

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



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RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

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June 2021

“No Crisis” Claim After Three Officials Quit STATE ON STAND-BY, BUT HELP NOT NEEDED YET

By Simon Winchester

As Sandisfield careened from one problem to another last month—losing in a series of resignations no fewer than three of its executive officers—the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has indicated it stands ready to step in to help the town if the need arises. In the short term temporary appointments from a corps of freelance specialists will be made to fill the empty posts; Boston will offer what it describes as “robust” assistance after any formal request comes from our Select Board, though at press time no such request has been made.

The serial departures of the Town Manager, the Town Clerk and the Assistant Town Clerk came in the closing weeks of last month—interrupting what might otherwise have been a healing moment for Sandisfield, with the announcement of a probable solution (see below) to the highly charged plans to build a cannabis growing facility in the northern woodlands.

Such relief as might have been brought on by this news has been overshadowed by the cascade of unprecedented personnel-related events that are currently swirling around the town government. Optimists are hoping that, with divisions over this issue now set to one side, the town and its select board may now be able to work cooperatively to meet the current series of new challenges to the town’s governance.

The first and most controversial of the three departures was that of Joanne Grybosh, the highly regarded Town Manager who has quit her post after less than three years on the job. Though Ms. Grybosh is not permitted to disclose the exact reasons for her departure, sources have informed the Times that she had complained of various forms of mistreatment.

Cont’d on p.8



Town Meeting, 2021, Page 6.

The Town’s nondescript cigar-box-like voting box accepted the secret ballots. The vase of flowers brightened the event.

Photo: Bill Price

SAMA Public Hearing #2

ABBY ROAD SITE MAY BE ABANDONED FOR RT. 8

By Simon Winchester and Bill Price

The plan to build a large cannabis growing facility in the Sandisfield woods will very likely be abandoned in the face of intense public pressure and because a more logical site has been identified. SAMA Productions LLC has found an alternative site at 42 South Main Street on the east side of Rt. 8 south of New Boston,

about two miles north of the Connecticut border. It has few neighbors and better access to highways.

A Community Outreach Meeting to present this new site will be held June 22 at 6:00 p.m., at the DPW Garage. This will be the second hearing for the same facility. The first proposal, on Abby Road near Town Hill Road, met with dedicated neighborhood resistance.

The planned facility is, like the first one, to include over 100,000 square feet for a processing building and 22 commercial greenhouses for cultivation. The Rt. 8 property is currently owned by Ralph Morrison, owner/operator of A&M Auto and the Town’s fire chief, and is forested land that has been intermittently cleared over the past three or four years.

Town government sources indicate that the special permit application by SAMA for the new site “will go through on the nod.” While it is too soon for the opponents of the Abby Road site to breathe easy, the source did say that if the permit is granted, “there is no doubt at all that SAMA will drop its Abby Road plans.”

Abutters listed informally on the application are the US Corps of Engineers and, across Rt. 8, Charles Pease, Jr., Charles Yarzab, Lauren Dana, and the Western Massachusetts Climbers Coalition.

The meeting will be available in person at the DPW Garage or via Zoom. See the town’s website for Zoom access. Details for the project can be found on the Town’s website at www.sandisfieldma.gov.



Town Election 2021

Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko, beside the ballot box, organized her team of poll workers for the Town Election on Monday, May 15.

From left, Theresa DellaGiustina, Laura Rogers-Castro, Dolores, and, far right, Pauline Bakunis and Vicki Bakunis. Out of the photo, to the right, is Poll Watcher Connie Canty.

Honoring Heroes With Heroes and Ice Cream

By Lynn Rubenstein


Heroes come in many shapes and sizes. As well as great big sandwiches, we have our own town heroes. First responders (Fire, Police, EMT's, nursing staff), educators, our DPW crew, our Town Hall staff all fit the category of "heroes." Our veterans, without a doubt. We also have family heroes, dads, moms, grandparents. Even many of our children! Name your own hero.

Plus those big sandwiches.

The Rec Committee invites you and all your heroes for a "Heroes and Ice Cream" event. On Sunday, June 13 (noon to 1:30 p.m.), we will be honoring all of you with six-foot hero sandwiches and ice cream to enjoy at the Sandisfield Library/Community Center playground. In case of rain our alternate venue will be Fire Station # 1 on Rt 8 in New Boston.

THIS EVENT REQUIRES PREREGISTRATION BY JUNE 5. Contact us at SandisfieldRecComm@outlook.com or call 413-269-7357.

The library will be open that day (even though it's a Sunday). Pick up a new book to accompany you and your beach towel when you visit York Lake this summer.

Be our hero and join us. Just a reminder, we are always looking for more members and volunteers to complement our team. 



Town Election 2021

TWO CLOSE RACES AND ONE SURPRISE

By Bill Price

Of the Town's 638 registered voters, 206 voted, representing a 32 percent turnout.

Alex Bowman was elected to the Select Board seat vacated by Brian O'Rourke, who opted not to run for a second three-year term. Bowman joins fellow Selectmen Mark Newman (elected in 2017 and 2020, up for re-election in 2023) and George Riley (elected in 2018 to fill Alice Boyd's vacant seat for a year and elected again in 2019, up for re-election in 2022). Riley was elected chairman of the Select Board for the coming year.


Bowman won narrowly against Chris Joyce, winning by only a dozen votes out of 200 cast. Over the past couple years, he has been critical of the Board over what he saw as its failure to follow Open Meeting regulations and other rule transgressions, but the Board meetings since the election have been cordial and professional. It is hoped that Bowman, an IT developer, will help Town Hall become more proficient in computer technology.

An even closer vote was for a three-year term on the School Committee. Carl Nett won with a margin of only two votes over Billie Anderson Pachulski, the incumbent. Nett told The Times, "I'm truly honored and humbled to have been elected to the School Committee. I will give my all in this role to improve the scholastic performance and financial efficiency of the district, particularly the elementary school."

Other positions were filled by candidates running without opposition. John Field was re-elected to the Planning Board and Bill Taylor won an open seat. Kathie Burrows won a new term on the Board of Assessors and as a Library Trustee. In his first run for Town government, Dominic Konstam Jr. won a one-year term as Moderator, filling the seat vacated by Simon Winchester.

A surprise candidate turned up at the last minute. There was no candidate to fill the seat vacated by Roger Kohler on the Board of Health, which would have left the Board with only two members, Victor Hyreckvich and Kim Spring. But Keith Larson "announced" to a few friends that he'd be a candidate, and he won by garnering six votes. Had this reporter known Keith was in the running, Keith would have gotten seven votes.

Keith, who serves as the Town's Transfer Station attendant, acknowledged that he "hadn't thought of it until I did. I told a couple people and pretty soon I had six votes." He added, "It'll be an adventure."

Keith will have a steep learning curve since Board of Health regulations, already a thick book, come fast and furious. DPW Superintendent Brad Curry has put Keith in touch with a long-time veteran of the Tolland Board of Health, and he will have the help of outgoing Roger Kohler and good advice from Victor and Kim. As Keith said, it'll be an adventure. 



