

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

*Tribunus*



*Plebis*

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume XII, Number 4

July 2021

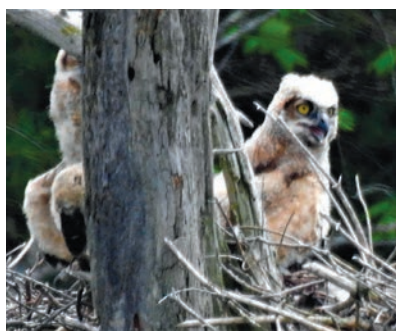
## And Then There Were None

### VALIANT EFFORT BY RESIDENT TO SAVE GREAT HORNED OWLETS

By Ron Bernard

*Owls are generally a symbol of paranormal wisdom, regal silence and fierce intelligence.*

– Wikipedia



*When there were three.  
Photo Cindy Ragusa*

A large marshy pond at Cold Spring and Hammertown roads has for several years been a rookery for great blue herons. Bird watchers have reported as many as five huge platform-style nests here at one time. The herons put considerable effort into building these structures. Great horned

owls prefer to commandeer heron nests, saving themselves a lot of time and trouble.

This is an account of a frantic effort last month by a resident with support from fellow Sandisfielders to save a trio of young owls. Unfortunately, what follows belies the popular image of the bird, or at least of one mother owl, as being “wise.” In this case she selected a nest that was situated over water instead of near land which resulted in the demise of the brood.

On May 21, nature photographer and Times contributor Cindy Ragusa brought exciting news and long-range photos of what appeared to be three downy white eaglets in a former heron nest atop a tree trunk in the middle of the pond. A frequent visitor to this vibrant place, Cindy said she had seen an eagle there in the past.

Word about the nest and its uncommon occupants reached Cold Spring Road resident Mike Loglisci who has a long-standing interest in raptors. His binoculars revealed a large owl repeatedly visiting the nest, proof that here resided not a family of eagles but different raptors, also apex predators and nearly as formidable – great horned owls.

*Cont'd p.5*

## Auditor Faults Handling of Money

### UNANSWERED QUESTIONS LINGER

By Simon Winchester

The disarray which has plagued our town's finances for the past several years is still much in evidence, according to a new report by the auditor called in to assess our situation.

Officials hope that the widespread personnel changes made necessary by the recent wave of resignations and early retirements will help improve matters, but suspicions linger of incompetence and possible malfeasance – irregularities that will continue to limit the Town's ability to raise funds for future improvements until charges are answered and policies reversed.

These are the main takeaways from a ten-page report, commissioned by the Select Board and prepared by the South Deerfield-based municipal accounting firm of Scanlon & Associates. The report – not a full audit, like the one Sandisfield suffered through five years ago, but rather a “review of procedures” – has already elicited an apology and a promise to do better by the Town's beleaguered Treasurer and Tax Collector.

It is expected to prompt further demands by the town-appointed Finance Committee for wholesale reforms in financial arrangements that have been variously described by officials as “dangerously erratic,” “a shambles,” “open to exploitation,” and “a hot mess.”

The report, written by the firm's principal Thomas Scanlon, is riddled with the word “variance,” as on so many occasions the reports of town monies collected and disbursed made by the Town Treasurer,

Theresa Spohnholz, were at variance from the figures later calculated by the Town Accountant, Margaret McLellan.

Sometimes the variances are small -- \$17 in one case; sometimes mid-sized, \$800 or \$900 in two examples – and on occasion, significant – as with an unreconciled difference between the two ledgers for the month of June 2020 amounting to nearly \$7,800.

