*Lorraine and Jay Greenwell  
Town Hill Road*



# Berkshire Botanical Garden's Annual Bulb Show Returns

**FEATURES NEW ENGLAND FAVORITES, LESSER-KNOWN VARIETIES**

Berkshire Botanical Garden's Fitzpatrick Conservatory becomes a harbinger of spring starting March 1 until March 14, when the public is invited to enjoy hundreds of flowering bulbs in an annual exhibition featuring New England springtime favorites along with some striking, lesser-known varieties hand-picked by BBG's horticulturists.

Visitors to the greenhouse will see an evolving collection of 1,400 blooming bulbs over a two-week period.


Some of the standouts from last year's show will be back, including the diminutive 'Big Smile' Grape Hyacinth and the enchanting Guinea Hen Flower, with its nodding, bell-shaped blooms in a variety of showy colors and faintly checkered patterns. Alongside these will be some new inclusions: 'Vincent Van Gogh,' a striking, dark purple tulip with fringed petals; a diminutive, pink-orange tulip called 'Salmon Gem'; a trio of new daffodils; and two exquisite dwarf irises, 'Harmony' and 'Pauline,' with flowers of brilliant blue and deep purple, respectively.

"The horticulture department at BBG is excited to open our doors to the public to showcase the colors and fragrances of spring at the Bulb Show," said Director of Horticulture Matthew Turnbull. "By March, we all need a remedy to ward off the winter blues."

As in previous years, the bulbs will be exhibited among the Garden's collection of succulents housed year-round in the Fitzpatrick Conservatory, a period building replete with curved glass.

"Last year's Bulb Show had to be cut short because of the sudden onset of COVID restrictions and concerns," said BBG Executive Director Mike Beck. "We had a greenhouse full of beautiful color and scent, and hardly anyone to enjoy that. This year, I am very excited to bring this taste of spring back to the hundreds of visitors who routinely come for a quick escape from winter."

The Bulb Show runs March 1- 14, daily from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Considered the Garden's gift to the community, Bulb Show admission is free; however, for safety in compliance with current state guidelines, advance reservations are required, as are masks. Visitors are asked to plan ahead, as all other buildings at the Garden remain closed for the season, and restrooms will not be available.

More information on upcoming events and the Garden's education program is available online at [berkshirebotanical.org](http://berkshirebotanical.org). Berkshire Botanical Garden is located at 5 West Stockbridge Road, Stockbridge, Mass. 



## A GOOD BOOK

Life is always better  
With a good book in hand  
Life is always better  
With stacks on your nightstand.

At the end of the day  
Relax... escape  
Curl into bed,  
Book on tape.

Fiction, nonfiction,  
mysteries, romance.  
I'll take any tale  
To enchant and entrance.

Books blend together  
Again and again.  
Do I like this author?  
Did I read it already? When?

There's nothing more magical  
Than when a book transports,  
Lands you in a world  
Of a mystical sort.

Life is always better  
When a story is nearby  
Life is always better,  
When the plot twists and terrifies.

Karen Garfield  
New Hartford Road

*The Knox Trail Inn*  
**IS NOW OPEN FOR  
LUNCH SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS**  
Our Pine Room Pub is socially & safely spaced for indoor dining!

CHECK OUT OUR NEW MENU AT:  
[knoxtrailinn.com](http://knoxtrailinn.com) & Like us on Facebook  
Follow us on Instagram



#knoxstrong2020  
**413-269-4400**

*Dine in or Takeout!*

**BACON WRAPPED MEATLOAF  
KNOX FISH & CHIPS  
CHICKEN BROCCOLI ALFREDO  
GRILLED RIBEYE**

or...