Local Chiefs Assess Police Reform's Impact

NEW TRAINING MANDATE GOES INTO EFFECT JULY 1

By Seth Kershner

Police chiefs across rural parts of Western Massachusetts are scrambling to comply with the demands of the police reform bill passed by the state legislature at the end of 2020.

While the reform bill touches on a variety of issues, the most concerning part of the law for many in local government is its mandate that part-time officers get the same training as full-time officers at state police training academies.

Prior to passage of the bill, far less training was required of part-timers, whose ranks fill out the police departments of many rural towns. Sandisfield currently has a part-time chief, Michael Morrison; a part-time assistant chief, Ralph Morrison; as well as three other part-time officers. At last month's annual town meeting, voters approved funding to hire a full-time Public Safety Officer.

In an email to the Times, Chief Morrison said that he agreed with the new mandate. "It will bring everyone's training standards to the same level which is how it is already done in most states."


The actual training itself is free, meaning towns will not need to pay the state. However, to stay in compliance with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, a town's officers would need to be paid for the time they spend in training because it is mandatory for their position. Municipalities have more leeway with regard to travel reimbursement and may be able to ask officers to foot the bill for travel.

Since the mandate comes without any accompanying rise in state funding, some chiefs worry about the financial impact on local governments. Police Chief Robert Garriepy of Huntington told the weekly Country Journal, in March, that sending his part-time officers to the police academy in Springfield for additional training would cost thousands of dollars in pay, fuel and other expenses.

Great Barrington Police Chief Paul Storti echoed these concerns. "I'm all for uniform training," Storti told the Times during an interview on Zoom. "However, it will be a costly process to bring some smaller towns up to compliance."

Sandisfield's Chief Morrison said he was taking a wait and see approach and was "unsure" about the financial impact on towns.

In a statement to the Times, the office of State Senator Adam Hinds said that Senators and

Representatives representing smaller communities are "continuing to work together to address the implications of the police reform law to ensure that there isn't a disproportionate impact on these communities." According to the statement, Senator Hinds is working closely with the governor's office to determine the financial impact of this new law and are attempting to secure sufficient funding to offset these costs before the bill goes into effect on July 1. 



New Boston Inn Car Show, June 12

Automobile enthusiasts and those in search of a good time will assemble at the New Boston Inn, 101 North Main Street, Sandisfield at 1:00 p.m., Saturday, June 12, for the Inn's First Annual Car Show. There will be cars to suit every taste, from classics to modern hot models, including many fine specimens from the High Idlers Club of West Suffield, Connecticut.

A bluegrass band, free popcorn, and free admission. If you have a car you're proud of and would like to participate, contact the New Boston Inn at 413-258-4477.


Flag Day, June 14

BURNING CEREMONY AT 5 P.M.



Do you have an unserviceable, worn-out United States flag?

Your no-longer usable flags can be dropped off any time at the Sandisfield American Legion Pavilion on Rt. 8 in New Boston. Leave them on the counter by the fire pit.

A burning ceremony to dispose of them properly will be held June 14, Flag Day, at 5:00 p.m., at the Pavilion. Everyone is welcome. 


Maria Domato
Commander, Post #456

Last Call for Essay Contest

\$250 AWARD AWAITS WINNER

The deadline of this year's Sandisfield Times essay contest has been extended to June 30.

Open to Sandisfield residents of all ages, entries should be a maximum of 600 words long. Please send submissions by June 30 to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org.

The topic of this year's contest: Other than your home, what is your favorite place in Sandisfield, and why? The winner will receive a signed commemorative book and cash prize of \$250. Essays by the winner and runner-up will appear in our August issue. 

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Dolores Sets a Record

TOWN CLERK IS MOVING ON

Photo and text by Bill Price

Dolores Harasyko said, referring to her retirement as Sandisfield's Town Clerk, "The time is right."

While no one else may think so, she may be correct.

Sandisfield has a history of long-lasting Town Clerks, at least since 1892 when George Shepard stepped aside (he began in 1875). Then came Wesley Clark (21 years), Jason Sears (18 years), Zoe Campetti (11 years), and Flora Rhodes (the champ at 23 years). Until Dolores at 24 years.

Dolores and her husband Steve moved to Sandisfield from Hartford in 1992. In 1998, after Flora Rhodes became ill and Lori Wilkinson had filled in for a year or so, someone suggested to Dolores that she might like the job. She was elected and in fact has liked the job ever since.

"You have to enjoy the work," she said. "I feel blessed to have worked for the people of Sandisfield. Confidential issues come up and I feel good that people are comfortable talking to me about them. If I can, and it's possible, Town Hall will help them out."

She added that she's loved working with people in Town. "It's been a very good experience."

Now, age 63, she's ready to take the summer off. "I've been working since I was 14." She had put in an earlier 15 years at a Connecticut insurance firm.



Dolores received a citation for 20 years of service from the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 2017, hand-delivered by Representative Smitty Pignatelli.

In the second issue of The Sandisfield Times, May 2010, more than a decade ago, Dolores told reporter Rita Kasky that a big part of her job was organizing local, state, and federal elections. She was also busy then—as now—communicating with Selectmen by phone, email, and in person, organizing agendas, transcribing minutes, organizing their mail and papers to be signed.

Her favorite part of the job, she said then, was "dealing with people, especially their happy moments. Wedding licenses, recording births. Interacting with colleagues in Town Hall and residents who drop by for information."

"Always busy," she told Rita, "but not too busy."

Rita described Dolores as "a professional cat-herder."

Dolores gave the Select Board a 60-day notice. Her last day will be July 12, though having worked for 50 years she may not be able to simply stop and take a whole summer off. She indicated that in time she might like to find a job at Ward's Nursery or a garden shop, joking that if plants gave her a hard time she'll simply "dead head them and go on."

Asked what's changed in two decades, she said ruefully, "Mostly the election laws, especially in small towns. The changes have been enormous and a lot more responsibility has been passed along to Town Clerks."

She added, "Covid gave us a run for our money this year with almost daily changes in protection requirements for the elections and at Town Hall." Nevertheless, Dolores feels that no one got short changed. "We did pretty good meeting people at the door, learning new procedures, new ways of passing information to people who needed it, keeping everybody safe."

She is proudest, in her 24 years, of saving the Town's historic ledgers. "We got them out of Flora's house—where Flora, God bless her, had kept them—and the Town approved money for an archivist to go through the books, which went back to the 1700s, and prioritize them. He restored them and every page was encased in mylar and they are stored in fireproof cabinets. He told me that by making that effort we had added 500 years to the life of the ledgers."

What has changed? "The Select Board changes often. A lot of change. The Board really needs a full-time person for Town Clerk and another for Administrative Assistant." But is the Town ready to hire people to fill those jobs? That's a question for the new Select Board, the latest member of which Dolores swore in after the election held just May 17.

The best part of the job? "Registering young people to vote. Encouraging them. I've enjoyed all the people I've worked with, but getting to know young people in town is one of the joys of the job."