In all these cases, Mr. Scanlon found explanations plausible enough for him to advise ways of making the books balance – but he issued, in the calm and neutral tones of a man who spends his life dealing with balance sheets and numbers, a stern rebuke: being so cavalier (not his word) with keeping the books and with collecting cash and handing out taxpayers' monies could only lead, he warned, to

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# At the New Boston Inn Car Show

The New Boston Inn threw a successful Car Show and Party in June that drew over forty unique cars, pickups, hot rods, and a lot of other gorgeous, road-worthy machines. The High-Idler Car Club, a new organization from Connecticut and Massachusetts, held a “drive” to New Boston that caused a lot of rubber-necking along Rt. 8 north and south. Innkeeper Barbara Colorio said she planned to hold two car shows each year, with the second in 2021 on September 19. She added that of the 40 cars on June 12 most were from nearby car clubs, but a lot of them were autos and rigs repaired or rebuilt, but all loved, from Sandisfield neighbors and car enthusiasts. Barbara awarded trophies and certificates to winning entries, and a lot of patrons stayed for dinner at the Inn. See you again September 19. 🇺🇸

*Times Photos*



# School Review Committee to Present Report

*By Bill Price*

The Regional School Review Committee that was formed in February held its final meeting June 28 and expects to report to the Select Board in July. After the Select Board reviews the committee’s recommendations, a Community Outreach Meeting will be scheduled, possibly late July or in August, to present the recommendations to Town residents.

The committee, which met weekly for three months, was to evaluate and make recommendations on an alternative or continued participation in the Farmington River Regional School District. At the time of their first meeting, Town Manager and Chairperson Joanne Grybosh described the committee as “smart people who are willing to work hard. We’re looking forward to making some good recommendations for the Town and for the school children.”

Although the chairperson resigned as Town Manager in June, the other members are finishing their assignment. Committee members included Barbara Cormier, Jennifer Hibbins, Carl Nett, Joanne Lazarowitz Olson, and Steve Seddon, Sr. 🇺🇸

## Select Board Summer Schedule

Meets every other week on Zoom or in-person at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Sandisfield Road. Visit [sandisfieldma.gov](http://sandisfieldma.gov) or call 258-4711 for information. Schedule: July 12 and 26, August 7 and 23. 🇺🇸

## STEAK ROAST: SAVE THE DATE

- The Sandisfield Fire Department Annual Steak Roast
- Coming up Saturday, August 14, 5:00–7:00 p.m.
- Firehouse #2 on Sandisfield Road, Rt. 57.
- Steak, baked potato, salad, and dessert.
- This year it’s a Drive By, Grab n Go. Says Chief Ralph Morrison, “Nobody gets Covid, but everyone gets fed.”
- So this year no long tables of friends and neighbors, no dancing, and no band, either.
- But you can come as you are, jacket and tie not required.
- Tickets can be purchased from any Fire or EMS volunteer or call A&M Auto, 258-3381. Tickets not available at the drive-in, must be purchased ahead so we know how many steaks to order.





## Cannabis to the Right of Us, Cannabis to the Left of Us, Into the Valley of Pot ...

By Bill Price

When David Hubbard of Dodd Road encouraged the Town to get involved with the growing and sale of cannabis, way back when in, what was it?, 2013?, he was nearly thrown out of Old Town Hall by the seat of his pants.

But let's review only the last two weeks of June 2021. Sometimes eight years goes by in a flash of light.

The Select Board approved the special permit for SAMA Productions, LLC, for its newly proposed site on Rt. 8 south of New Boston.

Berkshire Mountain Cannabis has proposed a cannabis retail site at Villa Mia.

Daydreamz Estates moved calmly along, getting its approvals in line.

Jennifer Pilbin's project on West Hubbard Road. Began two years ago, and moving slowly.

Are we missing some?

At the June 16 permit hearing for SAMA's newly proposed 15-acre site on Rt. 8 south of New Boston, held at the DPW Garage with in-person attendance and a Zoom connection, Selectman Alex Bowman cast the third "yes," joining those of Chairman George Riley and Selectman Mark Newman to make the vote unanimous, a requirement for the motion to pass.

The new site is favored, for sure, by the few dozen opponents of SAMA's original site in the woods on Abby Road. The opponents there mounted a strenuous campaign to negate an earlier special permit which would have allowed the 100,000 square foot cannabis growing complex. The new site, bordering Rt. 8, allows for highway access without impacting local roads. The new location as well requires much less initial site preparation and will be shielded from Rt. 8 by a row of existing and to-be-planted trees.

