

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



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Volume XII, Number 1

April 2021

Cannabis: With a Decision Imminent, a Fight is Beginning

By Simon Winchester

Concern over the construction of an enormous, Home Depot-size cannabis growing facility in the woods of northern Sandisfield, undoubtedly the most divisive issue to have confronted our town in decades, has briefly stalled any decision to proceed.

The three-man Select Board, which has the power to grant a special permit to the operator, SAMA Productions LLC, held a testy three-hour public meeting on March 29, but were unable to take a vote on the issue for want of additional documents from SAMA. They will try again on April 5.

A substantial number of attendees expressed keen support for the building of what the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission defines as a Tier Eleven facility – the largest allowed, with 23 greenhouses and over 100,000 square feet of growing space.

Backers of the plan pointed to the promised financial benefits for the town – monies from property tax revenues, pledges of company gifts to town enterprises such as the library and recreation committee, and most importantly, from the so-called Community Impact Fee which cannabis growers are obliged to pay to their host communities. SAMA has said that such fees can deliver from \$90,000 to

con't p.9



Tastes great! During a sunny day in late February, four-year-old Liam Pennington drank sap straight from the spigot on a maple tree on his family's property on Sandisfield Road.

Photo: Will Pennington

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Cultural Council Announces Grants

The Sandisfield Cultural Council is pleased to announce that we have awarded \$4,958 in grants to 15 organizations or individuals to provide cultural programming to the residents of Sandisfield and surrounding areas in fiscal year 2021.

Grants were awarded to the following:

- Ann Jon - IceFire 2021
- Fractured Atlas - Art Close to Home
- Berkshire Bach Society - Bach to the Future
- Dewey Hall - Dewey Sessions Concerts
- Davis Bates - Generations of Fun: Songs & Stories for All Ages
- Dr. "The Machine" Jesse Green - Chainsaws, Cheeseburgers, and Rock N' Roll
- Berkshire South Community Center - Berkshire Ukulele Band and Berkshire Sings
- MUSIC Dance.edu - Hip Hop Dance Chair Exercise for Seniors
- Music in Common - Berkshires Worldwide
- New Marlborough Village Association - Meeting House Programs


- New Stage Performing Arts Center Inc. - Rites of Passage: 20/20 Vision
- Pittsfield Shakespeare in the Park - 2021 Season
- Sandisfield Cultural Council - Sandisfield Memorial Day Parade
- Tom Truss - Rewritten
- WAM Theatre - Season of Events 2021

In keeping with our council priorities, grants were awarded to applicants that best met the following criteria: The venue should reach a large group in the community. School children and activities related to learning are a high priority. Local presenters dealing with the arts, humanities and science are encouraged.

Due to Covid-related restrictions and closures, the Cultural Council did not receive applications in this grant cycle from the Farmington River School or the Sandisfield Arts Center. Since the funding of many programs for fiscal year 2020 was modified or postponed, we extended the deadline to December 2021, in hopes that many of the intended programs could be held in the future.

The Sandisfield Cultural Council is supported by an annual grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, as well as funding of \$250 from the

Town of Sandisfield. Gifts to a local cultural council are considered to be donated to a political subdivision of the Commonwealth exclusively for public purposes as defined in Section 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States and therefore eligible for tax deduction. To support culture in Sandisfield, please consider making a donation to the "Sandisfield Cultural Council" and mailing it to: PO Box 84, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

You may also donate your time. Our Council is comprised of the following volunteer members: Connie Canty, Rosanne Carinci-Hoekstra, Ellen Croibier, Jennifer Hibbins, Jennifer Lenzi, John Skrip, Rosanne Skrip, and Barbara Kershner, who joined us in October 2020. New members are always welcome and may contact us at culturalcouncil@sandisfieldma.gov for more information. 



Turtle Effigy

An exquisite example of a turtle effigy Ceremonial Stone Landscape. See pages 10-11 for Part II for "Native American Presence in Sandisfield."



Signs of Spring

Before the crocuses and snow drops poke through into spring sunshine, an earlier sign of spring appears all over town. Like this one at the intersection of Cold Spring and Hammertown roads.

Because of a prolonged period of cold that lasted well into March, residents did not have to deal with muddy roads until March 11 and 12 which brought sunshine and temps in the 60s, our first thaw of the 2020-21 winter. Everything melted all at once and caused "Road Closed" signs to go up on many of our dirt roads. On request of worried residents trapped at home on mud-prone Hammertown, the Highway Department on March 13 dispatched its 30-year-old behemoth grader to the rescue.

Adding to the confusion at this intersection is that the street sign has been stolen again – for at least the third time in the past several years. Who knew that a "Hammertown Road" sign could be a collector's item to rude, stupid people who are indifferent to the fact that stealing government property costs our town time and money?

Photo and story Times Reporters
More mud reports and photos, page 14

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New Candidate for Select Board

ELECTION MAY 17

By Bill Price

Selectman Brian O'Rourke has decided not to stand for election for a third term. Another resident, however, has taken out papers to run for the office.

Chris Joyce, a self-employed contractor who lives on Sandisfield Road near the foot of Town Hill Road, has signed up for the job. If he remains the only candidate by election time May 17, he'll be elected Sandisfield's newest Selectman and will begin a 3-year term with fellow Selectmen Mark Newman and George Riley. Originally from Sheffield, Joyce moved to Sandisfield in 2016.

Others who have taken out papers for the May 17 election are three incumbents:

Board of Assessors	Kathy Burrows
School Committee	Billie Anderson Pachulski
Library Trustee	Kathy Burrows

Four other offices are so far open for election this year:

Moderator	1 year
Board of Health	3 years
Planning Board	4 years
Planning Board	5 years

The Town Caucus will take place April 8, Thursday, at Old Town Hall, 7:00 p.m. on Silverbrook Road at the intersection with Rt. 57. State mandated masking and distancing requirements will be in place.

Only registered voters will be allowed to vote in the Annual Town Election and at the Annual Town Meeting, May 15. The last day to register is April 27.

Early voting by mail will be available for the election. The application is on the website or voters can call 258-4711, ext. 2, to request an application.

Annual Town Report

As last year, the Annual Town Report, which includes summaries from last year for Town departments, commissions, and committees, will not be mailed to registered voters. Instead, the Report will be posted on the Town's website and available in hard copy at the Annual Town Meeting.

The Town Meeting Warrant, however, will be mailed to registered voters, as well as being posted on the Town website and available in hard copy at the Town Meeting.

Part-Time Police Officer Hired

By Bill Price

Approved by the Select Board February 1, Police Chief Michael Morrison hired Mary Bredenfoerder as a part-time police officer.

Mary is still undergoing police field training and certification, according to Mike, and is not yet on patrol. "Covid has delayed a lot of things," he said, "including in-person training. Hopefully she will be on the job mid-April."

Her position is not intended as a replacement for Officer Mike Johnson, who is recovering from a shoulder injury incurred on the job and is currently on medical leave.

Mary, a resident of Tolland, has served as an EMT with the Sandisfield Fire Department for six years. Married with two children, she is presently employed as a Certified Nursing Assistant at a nursing and rehabilitation facility, and previously worked for 23 years with special need students in a residential treatment program.