**\*HOUSE SPECIAL PRIME RIB  
GRINDERS & SPECIALTY PIZZAS  
BUILD A BURGER  
& SALADS**

*Great Appetizers!*

**WED-FRI 5-9PM SAT 12-9PM SUN 12-7PM ★ 1898 EAST OTIS RD. (RT. 23) EAST OTIS, MA**

# Our Transfer Station

## SOME RESIDENTS' OBSERVATIONS

The Times in December asked for comments about the Sandisfield Transfer Station: Whether it's better or worse than it used to be, whether it's a place we love to gather or just a place to throw out stuff. A Swap Shop opened last June for the exchange of things still good but unneeded. Shop hours are the same as for the Transfer Station: 9-4 on Saturday and Sunday; noon-5 on Wednesday. Here are some of the replies we got from around town.

"The transfer station has improved remarkably in the two years we have been using it – in big ways and small. The swap shed is a terrific addition, and we have snagged some useful things there, while feeling good about leaving stuff we don't need any more but that is too good to throw away."

*North Beech Plain Road*

"Improvements at the transfer station are much appreciated. With a pandemic and getting a lot of things delivered, the box compactor is a real blessing -- makes me feel a bit less wasteful and that my box breakdown doesn't always have to be perfect."

*Hammertown Road*

"Keith hands out cards showing what should and should not be recycled and what garbage goes where. A very good effort!"

*Sandisfield Road*

"The expanded hours are very helpful, so I'm less likely to realize closing is in 15 minutes. In a town without a general store, the post office and the transfer station are really two of the main centers of town life!"

*Hammertown Road*

"The overall rearranging of the site and the 'flow' works much better, and we like being able to grab an extra copy of The Sandisfield Times when needed."

*North Beech Plain Road*

"The transfer station is maybe the one place that all Sandisfielders visit at least once a week. During the pandemic, going there has become our only regular outing and a place where we can reliably hope to enjoy seeing a neighbor or two in person every once in awhile."

*North Beech Plain Road*

"Our Transfer Station should be able to accept and transfer trash while not polluting the surrounding area."

*Lower West Street*



### Makin' Ready

*Eversource crew delicately repositioning a transformer on a new, sturdier pole on Cold Spring Road. 14 degrees, February 12.*

*Photo: Sandisfield Times*



## HOMEIMPROVEMENTS

STEVEN SEDDON, SR.

Building and Modifying Homes  
in the Berkshires

Since 2001

413 563 1483

sshhomeimprovements@live.com

www.sshhomeimprovementsma.com

## CHARLES PEASE 413-394-0213

### PLUMBING & HEATING

Residential & Commercial • Licensed & Insured

Gas Boilers • Heat Pumps • Water Heaters  
Well Pumps & Controls • Water Filtration & Conditioning

CharlesAPease@gmail.com



# Comings and Goings



**HERBERT BURTIS**  
1930-2021

Herb Burtis, 90, a world-renowned musician and voice teacher, died February 5 at his home on Rood Hill Road. Herb bought the home with his partner, John Ferris, in 1961.

Herb was also an important figure in the battle to legalize gay rights. In 2004, he and John participated in efforts that led to the legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts, which allowed the couple to marry that year. Following John's death in 2008, Herb participated in a lawsuit that ultimately resulted in the U.S. Supreme Court granting full and equal rights for gay marriage in 2012. In a tribute, GLAD (Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders) wrote: "Our hearts are with Herb's surviving partner, his family, and friends, as we remember Herb with love and gratitude for all he shared."

Herb was born in Battle Creek, Michigan on March 19, 1930. In college, he met John Ferris, also a gifted organist and pianist, and the two became inseparable. John led a distinguished career at Harvard University as organist and choirmaster at Harvard Memorial Church, while Herb became organist and choir director for several New Jersey churches, eventually at Red Bank United Methodist Church which he served for 21 years.

David Fleer, Herb's partner since 2013, said, "Herb possessed many gifts, musical genius being just one of them, and he shared them abundantly with friends, students, and colleagues, all of whom were pleased to be where he was, and happy to work with and for him in any of his endeavors."

As a concert organist, Herb toured Europe and the Caribbean; directed and accompanied many choral concerts, solo recitals, chamber operas, and instrumental groups, imbuing each performance, said David, "with his style, wit, skill, and perfectionist eye toward the highest standard of professionalism."