Bordered by forest land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the new site has five other abutters, all on the opposite side of Rt. 8. The abutter most impacted is Lauren Dana Curtis whose home is directly across the highway. Speaking about the impact on her place, Ms. Curtis seemed a bit reassured that lighting, fencing, and noise issues would be addressed. Pointing out that she could suffer significant property value loss, she acknowledged

*Cont'd p.4*

## Help Wanted: Town Hall What's the Right Path Forward?

By Bill Price

Within days, it seemed, seven vacancies popped up in our Town's small workforce.

Not really seven employees, though it amounted to seven jobs. Some of the people holding those jobs had been doing double-duty. Town Manager Joanne Grybosh was also DPW Secretary; Dolores Harasyko was Town Clerk as well as Administrative Assistant to the Select Board. Her assistant, Pauline Bakunis, was Assistant Town Clerk and the Town Webmaster. And Austin Garrett, a DPW worker who was doing only that one job, found a better paying job and took it.

Not exactly an overnight massacre, but for a town the size of Sandisfield to lose its Town Manager, Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Select Board Administrative Assistant, Webmaster, DPW Secretary, and a DPW worker in such a short time sent shock waves along Rt. 57

Unsubstantiated rumors indicate there may be more resignations to come. But that is the unknown future. Now is the time to find qualified and dedicated people to fill these open positions.

On the bright side of Town governance, at the June 28 Select Board meeting, 17 Town residents stepped forward to be appointed – or reappointed – to crucial jobs such as chiefs of fire and police, emergency management, building inspector. Everything it seems from tree warden to wiring and plumbing inspectors.

### PLAN GOING FORWARD

The Select Board has taken the sudden vacancies with a hopeful attitude. At the Board meeting

of June 21 – attended by George Riley and Alex Bowman, with no word from absent Mark Newman – they began working out resolutions to the vacancies. The board met again at a later working session and at its meeting on June 28 reviewed and revised their processes.

The two DPW vacancies will be posted as usual, including on Connect Sandisfield, and candidates interviewed.

But the Selectmen are looking at the Town Hall vacancies as an opportunity rather than a crisis. Can some of the jobs be realigned? Can there be other combinations of related tasks? Sandisfield hasn't taken a deep look at its government procedures in many years and such a look, the Selectmen feel, is overdue. The vacancies give them an opportunity.

### A STEEP LEARNING CURVE

Not that there haven't been stumbles along the way. Selectman George Riley is serving for the first time as board chairman and is learning to guide the agendas and aim the board rather than simply debating the issues. Freshman Alex Bowman is learning the ins and outs of Select Board duty and just how deep the paperwork stacks up.

The outgoing Town Clerk/Administrative Assistant to the Select Board, who will be on the job until July 12, recently went on vacation, during which Board meetings were twice cancelled because agendas were not posted in the proper time frame.

The new chairman, who was doing the postings himself, learned that agendas posted on

*Cont'd p.6*

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**Cannabis to the Right of Us,  
Cannabis to the Left of Us,  
Into the Valley of Pot**

Cont'd from p.3

that she already lives with considerable highway noise with truck traffic on 8 and corresponding echoes from the Hanging Mountain cliffs on the other side of her place. Selectmen Riley and Bowman said they would seek to lessen the impact on her home as much as possible.

Held too late for a report in this month's Times was a subsequent Community Outreach Meeting held by SAMA July 1, out of sequence in fact because the Select Board had already granted the permit. But the proposal was unlikely to meet heavy opposition.

Also too close to press time was the June 29 Community Outreach Meeting for a proposed cannabis retail establishment at the former Villa Mia site, sponsored by Berkshire Mountain Cannabis. According to traffic on ConnectSandisfield, this proposal could generate some resistance.

Meanwhile, Phillip Blume's Daydreamz Estates, out of sight on the hillside behind Town Hall Annex, continues to move gently along amassing its permits and permissions for a cannabis-growing establishment with the permission and encouragement of his Rt. 57 neighbors. 

**"Like Floating on a Cloud"**

**DRIVING THE NEW RT. 57**

By Times Reporters



Photo:  
Liana Toscanini

Work crews from the Lee-based LB Corporation worked hard this spring to repave a 4.2 mile stretch of Rt. 57, from Gedney Farm in New Marlborough to the start of New Hartford Road in Sandisfield Center. Although they got the job done in around two weeks, the resurfacing was a long time coming.