Of her new role in Sandisfield, Mary said, "I look forward to continuing to serve our community."

College Scholarships Available

By Laura Rogers-Castro

The Sandisfield Scholarship Fund Committee is accepting applications for this year's awards for college attendance.

Applicants can attend either a 2- or 4-year college or university. This year's application must be postmarked by April 20. If you would like an application, please contact Laura at 258-4688 or PO Box 372.

Scholarships usually range from \$350 to \$500, depending on the amount raised through fundraising events and donations.

The scholarship requires applicants have at least one-year, full-time residency in Sandisfield. Preferred applicants are students who have conducted some type of community service activity in Sandisfield, including assisting with community events such as the Fireman's Steak Roast or Holiday Fair or Memorial Day Parade.

The Committee is also seeking sponsorships for scholarships. Any donation is appreciated, however. Checks should be written to the "Sandisfield Scholarship Fund." If you would like to make a donation, please contact Laura at the number/address listed above.



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Covid News

Three Damns Make One Right

COVID TRIES TO GET AHEAD OF VACCINES

By Bill Price

Don't relax

According to the weekly report of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, as of mid-March Sandisfield had recorded thirty cases of Covid-19. Three Town residents had died of the disease.

Although several Berkshire County nursing homes have suffered badly during the pandemic, the Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center in New Boston, with 57 beds, had remarkably fewer than ten cases and no deaths.

But Don't Take It Easy Yet

Statewide, toward the end of the month the number of newly confirmed cases was increasing, despite the widening spread of vaccines. The Department of Public Health reported that there are about 2,000 more active cases in Massachusetts than the previous week. And new strains of the virus are pushing against the vaccines and making life difficult for new patients and the health care system.

The rule over the next couple months has to be to maintain common sense until more of your neighbors are vaccinated. While many residents may believe their rights are being trampled by being asked to wear a mask and maintain distance, more believe these temporary rules more closely resemble driving on the right side of the road or being cautious with a firearm.

Getting Vaccinated

The Berkshire Eagle reported a statewide push to vaccinate the approximately 25,000 homebound residents in Massachusetts who still have not received the vaccine, asking local boards of health to help reach those who cannot access the vaccinations. "Homebound residents or their loved ones can call 833-983-0485 to begin the process of scheduling an in-home vaccine appointment," the Eagle reported. That line should

be open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Those who qualify to receive doses where they live include: individuals who face significant difficulties getting to a pharmacy, health care center, or one of the state's mass-vaccination sites; those who require an ambulance or two-person assistance to leave home; and those who were unable to leave home for medical appointments before the pandemic.

Individuals who are not eligible to receive a shot at home will be connected with other resources, such as the 211 call center to schedule a vaccine appointment.

Get Tested

"Stop the Spread" testing sites are open at three Berkshire Health Systems locations. Tests will be conducted for any reason, with the state picking up the cost. To schedule a test, call the toll-free hotline, 855-262-5465, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily.

TESTING AND VACCINES

If you have internet: go to www.maimmunizations.org to schedule a vaccine appointment

If you do not have internet: call 211 for instructions. Nina Carr, 258-3314, and Linda Riiska, 258-4816 have volunteered through the Council on Aging to help seniors (or any others) make vaccine appointments. Lynn Rubenstein brings internet knowledge and access to the process.

In-home vaccination, call 833-983-0485, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Free Covid testing, call toll-free, 855-262-5465, M-F, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

By the Way

The three damns to make one right are: (1) Get your damn shot; (2) Wear the damn mask; (3) Keep your damn distance. 🦋



At least twice in March, a feisty barred owl figured out how to get into Will and Lindsay Pennington's chicken coop for an easy meal. This time the normally shy bird posed for its close-up by Lindsay.

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Roads and Audits

HOW TO PROVE EINSTEIN RIGHT

By David Hubbard, Dodd Road

It is Spring and, yes, “mud season.” Once again the freeze/thaw cycle is rendering many of our dirt roads dangerously impassable.

It really does not have to be this way.

By now it should be clear to everyone that “grading and gravel” have not and will not solve the problem created by inadequate base and improperly engineered drainage. “Grading and gravel” is a waste of money that wears out the men and machinery at the highway department, while perpetuating dangerously impassable roads.


I note, as well, that the town has finally decided to commission a financial audit.

Sandisfield flunked its last audit in part due to the town’s failure to maintain a proper capital asset depreciation schedule. The Town’s largest holding of capital assets are the 90 miles of deteriorated roads, culverts, and bridges. A few years ago, when Rugg Bridge on Rt. 57 in West New Boston was declared unsafe the unexpected emergency repair cost Sandisfield over \$400,000 (over and above a million-dollar state grant).

An accurate depreciation schedule would account for this risk by assessing the condition of the assets and estimating remaining lifespan and future costs. Our taxpayers deserve this information and our creditors require it. Producing such a schedule would necessitate a formal third-party engineering report which the Town must provide to the auditors, in any event, or once again flunk an audit. Now is the time to put money in the budget to commission such a depreciation schedule.

An additional reason to prepare this schedule now is the possible passage of a massive infrastructure bill by the U.S. Congress.

If such a bill succeeds we may have a “once in a generation” opportunity to receive federal money to help repair our infrastructure. In order to capitalize on this opportunity, we must identify our projects and have them shovel-ready.

Einstein famously posited that “one definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over expecting a different result.” Will Sandisfield continue to prove Einstein right? 

OUT ON A LIMB: OP-ED: *Subjects should be enthralling to most of us and have a strong link to Sandisfield, written by and for Town residents. Address either PO Box 584, Sandisfield, or email editor@sandisfieldtimes.org*

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Town Budget Process

NO MORE GUESSWORK

By George Riley

The Town Budget process was conducted a bit differently this year, and indications are that it has gone quite smoothly. Department heads submitted their reports and budgets to the Finance Committee, which organized each budget into a standard format. The important new element in this reporting is the “forecast,” whereby each department was asked to examine its actual expenses for the first six months of the fiscal year and predict its full -year spending based on that, with explanations of any variations. Next year’s budget is then based on that expense forecast, with any adjustments explained.

This sounds pretty dry and maybe boring, but it’s actually revolutionary: for the first time in its history, Sandisfield is creating a budget, not based on last year’s budget, but on last year’s actual and projected expenses. The result should be a more realistic budget, in which any changes in spending become more readily apparent, and which should result in less unspent cash left over at the end of the year. We owe a great debt of thanks to Finance Committee Chair Roger Brown, who not only managed to explain this proposed process to an initially skeptical Select Board, but painstakingly worked with each department to guide them through this new approach.

This doesn’t in itself guarantee that our taxes will go down, but at least we’ll be more likely to be funding actual expenses rather than guesswork. ♡

Woods to Retaining Walls

by Alex Bowman

Night one of the SAMA special permit hearing made it clear that SAMA is attempting to shoe-horn too many greenhouses where the geography doesn’t gracefully allow it. Greenhouses require flat land, but the site they’ve selected is on a hill, which will require a massive earth-moving project. Retaining walls and drainage pools that you usually only see at shopping centers and business parks will be built right on Abby Road. As you drive or walk past, you’ll stare into a 10’ tall retaining wall with a 6’ chain-link fence on top of it.