She added, "I feel good that anyone with experience should be able to come in here and take over my desk. The filing is up to date, everything's in its place, and ready for a new set of hands."

Dolores' husband, Steve, retired five years ago. She said it has been tough to be the only one in the house going off to work in the morning. "I'm looking forward to not doing that. At least for a while. Maybe all summer." 🍷

Another Loss for the Town

Dolores' assistant, Pauline Bakunis, will be moving on even before Dolores is gone. Her last day will be June 7. Her job at Town Hall was her first job and Dolores enjoyed mentoring her and helping her become more used to interacting with strangers and working alongside others. "Pauline was here five years," Dolores said, "and I've been grateful every day she's at work." Pauline applied for jobs outside of town and was hired at a cannabis dispensary in Lee. She starts her new job in mid-June.

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June at the Arts Center

ENTERTAINMENT AND EDUCATION, FREE AND FUN!

By Hilde Weisert

June begins at the Arts Center on Saturday, June 5, with a big day, both on-site and online. Register for Zoom events on the website, www.sandisfieldartscenter.org.

At 10:30 a.m., June 5, tune in on Zoom for "My Life in the Most Amazing Scientific Program You've Never Heard of: 50 Years of Scientific Ocean Drilling" with Sandisfield resident and Wesleyan University Professor Suzanne O'Connell taking us into her under-the-sea world to explain how scientific ocean drilling helped to prove plate tectonics, developed the discipline of paleoceanography, and has recovered life in the deepest recesses of Earth's ocean crust. Learn about its origins, contributions to understanding Earth's history, and its future plans.


From 4 to 6 p.m., the Gallery hosts an outdoor reception for photographer Peter Hason's show in honor of his mother, longtime Arts Center volunteer and Sandisfield resident Jane Hason. Indoors, the Gallery show will be open to small groups.

At 7 p.m., connect back online for the "Share Your Talent" Open Mic, Perform on the virtual Zoom stage of the Sandisfield Arts Center or join the audience of your friends and neighbors to see and hear the many flavors of local talent!

Did you enjoy the amazing concerts by pianist Fred Moyer in 2018 and 2019, mixing jazz and classical and featuring the MoyerCam (where you see his hands on the keyboard as he plays)? This year, you can attend a special June Moonlight Sonata at 7 p.m., Saturday June 12, a free YouTube Premiere you can watch with friends and family. Afterwards, join a live conversation with Fred over Zoom for \$10.

While we were closed for on-site events in 2020, Thad Kubis, master photographer and friend of the Arts Center, offered three well-received photography workshops over Zoom. This season, while we wait for a safe return to our Arts Center building in September, Thad is again providing an expert, engaging workshop for experienced and neophyte photographers using their smartphone or DSLR, June 19, 10:30 a.m., "Mastering Impressionistic Photography."

Did you miss the YouTube Premiere of "Irresistible Excerpts from (Some of) the Sandisfield Players Favorite Shows,"? Introduced by Ben Luxon, highlights included scenes from "Jack and the Giant Beanstalk," "Under Milk Wood," and "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," with a grand finale of "Imagination" sung by the whole Charlie cast. To see this and other Arts Center videos, please go to youtube.com and search for "Sandisfield Arts Center."

We are investing in making SARc safe and healthy in ways that will serve us well long past COVID-19. For improved air quality, important for years to come, we've installed HEPA air filters, are arranging professional duct cleaning, and are getting bids to replace our noisy exhaust fans with fans that can circulate air quietly during performances. Our goal is a safe, comfortable, and confident return for you, our audience, our performers, and our volunteers, as well as a healthy environment come what may. If you want to contribute to the SARc Safe Opening fund, you can text "SARCSAFE" to 44321 or mention it on our website's Donate page. 

Housing Rehab Loan Program Returns

Does your home need a new roof? New doors/windows? New siding? Septic update? Code violations corrected? Other repairs?


Sandisfield has applied again for state funds with the towns of Egremont and Great Barrington to provide home repair services to local residents. The funding, provided by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, offers zero interest and a deferred, forgivable loan up to \$40,000 to make critical repairs to your home.

Funding will be on a first come/first served basis.

Over the past two years the program has completed 21 projects in Sandisfield alone.

If you are interested in learning more or participating in the program, please fill out an application. You can pick up an application at Town Hall Annex or access Sandisfieldma.gov at Housing Rehab Loan and click on Sandisfield pre app icon.

You can email the completed application to: dawn@theresource.org or by mail to: TRI-The Resource Inc., 291 Main Street, Suite 309, Great Barrington, MA 01230, or stop in the Town Hall Annex and give it to the Town Manager or the Town Clerk.

If you need assistance or have any questions, please call Dawn Lemon at 413-645-3448 or email dawn@theresource.org. 



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PIANIST FRED MOYER "JUNE MOONLIGHT SONATA" FREE CONCERT FOLLOWED BY ONLINE RECEPTION AND TALK (\$10).

★ UPCOMING: More live streaming events and workshops in July, outdoor events in the summer and then a full Fall schedule at the Arts Center ★

FOR DETAILS, VISIT SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG

Town Meeting 2021

CANNABIS BYLAW FAILS TO PASS

By Bill Price

Everything passed at the Town Meeting except the two items that might have provided some fireworks, but in fact didn't. They provided fizzle, but nothing to light the bright blue sky outside the DPW Garage where the meeting was held.

At least some of the 128 registered voters who attended, along with a few of the 20 or so interested resident non-voters who came along, must have been disappointed, but the meeting was conducted with a politeness and decorum that was reflected by the audience. People let their feelings be known, but no one got mad.

The meeting began at 10 a.m., governed by Selectman Brian O'Rourke, filling in as moderator for Simon Winchester, who had

recused himself because of his perceived preference for one of contentious articles. Brian, a superb moderator, set an example for young Dominic Konstam who two days later was elected moderator for the coming year.

Most articles passed unanimously, but a few by majority vote. During the nearly two-hour meeting, the Town voted to spend some \$2.5 million on basic living expenses for Fiscal Year 2022, with not much allowance for frills. This was only about \$50,000 more than last year's budget, hardly a drop in the bucket but at least not a waterfall.

Add another \$1,654,049 for educational purposes and the Town is talking real money.

Fiscal Year 2022 will cost us a bit over \$4 million. There wasn't a lot of discussion at the meeting of where that \$4 mill might come from. The assumption is, as usual, that it will come from thee and me.

The contentious discussion came when Moderator O'Rourke called Article 27, whether the Town would pass a bylaw limiting the production of cannabis. Many hours of hard work had been put in by the Town's Planning Board, in conjunction with the Select Board and the Finance Committee, to produce a 14-page bylaw regulating the cultivation, growth, distribution, and sale of marijuana.

Everything regulated, it seemed, except the smoking or consumption of the stuff.

The bylaw needed to pass by a two-thirds majority. It failed to receive even a majority, being defeated by 58 ayes to 68 noes. Many of the no's were because the bylaw prohibited large-scale growing facilities, which would have precluded any facility the size of the already approved Abby Road establishment, along with a few property-rights advocates and resisters to 'government interference.'