Rt. 57 had once been so badly damaged that Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito called it "a public safety issue," with its many potholes significantly slowing the response time of EMS and other first responders. Not to mention the rest of us simply driving in or out of town.

The project would not have moved forward without an infusion of funds from Boston. The Sandisfield Select Board and Town Manager spent considerable time fighting for aid and attention to their cause, and their efforts eventually paid big dividends. In January 2020, the Commonwealth announced that Sandisfield


and New Marlborough would receive a \$2 million MassWorks grant.



Two supervisors with a six-man crew.  
Photo: Lindsey Pennington

Work began last fall, when Belmont-based Tasco Construction dug drainage trenches and replaced culverts. It resumed in the spring, with machines from LB Corp chewing up the old pavement and laying down new.

By mid-May, it was smooth sailing. As Rita Kasky wrote on the Connect Sandisfield Facebook page, "driving on 57 now is like floating on a cloud! Thanks to all the workers who made this transition possible - you did a great job!"


Next month in the Times: Will repaving ever extend to the rest of the Town's stretch of Rt. 57? 

**Broadband**

By Times Reporters

The Broadband Committee reported in a posting June 21 on the town's website, sandisfieldma.gov, that the make-ready steps for broadband installation in Sandisfield are nearly complete, meaning the utility poles that will hold up the fiber-optic cabling have been inspected and replaced when necessary. The job took all winter and spring, since there are about 3,300 poles along Sandisfield byways.

Charter Communications network, which will own and operate the network once it is installed and completed, has contracted with Broadband Access Services (BAS) to construct the network. BAS was to have begun construction in the North Beech Plain area of town the week of June 21-25.

The report said that Charter is contractually obligated (via the contract between Charter and MBI) to complete all network construction no later than one year after the construction phase began and that Charter has provided MBI with an estimated completion date of June 2, 2022, for the entire network to be constructed and operational. 



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**And Then There Were None**

*Cont'd from p.1*

For several hours every day for a week, Mike observed the mother and her owlets and vice versa. "She watched me constantly, which was unnerving," he said.



*Only one left. Photo: Ron Bernard*

On June 1, Mike witnessed one of the owlets, no longer clad in down and already considerably grown, jump, fall or be pushed out of the nest. It landed in the water about twenty feet below.

"I watched for another hour. The bird did not seem to be in distress. I assumed that the mother would know what to do," he said. Mike checked back two hours later but the young owl was lying still in the water, in shock but alive. High above in a tree, the mother could only watch. "She was making a distress call. I never heard that sound from an owl before," said Mike.

He went home for his kayak and dragged it through heavy brush while being swarmed by black flies and mosquitoes and exposed to what many believe is the worst infestation of ticks ever seen in Sandisfield.

"I paddled to the center of the pond," he said, "and approached very carefully because I was concerned

about being attacked. The poor thing was wet and exhausted so I put it on the kayak. I had to paddle backwards, which is very awkward, in order to keep the mother in my sights. I was vulnerable and frankly quite worried. Lucky for me, she made no move."

At a neighbor's place on Cold Spring Road the listless bird was placed in a cardboard box and



*Just-rescued owlet. Photo Ron Bernard*

covered to retain warmth. Now late in the afternoon and facing a real emergency, Mike and neighbors dialed nature and wildlife organizations

looking for help. One call led to state-licensed raptor rescuer, Tom Ricardi.



*Tom Ricardi with rescued barred owl. Photo Greenfield Recorder, March 2021*

A retired state environmental police officer, Ricardi for the last 20 years has continued public service at the Mass Birds of Prey Rehab Facility at his Conway home where he nurses injured and sick raptors back to health. Currently there are 30 raptors under care. He told Mike how to stabilize the bird overnight. They agreed to a hand-off in Westfield the next morning.

covered to retain warmth. Now late in the afternoon and facing a real emergency, Mike and neighbors dialed nature and wildlife organizations

Instead, the next day a disappointed Mike had to inform all concerned that the owl had died. "I checked on him every fifteen minutes but at 1:30 a.m. he was gone, probably from water in the lungs," he said.