Sandisfield Arts Center Coming Back, 2021

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU, FIRST ON ZOOM, THEN IN PERSON!

By Hilde Weisert

Although there are still unknowns, the 2021 Arts Center season is beginning to shape up. Some dates are set, others are still in the works.

From May into July, we’ll offer lively online events that will shake up your Zoom doldrums. A few (with more to come):

Season kickoff: Early May, Highlights of Sandisfield Players productions introduced by Ben Luxon, with behind-the-scenes glimpses.

Possibly an online gala (or this may wait until Fall).

Saturday, June 12: Pianist Fred Moyer, a favorite of the Arts Center audience in 2018 and 2019, will present a special recorded “June Moonlight Sonata” followed by a live conversation over Zoom. Fred does Gershwin, other jazz, full orchestra productions, and makes all these forms accessible and fun with his keyboard MoyerCam.

A few interesting workshops include a crossword puzzle workshop from Sandisfield crossword puzzle maven Michelle Arnot in July.

August will be a kind of “bridge,” when we believe we will be able to safely gather in person outdoors for two festive concerts in a lovely Sandisfield

On top of that will be tons of gravel for new ground cover across 4 acres of land.

This project takes considerable property value away from the neighbors and hands it to a corporation. With this new look on Abby Road, who would want to build a house nearby? It would essentially handcuff the owners to unusable and unsaleable land.

We can all agree that Sandisfield could use a revenue boost, but the proposed project plainly does not fit this site. The project could have been designed to not have such a gross impact to the neighborhood, but Sam’s proposal shows little respect for the neighbors.

The Select Board has great power and responsibility to enforce conditions that protect the neighborhood from unfair burdens, but will it exercise them?

See more Cannabis opinions on pages 1 and 8-9. ♡

meadow. One will be a popular pop/rock singer-songwriter and the other a wonderful string quartet sponsored by Lynn and Steve Rubenstein. If it’s safely possible to do an outdoor family film, we will.

From September to early December, with all of us vaccinated and the Arts Center spic and span, we’ll open our doors for the following events, and more:

- Simon Winchester reading from and signing his new book, *Land: How the Hunger for Ownership Shaped the Modern World*
- Master guitarist and local favorite Joel Brown
- Sandisfield Players reading selected short stories
- Jerry Herman’s film, “Our Town” at the Minack:” A film about the Sandisfield Players traveling to and presenting “Our Town” at the Minack Theater in Cornwall, England in 2016. This is a real community gem.
- Sunday matinee, November 7: Piano recital by Jeewon Park
- Evening of Song with Linda Mironti
- A few interesting and timely workshops
- On October 9, we’ll gather to remember and celebrate the life and work of Val Coleman, with his family and the Arts Center community.
- We hope to open the Gallery in the early summer for shows postponed from 2020, with socially-distanced outdoor receptions and indoor viewing for two to four people at a time.

Safety and health is our first consideration, but we’re committed to enlivening the spring, summer, and fall months with local fun and enjoyable theater, music, and family events that we’ve all missed in the last year. Please see our website www.sandisfieldartscenter.org for the latest information and signups. ♡



Photo taken March 16 by Cindy Ragusa in her Otis garden.

SAMA: The Case Against

By Edward Brozman, West Hubbard Road

In the life cycle of every town there comes a moment when residents have to decide what they want their town to be and what common values are important to them. I believe Sandisfield is at that soul-searching point.

Town officials appear to be going headlong down a path toward approving a special permit for an out-of-state investor group to build a 100,000 sq ft. industrial cannabis cultivation facility housed in 23 outdoor greenhouses. Pretty much everyone, including proponents, agree that this is all about money and nothing more.

It may also be a race against time to approve the special permit and grandfather this proposal before residents have an opportunity to vote on a zoning bylaw at the Town Meeting in May.

Why should we be against this action?

Sandisfield is rural, quiet, bucolic and much of its land is still pristine with some old-growth forests. It's an environment that I believe we want to preserve. How will this change if this facility, which abuts the state forest, is approved?

Those pristine fields along Town Hill Road and

Abby Road will be scarred and a large swath of trees cut down and sold for the lumber. Currently we know very little about this investor group that we seem all too ready to embrace. What recourse would we have if this enterprise was sold or went bankrupt or flagrantly violated their contractual environmental commitments?

Once this facility is constructed, what outcome will we be left with? For one, an obnoxious smell of dead skunk during the 6-8 weeks of flowering plants in late summer and early fall. This assertion is not in contention. Google California, Oregon, or Colorado for outdoor marijuana cultivation and you will read a long list of community horror stories about the smell. When asked by a resident about the smell at the December outreach meeting held by the investor group, the individual representing the groups said they would aim the fans toward the state forest, mitigating the smell to surrounding homes. Sama officials later said they intended to use a new system of odor mitigation but could not explain it or know of any facility where it was being used and actually worked.

A facility of this size is a bit more than two football fields of growing space. The amount of water use is huge.

Do we think there will not be groundwater contamination or a strain on the existing aquifer?

What about ongoing noise from the heavy duty exhaust fans, light contamination and security issues for the neighborhood?

What about the toxic chemicals that will be used in the 5,000 sq. ft. processing facility?


Some have said that this financial "silver bullet" of marijuana money is our only real chance for fiscal health. This money is certainly a seductive remedy for years of financial mismanagement, an unwillingness to tackle the hard things like town-wide zoning and the lack of a serious effort to find other alternatives to improve our town budget.

Frankly, this solution is just not good enough. We deserve better than taking the easy way out to the detriment of our neighbors and friends.

As you read this issue of the Sandisfield Times a second marijuana cultivation facility is being proposed, this time right next to the Town Hall on Rt 57. There will likely be more because without zoning Sandisfield is vulnerable to a modern-day marijuana gold rush.

We should make it clear to our Selectmen that we want them to slow down on any special permit approval. Wait until a thorough investigation is completed on all aspects of this enterprise before committing the town to a future we may come to regret.

This is our wake-up call to the reality that without zoning (or an outright ban), every homeowner is at risk of having a marijuana cultivation facility in their residential neighborhood.

Give us a voice and a vote at Town Meeting in May. 

Five Prospective Pot Farmers Line Up

CALIFORNIA OR BUST!!

By Bill Price


As of press time, April 1, five individuals or groups were at different stages of the process of getting Select Board permission to start a cannabis farm. Of the five, SAMA Productions is furthest along. The process (simplified) is for the applicant to:

- Request permission to hold a Community Outreach Meeting.
- Present a Host Community Agreement.
- Apply for a Special Permit from the Select Board. Requires unanimous vote.
- Hold a Public Hearing.

The applicants so far are:

1. Jennifer Pilbin. West Hubbard Road near intersection with West Street. Began process two years ago, but Ms. Pilbin says she is still going ahead.
2. SAMA Productions, LLC, of Yonkers, New York. Site: Abby

Road at Town Hill Road. SAMA, known earlier as Fulcrum Enterprises, backed out of earlier bid to open farm in Great Barrington because of community opposition. Presented Community Outreach Meeting in January, unfortunately during a snowstorm which limited turnout. Has presented a Host Community Agreement to the Select Board and appeared at a Select Board Public Hearing, March 29 for a Special Permit. (See report beginning on page 1.)