Those hoping to see the bylaw pass, for the most part, were foes of the large SAMA facility planned

for northern Sandisfield or who simply wanted the growth and sale of cannabis to be regulated in Sandisfield.

Fifteen residents took polite turns speaking in favor of or in opposition to the bylaw. Philip Blume opposed the bylaw because of restrictions it would have placed on his operation as a Tier 1 and 3 cannabis farmer. Cindy True, whose property would be impacted by the proposed Abby Road facility, spoke in favor of the bylaw, even though its passage would not have affected the SAMA site near her. Alex Bowman, a Select Board candidate in the pending election, was in favor of the bylaw because it could be amended as more was learned about its impact on farmers and cannabis deregulation.

A request for a secret ballot came from Jean Atwater-Williams because, as she said, residents might be hesitant to vote for or against a contentious issue under the gaze of their friends and neighbors. Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko and her assistant, Pauline Bakunis, prepared the Town's voting container and brought out the Yes/No ballots.

Ralph Morrison moved that the vote begin and voters lined up and took their turns tearing off either the Yes or the No and slipping it into the box. The count was taken, the results announced.

Accolades were given to a few friends in Town. Nina Carr thanked Lynn Rubenstein for providing the computer work for seniors seeking Covid vaccination appointments. Dolores Harasyko, who had announced her decision to retire in June, was thanked for her more than two decades of service to the Town. Selectman George Riley thanked fellow Selectman Brian O'Rourke for his service and friendship over the three years the two had served together. Brian had chosen not to run for re-election this term.

Then Brian closed the Town Meeting and everyone went home in the sunshine. 🌞

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CONGRATULATIONS TO SANDISFIELD'S HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

- Bryan Laughlin*
- Charles Annacharico*
- Joseph Beardsley*
- Emelia Fedell*
- Shane Messina*
- Alec Morrison*
- Fisher Rijska*



Hinds Announces \$3 Million in Aid to Rural Schools

CALLS FOR APPOINTMENTS TO RURAL SCHOOLS COMMISSION

By Sandisfield Times Reporters

Senator Adam Hinds, who represents a largely rural, Western Massachusetts district spanning 52 communities in Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden Counties, successfully championed the increase of \$1.5 million in funding, totaling an appropriation of \$3 million, for the Commonwealth's most rural school districts during the 2019-2020 legislative session.

"For communities like Sandisfield and others that share the rural experience," Senator Hinds said in a statement to the Times, "their zip codes should not determine the quality of their children's education."

Current education formulas do not account for the higher costs that schools with small and declining enrollment confront and that is why I fought to establish this line item in the budget. We are starting a commission to ensure this additional assistance for rural schools is permanently part of education funding in Massachusetts."

The Rural School Aid grant program helps school districts with low population densities and lower-than-average incomes address fiscal challenges and take steps to improve efficiency. Administered by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Rural School Aid is a source of funding separate from Chapter 70 aid and is intended to supplement the FY20 operating budgets of eligible school districts.

In order to qualify for Rural School Aid, DESE must determine that a school district meets two requirements: (I) The "rural factor" – student density per square mile of a school district; and (II) Ability to pay – the average per capital income of a school district.

Members of the Sandisfield school committee could not immediately be reached for comment.

Outdoor Sculpture Exhibit to Benefit the Arts Center

The Sandisfield Arts Center will be the recipient of all proceeds from an outdoor sculpture exhibit taking place in July in a five-acre field on Route 57 in Sandisfield. Artists hail from Sandisfield and neighboring towns. The opening reception will be July 3 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The exhibit will remain open on weekends throughout the month of July. Admission is "pay what you can" with a suggested donation of \$20 per person for adults.

Located at 186 Sandisfield Road, the exhibit will be hosted by Liana Toscanini, former president of the Arts Center. She has created a wide walking trail around the perimeter of her field with semi-circular cut-outs for the sculptures. A golf cart will be provided for those unable to navigate the 15-minute jaunt.

"This will be a safe, outdoor event that uses the arts to bring people together again, after 15 months of pandemic hibernation," says Liana. Like many other arts organizations across Berkshire County, the Sandisfield Arts Center has suffered major event-related revenue loss. "This is a nice way to help not only the Arts Center but also any artist who sells a sculpture during the exhibit."

Artists to date include: Jaye Moscarriello, Jamie Goldenberg, Gar Waterman, Jon Reidman, Karl Saliter, Robert Adzema, Bill Cunningham, and Nancy Johnson. For more information call Liana at 413-441-9542 or email liana@npcberkshires.org.

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SUNRUN



No Crisis*Cont'd from p.1*

The early retirement of Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko after 24 years in post brings to an end a legendary period in town history. Her institutional memory is deep and her knowledge profound, and she will generally be missed both within and without government. (See Bill Price's interview, page 4.)

Her sturdy enthusiasm for the traditional ways of running Town Hall has, however, occasioned not a little friction. Dolores was never eager to accept the necessity of keeping an up-to-date town website. But the arrival this month of a very tech-savvy newcomer to the Select Board, Alex Bowman, would serve only to continue a process of Town Hall modernization.

Moreover, the appointment in early April of a financial auditor, brought in to evaluate the town's accounting procedures, is believed to have proved additionally unsettling. The auditor is known to have found some of the traditional procedures unsatisfactory, and though his final

report is not complete, is thought likely to suggest reforms that would be onerous to implement, at the very least.


The subsequent departure of Ms. Harasyko, together with that of her assistant Pauline Bakunis - who has accepted a position in Lee - poses a significant challenge to the continued efficiency of our town's administration. Taken together with the whirlwind resignation of Ms. Grybosh this presents Sandisfield with a remarkable new reality, one dogged with fundamental questions as to whether the town can in fact run itself at all.

The few who are now left in charge, including a Select Board coming to terms with the probable new and very different membership style of Alex Bowman, are faced with a series of challenges that in ordinary circumstances might seem insurmountable. This is where the Commonwealth can come in, if needed.

The Massachusetts bureaucracy is a bewildering behemoth, but buried within the Revenue Department is the Division of Local Services,

which would help with tax matters and would, if asked, swing into action with a well-rehearsed and robust plan to advise on the means of collecting and disbursing monies. The Select Board would have to ask for help, but so far has not done so.

What the three members have done, however, is to make an initial 'save-the-date' approach to some of the small number of specialized companies that provide fill-in personnel at those times when, after retirements and resignations, small towns unexpectedly need backup. Sandisfield has already been helped out by such firms in the past, most recently prior to the appointment of Fred Ventresco as Administrator in 2016.

Whether a temp agency can fill the enormous gap left by the trinity of vacancies remains to be seen. The Select Board - with George Riley as its new chairman, and Mark Newman and Alex Bowman in support - is officially confident. There is no crisis, is the promoted view. Business is continuing, just as usual. 