One owl was lost but two more were nesting. Mike posted updates about the precarious situation on Facebook/Connect Sandisfield. They generated more than fifty followers. In addition to well-meaning suggestions several volunteered to stand watch at the pond including newly-hired Sandisfield police officer, Mary Bredenfoerder who came every day when off duty and Robin Margraf of Roosterville Road. They knew to contact Mike if another bird fell out of the nest.

That happened on June 4 when a second bird was found drowned. Monitoring continued but on June 7 it was determined by kayak visit that the nest was empty. The mother owl was gone too. Tom Ricardi said that nest was in a bad place and that there were insufficient branches for the owlets to exercise and practice as they fledged. Too young to fly, their prospects were never good.

Although this story's ending is not ideal, there may be lessons for the future. Clearly disappointed, Mike said, "At least now there is a group with experience, and we are better prepared. Plus, we have contacts in case of need."

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## Auditor Faults Handling of Money

Cont'd from p.1


the commission of error or fraud, both ill-advised in a town so wanting for revenue and so frugal in its spending.

No accusations have been made. But examples were offered, prompting questions that linger in the air like the musty smell of decaying old ledgers:

- Why did one taxpayer come to Town Hall to pay his bill with more than \$4,000 in a roll of cash – and where did the Collector, who does not have a safe in her office, secure this bundle of money, and for how long, and to which bank accounts did it eventually find its way?
- Why has Sandisfield racked up more than \$422,000 in uncollected taxes? How many houses does the Town now have tax title to – in other words, how many properties has it effectively confiscated from delinquent taxpayers? Why so few, worth so little, if the outstanding fees amount to over \$400,000? Why the years-long delays in taking the properties? And who exactly are these tax-averse townsfolk?
- Why can an un-named selectman pressure the Town Treasurer to cancel the fines and penalties levied on one such delinquent, who happened to be friendly with the selectman – and why did the Treasurer agree as asked and forgive the fines?
- Why does all the revenue from the Town Transfer Station pass directly under the control of the now-departing Town Clerk? And why has there been such steadfast hesitation to list those who have paid for their dump stickers and collate it against total collected revenue?

- And – risible though this may sound – where does the not inconsiderable money from town dog licenses go? The auditor has thus far failed to find that pot of license fees – any clues where it might be would be welcomed by the auditor and members of the Finance Committee.

All told, and in summary, the Town appears to be in more of a financial mess than it needs to be.

There is a somewhat grudging acceptance by the Select Board that the Town Treasurer can still regain the confidence of the elected officials and that her job is secure for now. Moreover, optimists in Town Hall see the recent resignations and retirements as offering the hope that maybe the town can now recruit and elect a team with greater competence than in the recent past, and that our monetary questions can be ended, and our balance sheets brought, at last, into balance. If not, trouble looms. 

## WE'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE

### 2016 AUDIT RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT TOWN FINANCES

A recent report critical of Town finances comes five years after auditors questioned procedures in the Treasurer's office. A 2016 audit by the same Deerfield-based accounting firm, Scanlon & Associates, faulted Sandisfield's Treasurer for not maintaining proper cashbook procedures and not performing effective individual bank account reconciliations for fiscal year 2016.

"We cannot emphasize enough," the auditor observed in 2016, "the importance of the timely reconciliation of cash and investments in order to have an effective system of internal controls. We strongly recommend management closely monitor this situation to ensure that cash and investments are reconciled in a timely manner between the treasurer's records and the town accountant general ledger."

The 2016 audit also noted that the Town collected real estate taxes at a lower rate compared to other towns. "Property taxes are one of the most significant assets and revenue sources of the Town," the report said, "and we cannot emphasize enough the importance of having procedures in place to ensure property taxes are being collected."

How much has changed in five years? Judging by the most recent review of procedures, not a lot.



## Help Wanted: Town Hall

Cont'd from p.3

the Town website do not qualify as "posted." The posting is required to be on Town bulletin boards, particularly the board outside the Town Hall Annex. Only then is the meeting "posted."