3. Daydreamz Estates, LLC, at 68 Sandisfield Road, uphill and to the left of Town Hall Annex. Owner/occupant: Philip Blume. Presented Community Outreach Meeting in March and Host Community Agreement to the Board March 8.
4. Berkshire Mountain Cannabis. North Beech Plain Road. On March 8 Select Board meeting requested permission to hold a Community Outreach Meeting.
5. Green Patriot. CEO, Joseph McCarthy. Site unknown. Has requested permission to hold a Community Outreach Meeting. 

About that "Vacation" ...

To the Editor:

This is to correct a misleading comment in last month's Times, in which it was reported that "[Select Board Chair Brian] O'Rourke left for "vacation" after a single vote on an unrelated matter, leaving his bewildered colleagues to table the cannabis proposal for a later work session and depriving the public of a chance to comment."

The facts are that Mr. O'Rourke had already left for a much-needed few days' vacation the previous week but agreed to phone in from his vacation for a previously posted Special Permit hearing. Special Permit hearings require not only extensive prior announcements,

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

Native American Presence in Sandisfield, Part II

CEREMONIAL STONE LANDSCAPES: NATIVE HERITAGE IGNORED

By Ron Bernard

The removal of thousands of trees and extensive clearing during the expansion of the Tennessee Gas pipeline along the northern edge of Sandisfield in 2017 exposed a mostly forgotten and unappreciated aspect of Sandisfield history, history that occurred long before Sandisfield existed.

The expansion of the corridor by another 50 feet, nearly four miles long through Otis State Forest and private property in the Beech Plain section of Town, revealed dozens of Ceremonial Stone Landscapes (CSLs) previously unknown.



Doug Harris is the preservation officer for the Narragansett tribe and assists other tribes.

Photo: Courtesy the Berkshire Edge

Doug Harris, of the Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office representing seven different tribes, had anticipated that a significant number of CSLs existed in the overgrown woods in the vicinity of the right-of-way, but the company's archeological surveys had identified a relatively limited number.

Because of the discrepancy in what might be out there, a "walk-over" along the entire right-of-way was conducted. The group included

representatives from the Company, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, regional tribes and Massachusetts DCR.

Amazingly, the walk-over identified 73 possible-to-probable native stone structures. The sites were duly catalogued for protection by the State, information that is not available to the public for preservation reasons.

Tennessee Gas wrote, "[we will] do our very best to avoid archeological and Native American sites that are sacred or sensitive." They added, however, that they would be unable to avoid destroying about one-third of the sites in the right-of-way. They offered to "move and replace" the stones.

Doug Harris replied, "Then what you have is an artistic replica of something that was spiritual. Once you remove the stones, the spiritual content is broken."



Ceremonial Stone Landscapes along the pipeline right-of-way, January 2021. The stone structures were reconstructed on-site by Tennessee Gas following pipeline installation.

Photo: Sandisfield Times.

An example of the problem can be seen from a vantage point on Cold Spring Road where the pipeline crosses. Portions of three CSLs, low stone rows, which have stood for centuries, were dismantled and rebuilt. Variations in stone color between sections is due to the rearrangement of some stones following the pipeline installation.

Native stone structures, heritage ignored and controversial

Since the 19th century the study of indigenous populations has been the domain of writers, anthropologists, archeologists, and university and tribal historians. A large body of work covers the early American civilizations – vibrant cultures with a love and respect for the land that spanned the continent and people who numbered in the millions.

One important aspect of Native American heritage, however, is mostly lacking from the academic record – Ceremonial Stone Landscapes. Not only have scholars by and large ignored the topic, but so do many state historical commissions. In preservation circles the issue has been controversial. A preservation consultant familiar with the situation told us that the subject "is very political right now."

What are Ceremonial Stone Landscapes?

Archeologists coined the term to describe indigenous stone arrangements. These include cairns which are defined as formally organized linear stacks, mounds, and stone rows sometimes meant to resemble snakes. Larger walls, stones piled on or around boulders ("turtles"), heaps of stones, chambers, groups in enclosures and other arrangements



Monument Mountain in Great Barrington/Stockbridge is named for this Mohican cairn near the summit.

THE NATIVE AMERICANS OF SOUTH BERKSHIRE COUNTY

As reported last month, the Mohican Nation lived throughout the Hudson River Valley for thousands of years before the Dutch arrived in 1609. By the 1730s, their population had been dramatically reduced by disease, conflict, colonial expansion, and other factors, and they had given up their ancestral lands, including their Berkshires hunting grounds.

Also known as the Housatonics, the Mohicans over time were constricted into an area along the New York-Massachusetts border including Great Barrington. The survivors of the tribe, under Chief Konkapot, agreed in 1734 to resettle at an English mission called Indian Town, later renamed Stockbridge. The Stockbridge Indians, as they've been known since, were loyal allies of the colonists during the French and Indian and Revolutionary wars.

During the five decades following the 1780s, the tribe was repeatedly uprooted to reservations further west until they ultimately settled in Wisconsin, their home today. Federally recognized as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community, they have proudly maintained their historical ties to the Berkshires and recently opened a heritage preservation office in Williamstown.



An example of a Manitou stone.

also constitute CSLs. Of note are “manitou stones” which have deep spiritual meaning. Manitou, the Algonquian word for great spirit, applies to standing or embedded stones that have a discernable head and shoulders resembling the upper human torso.

Differentiating native structures from, say, farmers’ walls and cellar holes, boundary markers, or random piles of rubble is a skill tribal experts obtain over years of observation and intuition about spiritual significance. Doug Harris of the Narragansett tribe gave a talk at Pittsfield in 2017 entitled, “The Meaning, Importance and Cultural Significance of Native American Ceremonial Stone Landscapes and Burials in the Forest of Massachusetts.” According to an attendee he said that identification is a matter of interpretation in addition to context and signs of known traditional arrangement techniques. The Massachusetts Archeological Society’s guideline for identifying CSLs includes 18 criteria, all observational.

No reliable way exists to determine the age of CSLs although artifacts found at a cairn in New Hampshire were carbon dated at 5,000 years. A structure that is submerged in the Hudson River was sonar scanned in 2002 and dated at 3,000 years. In New England, it is estimated that the majority of the region’s tremendous amount of stone work was completed between 800 AD and 1300 AD. Clearly this is an indication of how deeply inculcated and important the custom is to native culture.

CSLs also have different purposes and significance. Most structures have a spiritual aspect particularly when associated with burial. Stones were used to mark trails. There are also Native American structures that line up precisely with celestial events.

In the Berkshires, CSLs may be the only tangible evidence of the presence of indigenous societies pre-Contact. Also, Sandisfield may have an above average inventory because an ancient Mohican trail (today the Knox Trail) connected the Hudson River Valley to seasonal hunting grounds here.

Native stone structures need protection and respect

If 73 sites exist in or near the thin four-mile pipeline corridor, how many more might there be in the 52 square miles of reforested Sandisfield?