A voice teacher in Manhattan, Cambridge, and New Jersey, Herb helped often tremulous students to flower into confident singers, performing in recitals, musical productions, and as teachers themselves. Seven of his students sang with the Metropolitan Opera.

When Herb and John sought a place midway between New Jersey and Cambridge, they bought an old red farmhouse (c. 1781) on Rood Hill Road. They described it for Ron Bernard's *Sandisfield: Then and Now*: "They were 'adopted' by a special neighbor who became a dear friend. 'Our very first acquaintance in the village,' said Herb, 'was the wonderful Helmi Wouri. She told us how to arrange for electricity and telephone service – things not taken for granted in those days.'" They moved to Sandisfield full-time in 1990, updating the house for modern living.

Herb and John created the Ferris-Burtis Foundation in 1987 to award scholarships and otherwise help promising students develop careers as classical musicians. Yevgeny Kutik, a professional violinist who has performed several times at the Sandisfield Arts Center where Herb was a board member for several years, said after Herb's death, "Herb's generosity over the years was beyond anything I can properly convey in words. Underlying his support was incredible modesty and a simple desire to be as helpful as possible to artists like me in this incredibly challenging field."

Herb is survived by his brother Mervin and sister-in-law Kay of Portage, Michigan, nephews Stephen, David, and Peter and their families, and his partner, David Fleer.

A celebration of Herb's life will be held later in the spring. The Montano-Shea Funeral Home of Winsted, Conn., was in charge of arrangements. Notes of remembrances and donations can be sent to the Ferris-Burtis Foundation, 800 N. Main Street, Sheffield, MA 01257.







About 1945.



2017, at Ellie's 95th birthday

## ELEANOR PINSKY SKOLNICK

1922-2020

Eleanor Skolnick, 98, died December 25 as a result of complications of a fall. Known to all as Ellie, Eleanor lived with her daughter Sheila Gamradt in Boulder, Colorado.

Ellie loved Montville from the age of seven, when she moved to Sandisfield from Winsted with her parents, Nathan and Sara Pinsky, and her brother Marty and sister Frances. The family lived at the Buck River Poultry Farm on Sandisfield Road (Rt. 57), now the Beardsley residence.

Ellie enjoyed what she always described as “the best childhood ever.” As with many other Sandisfield children in the mid-’30s and early ’40s, her childhood was filled with one-room schoolhouses, swimming, biking (on clunkers only), one-horse open sleigh rides, hay rides, and skating on the pond at Jones Knoll. For Anne Hoffman’s 1998 book, *Sandisfield: Biography of a Town*, Ellie remembered that “winters were long and very cold. When the snow and ice melted the forthcoming spring was a joy to behold. The brooks babbled, the fields turned green, and blossoms appeared everywhere. Spring meant fishing season. We would make our own poles with a stick, string, and a diaper pin, and pull out little trout from the stream. My mom would fry them for us and I can still taste the sweetest, freshest little morsels that melted in our mouths.”

Memories of the Pinsky, Chernick, and Skolnick families can be found in three local histories: Anne Hoffman’s *Sandisfield: Biography of a Town*, Ron Bernard’s *Sandisfield: Then and Now*, and Lorraine German’s *Soil and Shul in the Berkshires*.

After her marriage to Dr. Charles Skolnick, an optometrist, Ellie and family returned every summer to Montville where they stayed with the Pinsky and Chernick families in the farmhouse her cousin, Alex, designed and built, visits which continued until Ellie’s brother, Marty, sold the family farm in 1963. Ellie and her husband lived in Lee and wintered in Florida. Their long retirement years were active with golfing, fishing, playing tennis, dancing, volunteering at Tanglewood, and enjoying the culture of the Berkshires, as well as camping with their children, their grand- and great-grandchildren, and their friends.

After Charlie died in 2008, Ellie spent about ten years keeping company with an adoring Howard Woocher, a retired dentist. Following his death at 103 in 2018, Ellie moved to Boulder to be near her daughter and some of her grandchildren.