But the bulletin boards require a key, which wasn't located. For at least one posting George taped the agenda to the outside of the glass, after which Sandisfield's sky opened up with much needed rain. The agenda, though posted, was rather bedraggled.

During the Town Clerk's vacation there were difficulties answering phone calls to Town Hall. Dolores came in from vacation to fill out at least one death certificate. A potential Town Clerk with many years' experience has been identified and interviewed and could be appointed on an interim basis by the Select Board.

If hired on an interim basis, she can be in place after Dolores steps aside on July 12. 



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# 2021 Graduate on Her Way to Tokyo

## JESSICA KOPIEC TO BEGIN 4-YEAR PROGRAM


By Bill Price

Jessica Kopiec, a June honors graduate from Monument Mountain High School, will leave the Berkshires at the end of August to begin a 4-year international program at Sophia University, one of the top-ranked private universities in Japan.



Jessica, who turned 18 this spring, was accepted into a limited special program taught in English. Initially, she will begin courses leading to a bachelor's degree in international business and economics. "My major may change over time," Jessica said, "but that's where I'm starting out."

Jessica divides her time between a home in Pittsfield where she lives with her mother, Mieko Kopiec, and in Sandisfield with her father, Steve Kopiec, a carpenter and handyman who has lived on New Hartford Road since 2006. Both Jessica and her sister, Ashley, attended Farmington River Regional School before graduating to Monument Mountain High School, where Ashley is currently a sophomore.

"It will be hard for us to have her so far away," Steve said, "but it's too great an opportunity for Jessica to pass up. She has grandparents in Japan and will be able to be in touch with that part of her heritage. Sophia is a great university, popular with international students, and has about 14,000 students. It's going to be an incredible experience for her. For her mother and sister and me, too. Friends in Sandisfield and her family are excited for her." 

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# Sandisfield's Farmers' Market



A few intrepid residents have banded together to form a Friday afternoon Farmers' Market at the American Legion field on Rt. 8 in New Boston. Starting out with four vendors, they've been able to expand to often eight and maybe more in July and August.

Every Friday from 4:00–7:00 p.m. More vendors – crafters, farmers – invited. Booth fee \$10, benefit the Sandisfield Historical Society. Contact Joanne Lazarowitz Olson at 917-686-1985. All are welcome. 🍷



## The Librarian's Corner

By Terry Spohnholz

### Library hours:

Monday and Tuesday, 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, 2:00–5:00 p.m.

Thursday, 5:00–7:00 p.m.

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### JUNE

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And long green weeks  
That never end.  
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There's Little League,  
Hopscotch, the creek,  
And, after supper,  
Hide-and-seek.  
The live-long light  
Is like a dream,  
and freckles come  
Like flies to cream.

Summer has officially arrived per the calendar and if we weren't paying attention to that, the hot days, mosquito battalions, and chirping songbirds are an excellent indicator. 🍷

Besides all the books in both the adult section (upstairs) and children's section (downstairs) we offer notary service, public computer and printer, and wifi.

If you have a particular author or book in mind, and the Sandisfield Library does not have it, we can borrow it from other libraries.

### NEW ARRIVALS

- *The Nighthawks* by Elly Griffiths
- *Golden Girl* by Elin Hilderbrand
- *The Third Grave* by Lisa Jackson
- *The Bullet* by Iris Johansen
- *The Immortality Key* by Brian Muraresku
- *The President's Daughter* by James Patterson and Bill Clinton
- *At the End of the World, Turn Left* by Zhanna Slor
- *Dream Girl* by Laura Lippmann
- *Machinehood* by S.B. Divya

And in celebration of the Fourth of the July in the Children's section we have the following:

- *Lady Liberty's Holiday* by Jen Arena
- *A is for America* (an alphabet book) by Devin Scillian
- *My Fourth of July* by Jerry Spinelli

Enjoy the summer sun, summer breeze, and nature in its bright golden dress! With a book or two besides you in the grass, of course. 🍷

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# Hail, Caesar!