That thought, in fact, was the impetus for this article. As a property owner of a section of the pipeline right-of-way where several CSLs exist, I feel that other land owners should be aware that important artifacts may be extant on their properties. These structures have survived centuries of farming, at least two general deforestations, roads, and natural factors like floods and fallen trees. Most are again inconspicuous in regrown forests throughout the town.

Ceremonial Stone Landscapes may be revered by all Native Americans, so we, as temporary stewards of this land, should be aware and respectful of them in the same way we hope future societies respect our cemeteries.

Besides, consider how CSLs, untouched for centuries, enrich Sandisfield’s heritage. Their presence stimulates the imagination and connects us with another time and way of life. How fortunate we are.

Recommended reading. J. W. Mavor & B. Dix, Manitou. *The Sacred Landscape of New England’s Native Civilization* (www.InnerTraditions.com, 1989); M. Starr, Ceremonial Stonework, (Power Road Press, 2nd Ed., 2018); M. & J. Gage, *A Guide to New England Stone Structures*, (Powpow River Books, 2nd Ed., 2016). 🍷

CSLS ARE PROTECTED HERITAGE ARTIFACTS

The National Historic Preservation Act includes protection for CSLs, which are also eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. If you own land here, particularly if it includes historically undisturbed areas not well suited to farming, there is a chance for extant CSLs. While I am in no way qualified to certify CSLs and discovery is not straightforward, I have several reference books with photographic examples and would be pleased to assist in comparing these images with what you may find. Contact: ronbernard@aol.com.

Ethical Guidelines Regarding Potential CSL Sites

- Be respectful of these sites
- Do not add or remove stones
- Do not walk on stone structures
- Do not remove any artifacts or souvenirs from these sites.
- Digging and artifact collecting are illegal on state and federal lands.
- Removal and digging at any site is considered desecration by native cultures.

TO LEARN MORE LOCALLY

THE BIDWELL HOUSE MUSEUM

The Bidwell House Museum is a 1760s Manse set on 192 acres in Monterey. The grounds and gardens are open 7 days a week, year-round, free of charge. House tours by appointment later in 2021. The land was once used by the Mohican, likely as their winter hunting grounds. Visitors are welcome to take a self-guided tour of the Native American Interpretive Trail on the museum grounds.

For more information go to bidwellhousemuseum.org/native-american-history. For stories about the Mohican in Stockbridge, please see bidwellhousemuseum.org/blog.

THE MISSION HOUSE, STOCKBRIDGE

The c.1739 Mission House at 19 Main Street, Stockbridge was a Christian missionary to the local Mohicans and is a National Historic Landmark. Programs and events through the summer. Non-member adults \$5, includes free tour. Gardens open daily for self-guided visits. Contact 413.298.3239 x3014 or naumkeag@thetrustees.org.

THE STOCKBRIDGE-MUNSEE COMMUNITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE, WILLIAMSTOWN

Recently established at Williams College, the office works to protect Mohican and Munsee cultural sites from disturbance and to repatriate cultural items back to the Community. Educational programs are being developed such as a seminar, “Words of Our Ancestors: Revisiting Indiantown,” which is highly recommended. Go to: mohican.com/historicpreservation. Contact 413.884.6048.

Recreation Committee News

REC COMM COMMUNITY CLEANUP

SAVE APRIL 25 FOR CLEAN-UP DAY

From Chrissy, Roger, Lynn, Laura, Dawn

Our Easter Bunny Hop-Around was a delicious day of fun, despite the rain.

To help celebrate EARTH DAY, which is fast approaching, the Rec Committee is inviting you and your families to join us for a town-wide Earth Day cleanup.

On Sunday, April 25, our members will be stationed at the DPW Garage on Silverbrook

Road, 8:00-9:00 a.m., handing out extra large paper trash bags.

Please pick one up and fill it with the winter's trash from your road. Other members of our committee will meet you at the Town Transfer Station, from 11:00-12:00 to accept your filled bags and present you with a token of our gratitude.

Remember, we will all be working as a community. Maybe the Bud-Lite litterer(s) will pick up a bag and help out.

More events coming all summer long. Stay safe. 🇺🇸



Left to right, McKinley Holland, age 2; Madison Feraon, 10; and Grayson Holland, 7. Photo: Amanda Leavenworth



Early Childhood Education

Pre-School and Pre-Kindergarten

FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOL

Otis, MA

Preschool & Early Kindergarten

Registration and Screening

New Students Only

FRIDAY MAY 14, 2021

Children who are residents of Otis or Sandisfield and who will be 3 years old before October 1, 2021 may be eligible for the public preschool program for the 2021-2022 school year. Residents of neighboring communities are also invited to apply.

Applications are available and screening will be scheduled for 3- and 4-year-old children on May 14 between 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Call for an appointment.

For the upcoming school year, our tuition-based program will offer families the following options:

- 5 half days a week, 8:30-11:30, for all 3-year-olds (minimum of 3 days required). Must turn 3 by October 1, 2021.
- 5 full days a week, 8:30-2:30, for 4-year-olds (must turn 4 by October 1, 2021).
- Sliding fee scale for eligible families.

Screening is required for all new enrolling students. Screening will be conducted in the areas of speech and language, fine- and gross-motor development and learning skills. Children currently enrolled in our program do not need to be screened.

We strongly urge any preschool student be potty trained by the start of school in September.

Interested families should call or email Teresa DellaGiustina at: 413-269-4466 or tdellagiustina@frrsd.org.



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Sandisfielders See Benefit from Starlink Internet

By Simon Winchester

If the night sky is clear and you are blessed with particularly good eyesight, you may be able to spot them to the north as they whoosh by, three hundred and fifty-odd miles above your head. Zip, zip, zip – tiny flashes of light passing in tandem across the velvet blackness, an entire constellation of miniature new satellites moving through space.

What you are seeing is part of the story of Starlink, the brainchild of Elon Musk. And while we have had to become accustomed to the manifold eccentricities of this near-50 year old South African multi-billionaire – moving his Tesla factories from state to state on a tantrum-triggered whim, naming one of his six children *X AE A-Xii*, turning up stoned before a panel of alarmed stock analysts – he seems to have got his plans for a world-wide satellite-based internet network just about right, and on target.

The Tesla chief aims to have no fewer than 40,000 devices droning around in low-earth orbit by the middle of this decade, ensuring, with as many as five million earth-based ground stations, that no part of the globe, from Timbuktu to Tyringham, will be denied the benefit of an ultra-fast internet service.

Which may well spell trouble for our current efforts finally to bring broadband, the one most crucially missing aspect of the twenty-first century, to town. Under the current program – the latest iteration of many, a chapter in our long and melancholy history of more than ten years of trying – Connecticut-based Charter Communications will bring us Spectrum connectivity through the hanging up of scores of miles of fiber-optic cables.

The two now competing plans – cables or satellites – are very different. Except that both proposals sport one feature in common. Both involve the disposition of *things*, and in very large numbers.

In the case of Starlink, those things are satellites - 1,200 of them up in space now, sixty more sent up from Cape Canaveral just last week, two hundred more due in April, fully four thousand expected to be flashing

across our skies by the time our pandemic is properly over, ten times that number once the scheme is fully done with.