Our Own Tom Christopher Wins Big

By Simon Winchester

The Garden Club of America, founded in 1913, is this country's principal champion of botany and conservation, and it awards annual medals of great distinction and prestige. Most of the medals bear the names of the formidable doyennes of American horticulture, with that named for Sarah Chapman Francis being among the most sought-after. This year the GCA has seen fit to bestow this medal upon Sandisfield's own Thomas Christopher, champion gardener and environmental writer who has been as proud as a dog with two tails ever since the award was announced last month.

"It really is an extraordinary honor," said Tom from his isolated timber-frame house on Sears Road, where he has lived for the last 20 years with his wife Suzanne O'Connell, a geology professor at Wesleyan University. "It is so exciting, to receive such an award for writing, and the citation says that it represents my entire body of work, which is even more gratifying."



The Sarah Chapman Francis Medal—bronze and huge and heavy and adorned on its obverse with a quote from Emerson, *Nature and Books Belong to the Eyes that See Them*—has been awarded each year


since 1964 "for outstanding literary achievement" on matters botanical. Among its honorees – with whom Tom may now rightly regard himself as

co-equal in stature – are the late Maui-based poet W. S. Merwin and, more recently, Andrea Wulf, who achieved world-wide acclaim for her biography of the eighteenth century Prussian explorer Alexander von Humboldt. Other renowned conservationists who have been GCA medalists include Rachel Carson and Aldo Leopold.

Tom Christopher, born in Rome where his father was a Time magazine correspondent, first became first enthralled by botany while at Brown University, despite originally enrolling to study classics. He began professional work with plants at the New York Botanical Garden, living in the Bronx – an experience he described as 'interesting' – before moving to restore the gardens at Columbia University's famed Lamont-Doherty geophysics laboratory, housed in the former American Express founder's estate on a bluff overlooking the Hudson, 15 miles north of Manhattan.

It was there that Tom met Suzanne, who still works as she did then, on deep-ocean core drilling research, while now teaching at Wesleyan. The couple spend semester times at Middletown but return as often as possible to their Sears Road property, where they are creating a varied and fascinating sustainable vegetable garden.

For the past twenty years Tom Christopher has worked as a freelance writer, with 19 books on gardens, sustainable gardening, landscaping and conservation already under his belt. He is a frequent contributor to The Sandisfield Times. He also records a weekly podcast, Growing Greener which after 100 episodes aired, already commands an audience of several thousand regular listeners and which, thanks now to the award from the GCA "may now grow in popularity," Tom says with a modest laugh.

Needless to say, all of us at the paper are tremendously proud of Tom's stellar achievement and hope that, despite his swelling fame and repute, he will continue to write for us as often as he can. 





Some Modest Proposals

By David Hubbard, Dodd Road

At Sandisfield's annual town meeting, held May 15, citizens voted overwhelmingly to reject Article 27, the proposed Cannabis Establishment Zoning Bylaw. By defeating what I felt was a restrictive, exclusionary bylaw, the Town can now move forward to generate revenue, jobs, and begin to strengthen the local economy.

President Biden has proposed a huge multi trillion-dollar infrastructure bill. Congress is currently considering reinstating earmarks.

For those of you too young to remember what this means, this might help. It means that our Senators Markey and Warren, and Representative Neal may be able to unilaterally designate ("earmark") Federal funds for any project in their district that they specify.

This is a "once in a generation" opportunity for Sandisfield to replace or repair all of its infrastructure with Federal money.

HERE IS MY RECOMMENDATION:

- The Town Manager should contact immediately the Chiefs of Staff for Senators Markey and Warren and Representative Neal and request a meeting with the Senators and Representative at their office.
- A Sandisfield delegation, consisting of the incoming First Selectman, the Chair of the Finance Board, and the DPW Superintendent should attend the meeting and present the case for our Town.
- We have a good story to tell. We are a rural, underserved (no broadband or three phase power) low-to-modest income community with 90 miles of road to maintain. To add

to that, two-thirds of our land is in some form of State mandated Chapter 61 and pays little or no taxes. Our financial posture is an inverted pyramid with 350 families supporting a budget of 3.5 million.

- Climate change renders our dirt roads dangerous and impassable during the two dozen or more yearly freeze thaw cycles that occur each winter. They are a public safety emergency.
- Our Town Hall and Annex are functionally obsolete to the point that we can not even properly store and preserve our state mandated records due to regular flooding and mold. Neither building has septic fields.
- Any proposal for a Town Center will need to include a package plant to treat septage as it is unlikely we will find land that will support multiple septic systems. It may well be the case that the package plant is an infrastructure category that will be easily funded.

NEXT STEPS: A PROPOSAL SHOULD BE CREATED ASAP TO:

- rebuild all our roads, bridges, culverts, drainage systems. The drainage should be designed as a town-wide system carrying all the water to its terminus river or pond.
- replace all our deteriorated highway and emergency services equipment and vehicles
- replace all our Municipal buildings
- build a town center (as detailed in the Sandisfield plan of development)

Federal money can ease our financial burden. To revitalize the community and bring in young families which will help us staff our volunteer fire department and EMT services we will need to add other amenities. We should follow the town Plan of Development and build a town center and establish a lake amenity at Spectacle Pond.

If our delegation fails to convince our Senators and

Representative to earmark funds for Sandisfield, we can get a second bite of the apple, when the general infrastructure funding is released. At that time, it will be first come first served for shovel-ready projects. We must define our projects and be ready to apply for funding on Day 1.

Fixing everything that Sandisfield needs will cost \$25-30 million. That is a lot. But still, it is worth asking. They can say "no" but we will now know what we are up against. We should be awarded at least several million if we show up with a specific, concrete plan. It is possible that we could get fully funded and that would be transformational for Sandisfield.

SO, TO REPEAT NEXT STEPS:

- The task ahead is simple and straightforward.
- The Sandisfield delegation (incoming First Selectman, Finance Chair and Highway Superintendent) should meet with Senators Markey and Warren and Representative Neal in the next few weeks to discuss our overall needs and get a reality check on obtaining \$25-30 million earmarked to rebuild municipal infrastructure.
- Immediately the Town should focus on identifying, quantifying, and pricing all our needs so we can be first in line when the Infrastructure Fund applications are released.
- The opportunity is upon us to move forward as a community. Now is the time for our elected officials to take full advantage of this unique opportunity and move us forward. Have we elected the right people for the job? We will soon find out.

Toward a Better Sandisfield is a new column to present creative ideas about how we might build a more productive, optimistic Hill Town down here in the SE corner of Berkshire County. Send us your ideas at editor@sandisfieldtimes.org.



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The Colorful Past of a Montville Gateway Property

PART TWO: THE BUCK RIVER POULTRY FARM

By Ron Bernard

Early photos courtesy Sheila Skolnick Gamradt

In last month's column we introduced the first of three successive families who lived at 90 Sandisfield Road between the 1870s and the 1970s. The only thing the families had in common, aside from the property itself, were chickens.



The Beardsley place as it appears today.
Photo Sandisfield Times

The Henry Manley family home was destroyed by fire about 1909 and the former farmstead remained dormant until 1930 when Nathan Pinsky, son of an original Jewish immigrant settler, and his wife, Sarah Kaufman, bought the property.