Ellie is survived by her daughter, Sheila and her husband Bruce Gamradt, her son Neil Skolnick and his wife, Karen Goldberg, six grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and three nieces and three nephews.

Donations in her memory can be made to The Sandisfield Arts Center, PO Box 31, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

In Boulder, Ellie marveled at the majestic Rocky Mountains, but, writes her family, one of her final smiles after dementia ravaged her mind was evoked by a live FaceTime transmission of a snow-covered Berkshire landscape.



## JANE HASON

1939-2021

A longtime resident of New Hartford Road, Jane Hason died January 30 at the age of 81. An obituary/tribute will be published in The Times’ April issue. Her sons, Peter and Kenneth Hason, and her former daughter-in-law, Philana Rowell, whom Jane always considered her daughter, wrote that since Jane would have wanted a party, “We hope that on her birthday, October 5, we will be able to hold a social gathering to celebrate her and her incredible life.”

*Above photo: Jane Hason, second from right, with Sandisfield friends June Wink, Dassy Herman, and Rita Kasky.*





**Health  
is in  
YOUR  
Hands**

**Wear a Mask,  
Wash Your Hands, and  
Social Distance  
YOU CAN MAKE  
A DIFFERENCE!**

 Fairview Hospital  
BERKSHIRE HEALTH SYSTEMS  
berkshirehealthsystems.org



## Letters to the Editors

### MISSING VAL

I miss Val. We met at an Arts Center event about a year after I moved into Sandisfield. I remember his reaction to my paintings at my first exhibit there. He was sitting at one of the tables, looking around the room at my work with an expression of bewildered awe. When I introduced myself, he looked up at me, wonder in his face. "You did these?" And we began what would be two decades' worth of on again-off again discussions about art, along with all manner of things. I miss those talks. I miss his staunch loyalty to the Arts Center – and to any cause worthy of support. Val was replete with vitality, wit, patience, and humor. And, man, he had a way with words.

The thing I miss the most about him? The poems he wrote for the Times. They were searing, honest, and as beautiful as the mind who made them. As the paper's designer, I put those poems, every month, at the top right of page 3. I read every single one. Cried over more than a few. This is the first month that I have no poem to place, and I'm sadder than I can say. I want to put something there this month in his honor – something beautiful, but we have too many stories in this issue, and there's not enough room. I'm sure he'd understand.

Goodbye, Val. I miss you. I miss you bad.

Rest, dear friend.

*Tina Sotis, Designer for the Times  
North Adams  
(formerly of Stump Rd., Sandisfield)*

### WISHING THEY WERE HERE

#### Reliable, fast, affordable Internet.

I know that this is no secret and has widespread support, but it is keeping me away from our beloved Beech Plain house.

I am a teacher, often teaching remotely, and would have spent at least half of my time since March 2020 in Sandisfield – probably volunteering somewhere and contributing to the local economy. But without Internet in Sandisfield, I'm in Branford.

Wishing health and wellness to all and continued success with my favorite newspaper.

*Maura Sullivan  
Branford, Conn.*



## OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

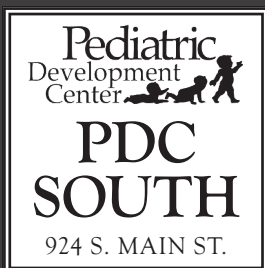
### THE BLUES OF A WINTER NIGHT

"One of the best sounds is hearing the snow plow go by during the night. Thank you, **Road Crew!**"

*Mary Anne Grammar  
South Beech Plain Road*



**Concerned about your infant  
or toddler's development?**



Give us a call and we can set up an appointment to talk with you about any concerns you may have.

**Certified Therapists  
offer evaluation & home visits  
and currently Telehealth  
to eligible children.**

Dept. of Public Health Certified  
Early Intervention Program.

924 S. Main Street  
Great Barrington  
413-717-4083

pediatricdevelopmentcenter.org

# NOW HEAR THIS!

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

## MARCH 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. at the Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road, sponsored by the Council on Aging. For information, contact Nina Carr (258-3314). Free.