In the case of Sandisfield, the things that currently concern us are by contrast wooden poles: 3,369 of them, to be precise. Seventeen hundred of these poles belong to Verizon and the other 1,600 or so that line our roadways are the property of Eversource, our little-loved distributor of electricity.

All of these 35-foot-tall spindles of fir, pine or cedar are currently being made ready to bear the weight and absorb the stress of miles after mile of thick black optical cable that Charter wants to suspend from them. By now we've all seen the utility companies' cherry-picker trucks out in droves, checking to see if the older poles have been worn out, are cracked, have been gnawed at by beavers, hollowed out by termites, splintered by the nailed boots of scores of Wichita-style linemen. Those deemed unworthy are replaced with new, paler colored copies. The rest are splashed with creosote, patted lovingly, deemed ready to carry the new-fangled wires.



And all the while, as our earthbound poles are being sorted out, so down at Cape Canaveral's Pad 39 the sleek Space-X Falcon-9 rockets are soaring regularly up into the Florida skies, each time depositing their boosters back on land to be reused, then depositing their payloads, batches of satellites clamped together in pods, into their respective 350-mile-high orbits. Each of the little astral bodies has a small ion thruster to enable it to get out of the way of pieces of hurtling debris in an increasingly jam-packed inner space. Most also have laser devices so they can chat with each other, passing the uplinked Internet connection across to where it is best suited to come down to us here in the hills and valleys of Western Massachusetts.

It does not come cheap, for either maker or user. To get the movable dish and router box that will capture and decode the signal will set you back around five hundred dollars, and you will then be obliged to commit to enriching Mr. Musk to the tune of \$99 every following month. But the small band of Sandisfield's early adopters are already reporting star-struck delight.

Roger Kohler, a school math teacher and our Planning Board chair, is hugely impressed by his Internet speed. Lindsay Pennington, who lives with her family on Route 57, declares the service 'amazing' – with speeds of up to 150 mbps (compared to DSL, from which even going downhill and in a following wind, you'll be lucky to get three). Zoom calls, she says, are uninterrupted, movies stream in at lightning speed, signal delays are negligible. As a result of a gathering rustle of word-of-mouth, potential customers are lining up, opting not to wait any further for the snail-like progress of the cable-based services that have been long promised, back since the days of Wired West.

A portrait of Lindsay and Will Pennington's small son Liam adorns the front page of our paper this month, showing the adorable child drinking from a sugar maple tap. Sandisfield is still a place of such rural charm, where the pace can be as slow as you like. But connection to the world beyond, essential to most of those who like to live here can now be as fast as you wish. Whether to make that connection today, or wait for a still indeterminate number of months to come, is a choice that many here are about to make. 🍷

Mud Season, 2021

Photos: Town of Sandisfield and Sandisfield Times

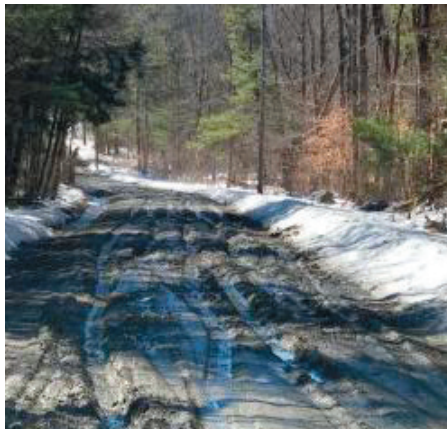
Mud Season Has Arrived

DPW Update – Adapted from the Town Website

New Englanders know that March and April can make our dirt roads unfriendly if not downright treacherous.

Brad Curry, DPW Superintendent, wants to remind residents that “as temperatures warm up, the frost that is in the gravel roads will melt and create mud. Mud season is not over yet. We are not out of the woods.”

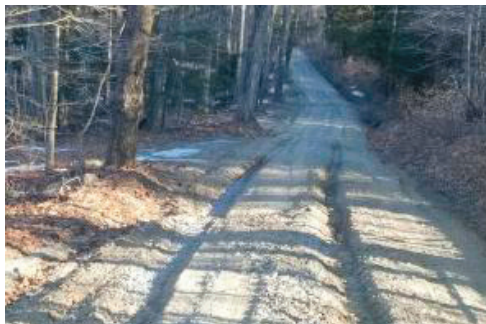
Please avoid traveling on dirt roads during mud season, if possible. Residents who live on dirt roads are being asked to keep trips to a minimum during this time.



Rood Hill Road

during the day when the early spring sun beats down on them and will frequently re-freeze overnight. If the thaw/freeze cycle weren't enough, melting snow contributes to the mess. Spring rains add to the misery.

Adapting to life in rural New England is not easy. It takes guts and gumption, nerves of steel, and the knowledge that “this too, shall pass.” Your DPW knows the mud rule and mud ropes and has the annual problem well in hand. The crew is hauling in loads of stone and adding it to the dirt roads to help stiffen up the mud and provide a base on which vehicles can travel. They also grade and yolk rake the roads to help aerate and dry out the mud. However, in some cases their machines do more harm than help.



Tire tracks one day after grading

Pay extra attention to the “Road Closed” signs in town; these roads are open to residents who live on them but are closed to through traffic. Your DPW assesses conditions daily and is working hard to get these roads open again.

The dirt roads thaw and soften

Mud is a hazard, yet it's still a prophetic sign of good weather coming. The good news is that March 20 was the official first day of Spring! 🍀



Hammertown Road at Cold Spring Road

Sandisfield's 5th Season

WHAT COMES BETWEEN WINTER AND SPRING AROUND HERE?

By Brigitte Ruthman

It's New England's fifth season. not including January thaw and Indian summer. Mud. Author Howard Frank Moshier likened it to everything that's bleak and horrible about being isolated at the end of a road that you just can't get out of. I'm not so sure about that. After all, if I didn't need to get out, or others in, I wouldn't mind.

Mud has a way of rattling your nerves as it sticks to your hubs. I've long forgotten the joy of its squishy feeling between my toes while forming pies as a child. It's temporary though, lasting only as long as the ground takes to thaw through and the melting snows to drain off. And it carries a promise the shackling sense of snow doesn't, of a warmer sun and longer days. The town crew, so able to keep roads clear in winter, is left to haul out a few loads of crushed stone, then the dreaded Road Closed, Mud Season road sign, posted at the end of Dodd Road and others. I wonder if they ever run out of those signs.

I caught Jim, the UPS man, at the end of the road, trying to stuff packages into my neighbor Patricia and David's mailbox. Poor Jim was about in tears over the

calamity of mud. He couldn't get up the road. the packages wouldn't fit in the mailbox. I volunteered to deliver them. “It's mud season,” some say belligerently. “Always been that way. If you don't like it, shouldn't o' bought a house oin a dirt road.”

I don't remember impassable roads 25 years ago when I set about to build a home, or any real estate listings warning against Sandisfield's fifth season. There wasn't as much traffic back then, Amazon deliveries, or global warming to deepen the mire.