Pinsky was known as a very good clarinet player. His granddaughter, Gilda Pinsky Coombes, now of Nevada, reports that "According to family tradition, he supposedly once played for the Czar of Russia."

By the time the Pinsky's bought the property, Sandisfield's "Jewish colony" had established a thriving micro-economy based on poultry products, concentrated in Montville.* Nathan and Sarah decided to enter the business and reintroduce family farming at this location. Their new home in Colonial Revival-style was constructed by the family by 1933. The family included Frances, 16, Martin, 14, and Eleanor, 11. Thinking long-term, Pinsky also built a two-story laying house, a novelty in the area's chicken farming community.

In her 1998 memoirs, their daughter Eleanor Pinsky Skolnick spoke of a magical childhood that included a one-room schoolhouse with its pot-bellied stove. "My parents who worked very hard on the farm would take us on a horse-drawn sleigh, equipped with bells, for rides over the snow-covered countryside. I marveled at the beauty of a white fairyland. Spring meant fishing. We made

our own poles and with string and a diaper pin we pulled trout from the river. Mom would fry them for us." She said her recollections of this—even the taste of it—remained vivid. (Eleanor died in December, 2020 at 98. See The Times, March 2021, for a tribute by her children, Sheila and Neil).

Nathan's wife, Sarah Pinsky, died in the Bronx on December 4, 1941, and Nathan seven years later. When their son Martin was discharged from the U.S. Army in August 1945, he assumed the operation of the farm. He had served nearly the entire course of the war and because he was fluent in Yiddish his final assignment was in a unit that liberated Jews from Nazi concentration camps.

A daughter's memory of family life and the business of chickens

Martin and his wife, Frances Bleier Pinsky, married in New York in 1946, took their poultry business very seriously, with all hands and all their kids on deck all of the time.

Nevertheless, their daughter Gilda speaks effusively about her happy childhood. "We had a horse and some cows and a big garden. There was plenty of fertilizer." She recalled that together with her slightly younger siblings, Nora and Jeff, they would rise at dawn, seven days a week, to collect, clean, grade and pack the eggs. Baby brother, Richard missed out on the fun.

"It was just us mostly," said Gilda. "We didn't mind. It was our responsibility and as a life experience we were the better for it. There was still time for friends and games and to enjoy all the wonderful things for kids to do in the country."

During summers from 1947-63, the three families, Pinsky, Skolnick, and Chernick, shared the house and all the cousins pitched in to help with the chickens and eggs. Eleanor's daughter Sheila recalled, "There were eight of us—very lively, loud and active cousins."

Buck River Farm flourished. Gilda said, "At the peak there were 10,000 birds, if you can imagine that. But my father was sensitive, and he wouldn't cram them inside."

The Berkshire Eagle published a big spread in July 1956 about the success of poultry farming in Montville. "Every week more than 200,000 eggs are shipped from Montville farms to the Connecticut market," said the report. The Pinsky's share of that was 300 dozen eggs per day, more than ten percent



Sketch portrait of Nathan & Sarah Pinsky, c.1915

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The Pinsky house as it appeared about 1940.

of the total from Montville. Pinsky and his Buck River Farm were featured because of their innovations in the egg business.

Lorraine German said, “Pinsky was famous all over the county for his progressive thinking about poultry husbandry. He was always trying new methods of breeding and experimenting with feed and breeds.” Gilda remembers that her father was focused on safety and was mindful of flock levels and health. “He allowed only one rooster per 2,500 hens,” she said.



The two-story laying house, early 1930s.

Active in civic life

In the aftermaths of the Depression and the War, Sandisfield in the 1940s was economically and socially distressed. The 1950s era became one of those turning points when strong and capable civic-minded citizens stepped up, Martin Pinsky among them.

Charismatic and energetic, he put as much effort and commitment into his community as he did with the synagogue and his family and farm. Pinsky served as selectman between 1953-58 and was elected Town Moderator for three of those years. He filled in as Sandisfield Chief of Police (1958) and served in other capacities as well. Gilda Pinsky remembers that because her father was so trusted and approachable, “People were constantly coming to him with personal problems.”

Towards the end of the decade, the Pinskys’ fortunes took a few turns for the worse.

Martin lost elections, possibly because he had to

turn full attention to the farm which was struggling for survival. Following the devastating flood of 1955, rising feed grain prices drove most of the Montville chicken farms out of business.

It must have been heart-breaking for this proud family to face such misfortune in 1963, when everything three generations had worked for was lost. The Campbell Soup company collected the chickens. The family departed for booming California and better prospects.



Sorting eggs, left to right. Frances and Martin Pinsky with daughters Gilda and Nora. Berkshire Eagle photo.

In September 1964, the Berkshire Eagle reported: “Mr. and Mrs. Adriel J. Bidwell and family of Glastonbury, Conn., have moved into their newly purchased home, the former Martin Pinsky Farm.” This innocuous notice belied what happened next at 90 Sandisfield Road. See our final installment next month, “The Sad and Fowl Bidwell Affair.”

*The fascinating story of the Jewish immigrant families who arrived in Sandisfield in the early 1900s is skillfully told by Lorraine German in *Soil and Shul in the Berkshires* (2018). Copies are available from the author at madriverrantiques@aol.com.



Eleanor and her father, Nathan, 1940s.

Chronic failing health ended with Martin’s death in 1988. Creosote exposure in the laying house was thought by the family to have been a contributing factor. Frances died in 2006. They had led exemplary lives that touched many and their contributions are a legacy to Sandisfield.



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Photos: Sandisfield Times



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The Clam River Trail

A BRIGHT FUTURE
FOR HIKING

BUT CONCERNS ABOUT
COMFORT FACILITIES AND
PARKING

By Ron Bernard

The word is out among area hiking enthusiasts about a gem of a trail in the heart of Sandisfield. The Town Hall Annex parking lot is the main entry point or trailhead—and the source of concerns.

Town officials are worried that the Annex may not be able to accommodate expected increased use of the trail.

The 1949-vintage restrooms in the Town Hall Annex (the former grammar school) are out of date and often out of commission due to chronic plumbing problems in that 72-year old worn-out building. “I’m sorry but we’ve had no choice but to turn away people who ask to use the facilities,” Town Clerk Dolores Harsyko told The Times.

The worry is that as pandemic restrictions wind down, more hikers will arrive, worsening the problem. Sandisfield Board of Health member, Vic Hryckvich, addressed another aspect of the situation. He spoke of reports that some hikers seek relief in an area behind the Annex parking lot. “It is a potential problem on the trail as well. We have to do something about it.”

Another issue is an increase in parking, especially at the Annex but also at the two other entry points on Hammertown Road. The land owners, the Berkshire Natural Resources Council or BNRC, were advised of the Town’s concerns.