**COA Business Meeting** on Wednesday, March 3 at 10:00 a.m. at the Council on Aging, basement level at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex on Route 57.

**New Boston Congregational Church Dinner Take-Out**, March 27 at Firehouse #2 Sandisfield Road (Rt. 57)

**Bunny Hop Around** on Sunday, March 28 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. beginning at Firehouse #2 on Route 57. Participants will pick up a map and find out where to hop to next for treats, eggs, and surprises. In-vehicle only. Free.

### EVENTS/OUTDOOR FUN IN OTHER TOWNS

**Winter Farmer's Market** on Saturday, March 27 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Camp Eisner on 53 Brookside Road in Great Barrington. Featuring locally grown and produced foods and gifts, including fruits and vegetables, cheeses, meats, breads, yarn, and more. Please wear a mask and socially distance.

### ONLINE EVENTS!

**Online Photography Lectures** with Thad Kubis sponsored by the Lee Library on Wednesdays, March 3, and 17 at 6:30 p.m. Please contact Rosemarie Borsody (rborsody@cwmars.org) to register for the series. Free.


**Green Drinks** featuring Botanist Eric Doucette on Tuesday, March 16 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom. Green Drinks is sponsored by the Berkshire Environmental Action Team. Meetings are free and

open to everyone with any environmental interest. Contact Sandisfield resident Elizabeth Orenstein (elizabeth@thebeatnews.org) for the Zoom link.

## The Sandisfield Times is your community newspaper.

We welcome news from your neighborhood, your family and friends (births, deaths, honors/awards).

The Times also publishes classified ads (free for 30 words or less, depending on space).

We also welcome your letters to the editor on topics of concern to Sandisfield readers. Maximum 300 words. 



### The Berkshires' Premier Boutique Real Estate Firm

with a unique talent of matching just the right property with just the right buyer.

in good part it's because we work really hard we care and we listen

Considering Selling? Contact us for an honest and professional market analysis.

Chapin Fish, Broker The #1 Selling Realtor in the Berkshires cumulatively over the last 12 years with over \$166 million in sales

**BROCKMAN**  
real estate  
brockmanrealestate.com  
413-528-4859

Our store  
**farm & home**  
and office  
will open as soon as renovations and restoration are complete at  
**MONTEREY GENERAL**  
448 Main Road in Monterey  
montereygeneral.com  
brockmanrealestate.com  
413-528-9100

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

P.O. Box 584  
Sandisfield, MA 01255  
www.sandisfieldtimes.org

*The Times is grateful to readers who  
contributed to our annual appeal in February.*

*Anonymous*

*Andrew & Marci Allen*

*Jeffrey & Laura Friedman*

*Steven Grise*

*Kenneth & Katarina Larsen*

*James Stern & Jane Judge*

*Bonner McAllester*

*Maura Sullivan*

*Tom & Cynthia Ragusa*

*Stephen Reilly*

*(in memory of Norton Fletcher)*

*Simon Winchester*

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 (non-Sandisfield addresses only) 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. Maximum 300 words. 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**

*Editor: Seth Kershner*

*email: editor@sandisfieldtimes.org*

*Advertising/Subscriptions: Ron Bernard*

*Graphic Design: Tina Sotis*

*Website: Jean Atwater-Williams*

*Now Hear This!: Laura Rogers-Castro*

*Founding Editor: Simon Winchester*

## **SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION**

To have the *The Times* mailed to your home, please complete the information below and send a check for \$25 (annual subscription fee for 11 issues) made out to *The Sandisfield Times* to:

**THE SANDISFIELD TIMES  
PO BOX 584, SANDISFIELD, MA 01255**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address to where *The Times* should be delivered:  
\_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (only used if paper is returned by USPS) \_\_\_\_\_

## **How to Contact Us**

*Mail can be directed to*

*The Sandisfield Times, PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255.*

*If internet accessible, all letters, news events and tips, ideas,  
obituary and family announcements, photos (600 dpi if possible)  
and advertisement queries to editor@SandisfieldTimes.org.*