I complain, I would tell Moshier. I do mind the mud on my axles, and the distance it leaves the farm from commerce. But even on nights when I misjudge the muddy mile by driving out in the car instead of the truck and must walk home to the end of the road, I know what's coming. I know it by the smell of things – melting snow, boiling sap, and even the mud. 🍀

Police/Fire/EMS Logs

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



January

Jan 1 Burglar alarm, Tannery Road
 Jan 2 Disabled motor vehicle, Gremler Road
 Jan 5 Well-being check, Sandisfield Road
 Jan 7 Medical, Sandisfield Road
 Jan 7 Medical, New Hartford Road
 Jan 7 Investigation, New Hartford Road
 Jan 7 Hit-and-run motor vehicle, Sears Road
 Jan 8 Well-being check, New Hartford Road
 Jan 11 Medical, North Beech Plain Road
 Jan 13 911 hang-up, Sandisfield Road
 Jan 14 Motor vehicle accident, North Main Street
 Jan 14 Citizen assistance, Sandisfield Road
 Jan 15 Investigation, South Main Street
 Jan 16 Disabled motor vehicle, Town Hill Road
 Jan 18 911 hang-up, Sandisfield Road
 Jan 19 Medical, Sandisfield Road
 Jan 21 Medical, New Hartford Road
 Jan 23 Motor vehicle accident, Sears Road
 Jan 23 Fire call, Dodd Road
 Jan 26 Fire call, New Hartford Road
 Jan 26 Medical, North Beech Plain Road, OWL
 Jan 28 911 hang-up, Silverbrook Road
 Jan 31 Citizen assistance, Sandisfield Road
 Jan 31 Medical, Sandisfield Road
 Jan 31 Fire call, River Road

February

Feb 2 911 hang-up, Sandisfield Road
 Feb 2 Traffic complaint, Sandisfield Road
 Feb 2 Court paperwork service, Sandisfield Road
 Feb 2 Medical, Sandisfield Road
 Feb 4 Court paperwork service, Sandisfield Road
 Feb 5 Motor vehicle accident, North Main Street
 Feb 5 Medical, Rood Hill Road
 Feb 6 911 hang-up, Sandisfield Road
 Feb 6 Medical, Otis Woodlands
 Feb 7 Medical, Tolland
 Feb 8 Well-being check, Sandisfield Road

Feb 9 Suspicious motor vehicle, Town Hill Road
 Feb 11 Assist other agency, Tolland Road
 Feb 11 Fire call, Rood Hill Road
 Feb 11 Medical, Clark Road
 Feb 13 Motor vehicle accident, South Main Street
 Feb 13 Medical, Sandy Brook Turnpike
 Feb 15 Breaking & Entering, motor vehicle, Sandisfield Road
 Feb 16 Traffic complaint, South Main Street
 Feb 16 Trees down, West Street
 Feb 17 Trees down, New Hartford Road
 Feb 17 Lost item, Sandisfield Road
 Feb 17 Assist other agency, Silverbrook Road
 Feb 18 Medical, Sandisfield Road
 Feb 18 Medical, Slater Lane
 Feb 23 911 hang-up, Otis Woodlands
 Feb 23 Disabled motor vehicle, South Main Street
 Feb 24 Medical, Tolland Road
 Feb 24 911 hang-up, Otis Woodlands
 Feb 24 Medical, South Sandisfield Road
 Feb 25 Domestic, Dodd Road
 Feb 27 Medical, Tolland
 Feb 28 Well-being check, Dodd Road



January

Jan 23 Fire call, Dodd Road
 Jan 26 Fire call, New Hartford Road
 Jan 31 Fire call, River Road

February

Feb 5 Motor vehicle accident, North Main Street
 Feb 11 Fire call, Rood Hill Road
 Feb 13 Motor vehicle accident, South Main Street
 Feb 18 Fire call, Slater Road



January

Jan 5 Medical call, Dodd Road
 Jan 7 Medical call, New Hartford Road
 Jan 19 Medical call, Sandisfield Road
 Jan 21 Medical call, New Hartford Road
 Jan 31 Medical call, Sandisfield Road

February

Feb 2 Medical call, Sandisfield Road
 Feb 5 Medical call, Rood Hill Road
 Feb 6 Medical call, Jamie Lane
 Feb 7 Medical call, Tolland
 Feb 11 Medical call, Clark Road
 Feb 13 Medical call, Sandisfield Road
 Feb 18 Medical call, Sandisfield Road
 Feb 24 Medical call, Tolland
 Feb 24 Medical call, South Sandisfield Road

WINTER SNOWFALL AND EXTREMES

2020-2021 Snowfall to date as measured at a Beech Plain backyard weather station.



October	4.0"	March: Zero Snow
November	4.0"	
December	14.5"	SEASON TO DATE: 62.0"
January	12.5"	

February	EXTREMES
Feb 1-3	•Dec 19, 2020 2°
Feb 5	•Jan 29 & 31 -3°
Feb 7	w/ severe wind chill
Feb 16	ice
Feb 18-20	4.0"
Feb 22	4.0"
Feb 27	1.0"
February 27.0"	•March 2 5°
	w/extreme wind chill



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THE ROBIN

The robin is the one
 That interrupts the morn
 With hurried, few, express reports
 When March is scarcely on.

The robin is the one
 That overflows the noon
 With her cherubic quantity,
 An April but begun.

Emily Dickenson

The Library is very pleased to announce that beginning Saturday, April 3, the Library once again WILL BE OPEN to the public. Please wear

your facemask and social distance by six feet when inside the library.

Check out the newly renovated Children's Section, now located on the lower level with books (from A to Z and in between), train sets, puzzles, and games. We hope to be able to again offer Arts and Crafts for Kids in the near future.

Upstairs we have restacked the books and expanded the adult section. Check out the fiction and non-fiction sections – escape, dream, or wile away a spring afternoon in the company of a book.

New Arrivals

- *The Power Couple* by Alex Berenson
- *The Kaiser's Web* by Steve Berry
- *One Night Two Souls Went Walking* by Ellen Cooney
- *Spin* by Patricia Cornwell
- *The Moonflower Murders* by Anthony Horowitz
- *Blink of an Eye* by Iris Johansen
- *The Prophets* by Robert Jones, Jr
- *Serpentine* by Jonathan Kellerman
- *Faithless in Death* by J.D. Robb
- *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell
- *The Liar's Dictionary* by Eley Williams
- *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro
- *Slough House* by Mick Herron

The Library doors will be open to the spring breezes. Coffee, tea, water, and conversation are available and even a robin or two may be chirping under the trees just outside the door. 🐦

Sandisfield Historical Society



Request for Help

By Ann Wald, President

Here we are. A year has passed and our inability to hold a meeting or fund-raising events continues to plague us, as the pandemic plagues us all.

The purpose of our Society is to encourage Town residents to maintain and collect historical records and to preserve objects and sites of historical interest. We wish to arouse greater interest in the Town and its history.

We need someone to help us apply for grants in the hope that the Historical Society can contribute to the general development to the Town.

We hope to be able to hold our Annual Christmas Fair this year.

Soon you should receive a letter asking for your support and a request for funds. We are trying to keep the lights on and heat in our building at the intersection of South Sandisfield Road and Rt. 183.