Formed over 50 years ago, the county-wide land trust has accumulated nearly 13,000 acres of



Views of trail entrances on upper Hammertown Road, a one-lane unimproved road susceptible to regular disruption by weather. BNRC, which owns land on both sides, has signaled they will prepare a few parking spaces.

undeveloped Berkshires land. Like other trusts it is dedicated to preserving the land’s natural beauty, ecological integrity, and wildlife habitat.

BNRC has taken its mission a commendable step further by installing public hiking trails all over the county.



The Town Hall Annex parking lot includes space for an estimated maximum 25 vehicles, including about 20 up top and perhaps five more below.

A sign advises hikers to park on the shoulder of the road leading to the main lot or, if full, to return another time. There are an estimated six spaces for hikers’ vehicles under the honor system.

Fortunately for Sandisfield one of them is in the 550-acre Clam River Reserve which

is bisected by Hammertown Road and the Clam River north of Montville. Established in 1998 by will of Bob Theriot of Monterey, the reserve was consolidated with a final acquisition by BNRC in 2012.

Trail design and construction began soon after that. By 2016 the first section was completed thanks in large part to the hard work of bands of enthusiastic youth from Egremont-based Greenagers and the Student Conservation Association (Times, September 2015). Additional segments and loops have been added so that hikers now have about six gorgeous miles of trail to explore and possibly more in the future.

Resolution of both parking and rest room problems, for the short-term at least, appear to be in sight. Responding to our inquiry, BNRC President Jenny Hansell on May 21 said, “The concerns about increased visitation to Clam River are being echoed at all our trails across the county. Covid brought more people outside into nature than ever before, and we expect that trend to continue even as other opportunities open up again. We look forward to working with the town to come up with creative solutions to any problems that arise, whether that is bathroom facilities, parking, or anything else.”

BNRC has since indicated to Hryckvich that a Portapotty at the trailhead may be feasible.

The future for hiking and nature appreciation looks even brighter because of efforts over the past two years by the Yanner Park committee to develop that 250-acre parcel. The Yanner family, owners since 1950, gave the land to the Town in 1995 on condition it be used for public recreation.

Committee coordinator Adam Brown told the Times that a determination is expected soon about a grant that would finally fulfill this vision. “It is a comprehensive plan and a significant ask. If approved, Greenagers will start work on a new trail that will extend from the park entrance on Town Hill Road to Hammertown Road and eventual connection with the BNRC trails,” he said. The Committee and BNRC have already been discussing this. Brown added, “We are hopeful—and anxious—but if it doesn’t come through this time, we will keep at it.”

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The Arrival

By Tracy Hohman, Lower West Street

We make the turn onto the rutted snowy road and pull into the drive to our house in the woods. Grateful to the plow guys. We are greeted by the great baritone bark of our neighbor's huge dog. Welcome.

The house is cold. We unpack hoping we have not forgotten anything, the grocery store too far now. Once the fire is started, the quiet descends and we realize how much we have missed this place.


We eagerly read "The Sandisfield Times," catching up on the town news. Feeling oddly connected to the people here, even though we hardly know anyone.

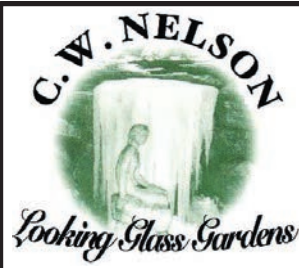
We cook dinner as the daylight disappears. Afterwards, we sit around the radio with no Internet to distract us. There is time for dancing, drawing, reading, stretching, and the mending of clothes.

We step out into the deep Berkshire cold night to admire the sparkling stars. Nothing to do but go to bed early.

Our alarm clock is the dog barking. I am reluctant to leave our warm bed, because the first one up has to start the fire. Wearing my winter hat and flannel pajamas, I try to quietly shovel the ashes and not make too much of a mess.

The fire started, it is time for tea.

I sit in the window seat, with the winter sun on my face, watching the stream flow by. The day awaits. 



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The Story Behind New England Indian Baskets

By Lorraine German

I've been collecting nineteenth-century New England Indian baskets for years. Aside from their decorative appeal, they serve as an enduring legacy of New England's Native American culture.

Following the loss of their ancestral lands and hunting grounds, the Native Americans who remained in New England learned to co-exist with the colonists. In the process, they became dependent on a non-Native economy and non-Native goods, which forced them to look outside of their villages to survive. Many of the men went to the coast to work on ships. Some of those who stayed behind worked at non-Native trades or in local households. Others turned to the forest, where they gathered the materials needed to make baskets that could be bartered or sold. In fact, by the early 1800s, basketmaking had become the main source of income for Native Americans in New England.



Lorraine German's collection of historical artifacts includes this basket. Found in the rafters of an old barn in Becket, its shape and decoration suggests that it is probably of Mohican or possibly Schaghticoke origin.

Photo: Lorraine German


The baskets they made were utilitarian—large, covered storage baskets, smaller household baskets, and market baskets. But what set these baskets apart from those made by non-Native basket-makers was the fact that they were decorated. Natural dyes made from boiled walnut shells and blueberries or homemade paints were used to paint or stamp designs onto the plain wood splint. These decorative baskets were popular with white settlers because they added a splash of color to their homes. At first, the baskets were decorated with traditional Native American designs. Later, savvy

basket-makers in some parts of New England copied designs from wallpaper or wall stencils to appeal to their customers' tastes. In southwestern Massachusetts, baskets often exhibited elements of Mohican, Stockbridge, Schaghticoke, and Iroquois basket forms and designs, yet another illustration of how much contact there was between the tribes.

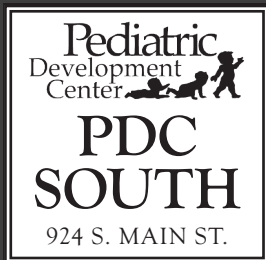
Originally, basket-makers sold their wares locally, but by the late 1700s they began to take to the road. Every spring they traveled from town to town and house to house with their loads of brightly colored baskets on their backs. Basketmakers often had regular customers on their routes and it didn't take long for them to return empty-handed.

The Schaghticoke Indians of northwestern Connecticut traveled along an ancient Native trail known as the Berkshire Path, which later became Route 7. Baskets made by the Christianized Stockbridge Indians were particularly attractive, with bright colors and hand-painted designs. It is very likely that a prosperous town like Sandisfield would have been a profitable destination for Native American peddlers looking to sell their baskets to shop owners and settlers.

The Native American population of southwestern Massachusetts declined throughout the nineteenth century. Basketmaking was no longer the primary source of income because the few who remained earned their livings as laborers or domestic servants. The 1870 Berkshire County census lists only one Native American basket-maker—85-year-old Elijah Cummings of North Egremont.

As the number of Native American basket-makers declined, so did the decorative quality of their baskets. Towards the third quarter of the nineteenth century, Native-made baskets started to look more like the sturdy, undecorated baskets that the non-Native basket-makers in the area made. And by the turn of the century, Native and non-Native baskets had become so similar in style that there was almost no difference between the two. 

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CRITTER CORNER

If you would like to send a picture for consideration for Critter Corner, you can email it to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org.



Do You Know Birds?

George Wheeler of West New Boston captured these birds (on film) in May.
Can you identify them?

Oriole (male), Black and White Warbler, Yellow-Rumped Warbler,
Black and White Warbler

We've made it harder for print readers by printing in B&W.
Online readers should have no problem identifying these critters.



WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG

When you're young
And free of care
You giggle and laugh,
Leap without fear.

In your teens,
The angst sets in.
The stress of school,
The fitting in.

Quickly you go
From teen to college
Roommates and parties.
A quest for knowledge.

What's next? A job?
Some travel first?
The world's your oyster,

You dive headfirst.
Fast forward ahead,
You're married with children
Work, home, sleep
Repeat times a million.

Read me a story,
The one about the bear.
Read it again.
You sigh, oh dear.

Just stop for a second
Breathe in, breathe out.
Be thankful, be present.
Go out and about.

The future is now.
The past is past.
Yesterday is gone,
Tomorrow won't last.

When you're young.

Karen Garfield
New Hartford Road

Mother's Day

On May 15 Bambi and mom visited the 7 Dwarfs House in Sandisfield Center. The fawn became distressed after getting caught inside chicken wire fencing in the backyard. After a bit of human intervention, which involved pushing and pulling sections of the fence, she finally was set free and rejoined Mama!

Photo: Christine Nadelman Pincus



Comings and Goings



ROBERT FREEMAN

1943-2021

Robert T. Freeman, Sr., known as Boomer, died of cancer in Maryland on May 11 at the age of 77. His father and mother, Robert D. Freeman and Ruth Mulvaney, were well-known civic-minded residents of Sandisfield for many years.

Starting in the early-1930s, the extended Freeman family summered at Skyledge, a former c.1852 church parsonage and prominent residence at the top of Sandisfield Road at the Center. His parents, fondly remembered here, moved to Sandisfield full-time in 1973 and became active in civic and social affairs. His father served as Selectman from 1977 to 1990; his mother was active in the church and especially at the New School where she introduced programs and coached special education children.

The property passed out of the family in 2001.

Raised in Brooklyn, New York and Natick, Mass., Robert is survived by his wife, Marianna Elizabeth (Buccheri), two sons, Robert T. "Beau" Freeman, Jr., of Frederick, Maryland, and Joseph D. Freeman of Chicago, Illinois; and one granddaughter, Samantha. He is also survived by a sister, Dorothy Dube (Russell Barber) of Cary, North Carolina; a brother, James Freeman (Laurie) of Barkhamsted, Conn.; twelve nieces and nephews, many more grand- and great-grandnieces and nephews, and countless honorary family members.

He was predeceased by his sister, Jane Freeman Shanklin of Sandisfield in June, 2020 (her obituary was published in The Times, July 2020). A private interment will take place at Sandisfield Center cemetery later this summer.

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NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

Please send notices for Now Hear This! to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org.

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

JUNE EVENTS

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

Playgroup on Tuesdays from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at the Otis Town Hall. Weather permitting. No pre-registration is necessary. Led by Nina Carr. Free!

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

Farmers' Market on Fridays from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., location to be determined. Vendors needed, please call Joanne (917-686-1985).

Free Fishing Days on Saturday, June 5 and Sunday, June 6. Anglers do not need to have a Massachusetts freshwater fishing license to fish on this weekend.

My Life in the Most Amazing Scientific Program You've Never Heard of: 50 Years of Scientific Ocean Drilling on Saturday, June 5 at 10:30 a.m. online with Suzanne O'Connell, Professor in the Department of Earth & Environmental Sciences at Wesleyan University. Sponsored by the Sandisfield Arts Center. Free. Visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org for more information.

Opening Reception: Peter Hason Photography on Saturday, June 5, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. (raindate, June 6) at the Sandisfield Arts Center located on 5 Hammertown Road, off Route 57 in Sandisfield. As a native New Yorker who spent his youth plugged into the street culture of the 80s and 90s, Peter's photography reflects his life-long personal relationship with the landscape, architecture, and people of the city as he captures the quiet but breathtaking beauty in the ordinary and everyday. The opening reception will be outdoors and the Gallery show will be open to small groups for safe social distancing. The exhibit will be on view weekends or by request through July 4. Free.

Share Your Talent: Open (Zoom) Mic on Saturday, June 5, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Perform on the virtual Zoom stage of the Sandisfield Arts Center or join the audience of your friends and neighbors to see and hear the many flavors of local talent! Got talent you want to share for 3 or 3-1/2 minutes in this hosted event? Email Linda Mironti at lindamiro@mac.com. Pre-registration required (no charge), visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org. You will get a Zoom invitation before the event.

Vintage Car Show on Saturday, June 12 at the New Boston Inn. Free music. Free popcorn. Rat Rod and Hot Rod Classics. If interested in showing a car, call 259-4477.

June Moonlight Sonata with pianist Fred Moyer on Saturday, June 12 at 7:00 p.m. This is a one-hour free YouTube Premiere specially produced for the Sandisfield Arts Center community. The streaming concert will be followed by a live on-line reception and talk with Fred. \$10, visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org for tickets.

Church Dinner on Saturday, June 12 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Fire Station #2 on Route 57. Ham, Scalloped Potatoes and more! Take-out available. Adults, \$14. Children, \$6.

Heroes and Ice Cream on Sunday, June 13 from noon-1:30 p.m. at the Town Library/Community Center Playground. See page 2 for more information. An honoring for all the heroes and heroines in town (name your own hero) with six-foot hero sandwiches and ice cream. Sponsored by the Recreation Committee. PRE-REGISTRATION NECESSARY, by June 5. Contact us at SandisfieldRecComm@outlook.com or call 413-269-7357. In case of rain, event will be at Fire Station #1 (Rt 8) in New Boston.

Free Photography Workshop with Thad Kubis on Saturday, June 19 at 10:30 a.m. Thad will show how to create "impressionistic photography" on your DSLR or smartphone. Please register at www.sandisfieldartscenter.org for this free workshop.

New Boston Church Service on Sunday, June 27 at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. All are welcome!

ONLINE EVENT

All That She Carried with Tiya Miles on Wednesday, June 9 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Historian Tiya Miles discusses her new book *All That She Carried*, an illuminating and deeply moving book about an enslaved woman and her daughter in 1850s South Carolina. Tiya unearths these women's presence in archival records in a singular and revelatory history of the experience of slavery in the United States. This program will be held via Zoom and registration (www.bidwellhousemuseum.org) is required. \$10.

SAVE THE DATE!

Outdoor Sculpture Garden in the Fields, Opening Reception on Saturday, July 3 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in Liana Toscanini's field at 186 Sandisfield Road. Benefit for the Sandisfield Art Center. Exhibit open weekends throughout July. Admission is "pay what you can," with a suggested donation of \$20. Artists from Sandisfield and surrounding towns. For more information, call Liana at 413-441-9542 or email liana@npcberkshires.org.



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*The Times is grateful to readers who
contributed in May.*

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Susan Potashner

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