As soon as we can, we will resume our monthly meetings and lunches and our fund-raisers. Until then, if you can please send us whatever help you can. 🐾

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Bobcat

Two relatively uncommon daytime sightings of a male bobcat roaming around the Beech Plain section. Left, New Year's day checking out newly-paved Cold Spring Road. Right, same fellow a few days later passing through a resident's field.

Photos: Ron Bernard



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Comings and Goings



Oscar Edwin Brown

Born February 2 at Berkshire Medical Center at 7 lbs., 10 oz.

Oscar joins his big brother Amos (4 years old) and his parents, Adam Brown and Hannah Fries, at home on Stump Road.



ILSA DAWN SULNER

1955-2021

Ilisa Dawn Sulner, 65, died Saturday, February 13, at her home on West Tamarack Way, surrounded by her loving family.

Born in Brooklyn, New York on December 2, 1955, Ilisa was the daughter of Irving and Eleanor (Rifkin) Malchatsky. She was a graduate of Tilden High School, Class of 1971.

Ilisa graduated from Brooklyn College in 1975, attained a Master's Degree from Adelphi University and an Ed.D. from St. John's University. She worked as an educator for thirty-five years for the New York City Department of Education.

Ilisa was a member of Hevreh of Southern Berkshire County, the Otis Cultural Society, the Sandisfield Book Club, and she wrote for the Otis Observer.

She is survived by her loving husband, Andrew B. Sulner, her daughter, Farrah S. Wax and husband, Benjamin, two granddaughters, Makayla and Effie, who were the loves of her life, and her dog, Sadie. She was a surrogate mom, g-ma, and sister to many.

In lieu of flowers expressions of sympathy in Ilisa's memory may be made to St. Jude's in care of the Birches-Roy Funeral HOME, 33 South Street, Great Barrington MA 01230. Condolences may be made through birchesroyfuneralservices.com.



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

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 at right) 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.

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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.

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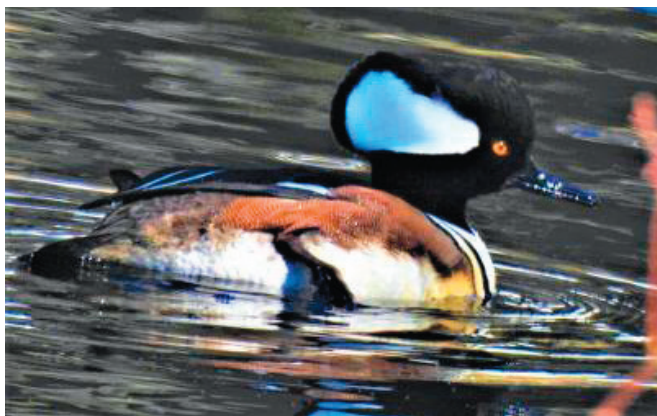
CLASSIFIED ADS

HELP WANTED - NEW BOSTON INN

Wait staff. New Boston Inn. 18+ 11:30 a.m. - 9 p.m Fri. thru Mon. Will train. Tips and hourly wage. Come by or call Barbara, 413-258-4477

UPRIGHT PIANO FOR SALE

Well maintained by my family since purchase. Asking \$500. Jean, 413-258-4105



A beautiful hooded merganser spotted in a pond on Cold Spring Road on March 11 by Cindy Ragusa.



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chuckwnelson@earthlink.net**

NOW HEAR THIS!

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

APRIL EVENTS

Please note: Be sure to check to see if the events are still scheduled as listed due to the uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic

Sandisfield Select Board Meetings are by Zoom or telephone conference. 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 more information, contact Nina Carr, 258-3314. Free.

COA Business Meeting TBD at the Council on Aging, basement level at the Sandisfield Town Hall Annex on Route 57. For more information, contact Nina Carr, 258-3314.

New Boston Inn reopens April 2, Saturday. (See new ad page 2)

New Boston Church Service on Sunday, April 4 (Easter) at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. Please wear a mask and socially distance.

Explore & Play, Kids and Caregivers, April 6, Tuesday, and then every Tuesday, 10:00-11:30 a.m., behind the Otis Town Hall. Meet at the gazebo, weather permitting, for stories/songs/creative crafts and play. Masks and distancing required. Call Nina Carr for information, 258-3314.

Town Caucus on Thursday, April 8 at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road.

Hike the "Great Road" (the Knox Trail) With an Expert, April 17, Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Rain or shine. See page 3 for details. Otis town historian Tom Ragusa, who knows the Knox Trail better than anyone, will lead a rigorous hike through heavy forest. Wet

conditions likely. This may be the only opportunity in 2021. Reservations and information, call Tom at 413-269-7209 or email to tommgrapes23@aol.com.

Sandisfield Scholarship Application Deadline Tuesday, April 20. High school seniors from Sandisfield are welcome to apply for a scholarship from the Sandisfield Scholarship Fund Committee. Applications are available by emailing laurarogerscastro107@msn.com.

Community Cleanup, Sunday, April 25. Sponsored by Sandisfield Recreation Committee. In honor of Earth Day, April 22, join a Town-wide cleanup. Pick up EXTRA LARGE paper trash bags at the DPW on Silverbrook Road, 8:00-9:00 a.m. Fill them with the winter's accumulated trash along your road, and turn them in at the Transfer Station, same day between 11:00-12:00, and collect a token of the RecCommittee's gratitude. See you on Clean-Up Day.

SAVE THE DATES!

Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, May 15 at 10:00 a.m. at the DPW Garage Building on 3 Silverbrook Road.

Annual Town Election on Monday, May 17 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road.

Car Show on Saturday, June 12 at the New Boston Inn. Free music. Free Popcorn. Rat Rods/Hot Rods/Classics. If you are interested in showing a car, please call 258-4477.

EVENTS/OUTDOOR FUN IN OTHER TOWNS

The Heirloom Gardener: Traditional Plants and Skills for the Modern World Online Lecture on Thursday, April 8 from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. sponsored by the Bidwell House Museum. In this program, Garden Historian John Forti will talk about his upcoming book. His presentation is inspired by the long New England History of heirloom preservation, garden craft, and homestead lifestyles. Visit bidwellhousemuseum.org for more information. \$10.

Winter Farmer's Market on Saturday, April 10 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.

Daffodil and Tulip Festival from Thursday, April 22 through Sunday, May 16 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. but closed Tuesday and Wednesdays at Naumkaeg in Stockbridge with in-person self-guided tours of the estate's gardens. There are 130,000 daffodil and tulip bulbs planted. This is a ticketed event, please purchase tickets at thetrustees.org.

Wildflower Hike on Saturday, April 24 at 10:00 a.m. on the Henry Buck Trail on West River Road at American Legion State Forest in Barkhamsted, Connecticut. Park at the northern entrance to Legion Road.

ONLINE EVENTS!

Attracting Birds, Butterflies, and Other Beneficials Online PowerPoint Program presented by Naturalist and Landscaper John Root and sponsored by the Granby Free Public Library on Tuesday, April 6 at 7:00 p.m. Visit www.granbylibrary.com for the link to the presentation. Free.



WATCH OUT FOR TURTLES!

The Knox Trail Inn
IS NOW OPEN FOR LUNCH SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS
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*The Times is grateful to readers who
contributed in March.*

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