## A TALE OF TURTLES AND HAIRPINS AND A KENO TRIUMPH

By Simon Winchester

The following story mainly celebrates the achievement of the Sandisfield sixth-grader – Xavier Caesar – to whom this newspaper gave an award upon his recent graduation from the Farmington River Regional School. But it is a little more than that, as you will see.

Three of us headed out on the appointed Tuesday, two to report, one to take pictures. Seth Kershner, who edits our paper, came along in my car; there was me; and there was Ron Bernard, who both writes and takes pictures and makes sure we pay our bills and keep the paper afloat. He drove direct from his home on Cold Spring Road; Seth and I, more distant and pressed for time, drove up Town Hill Road and turned right onto Route 23, heading for the school.



### THE FIRST OOPS

Here came the first departure from the expected routine. As we crested a rise we came across a young woman standing in the middle of the road, speaking into her phone. The tableau was in retrospect quite self-explanatory: on the right was her nice red car, now nose-down in a lake; and on the left, strolling serenely across the highway, was a turtle, unhurried and unfazed by the accident he had very clearly occasioned. It didn't take a Poirot to establish the sequence: young woman driving, oh-gracious-me! a turtle, sudden swerve, crash, oh-my-god!, splash, glug, end of journey, grab phone, jump out, call for a tow, smile sheepishly at the passing motorist who, on seeing all was under control and who was in any case, slightly pressed for time to see young Xavier, waved encouragingly and drove on.

### OUR AWARDEE

We arrived with five minutes to spare, after which we were witness to the moving moments of a classic elementary school graduation – ten students, four of whom were from Sandisfield and one of whom was Xavier Caesar.

Xavier is a fine young man in the making: karate brown-belt, Lego-fan, drone flier, world-traveler, and with a burning ambition to be an electrician like his grandfather, Jay Reynolds, who as most here will know inspects all our town's electrical wires. The school declared Xavier worthy of the first-ever Sandisfield Times Award for Academic Excellence, so we gave him a two-volume dictionary weighing almost as much as he did, and left him with congratulations ringing in his ears.

Ron next suggested we head out east, for dinner. He has a long-standing historical interest in the Ticonderoga-to-Dorchester forest pathway known as the Knox Trail, so thought it might be appropriate to dine at the Knox Trail Inn, in Otis. Accordingly, we made our way through veils of steaming rain showers, only to find Ron, already there, standing dejected in the Inn's empty parking lot: the joint was closed, it being a Tuesday and Tuesday shuttering being the inexplicable local custom.

### WE WIN DINNER

All was not lost, however. Seth, with an intimate knowledge of these parts, suggested we press further east still into the wildwoods of Becket and Blandford and then to a place named Russell, where there was yet a further hostelry, reportedly always open. As indeed, after ten miles through unfamiliar and now darkening forests, the Russell Inn turned out to be.

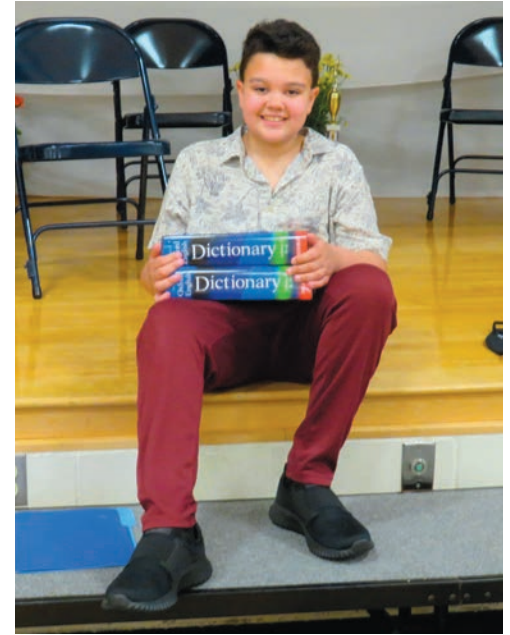
This was a cheerful, boisterous place, the parking lot a sea of pickups where we unexpectedly met a friend who did much to allay our perplexity at being on such unfamiliar territory. We were given food and beer in satisfying quantities. I say given because the bar tab was paid near entirely by my beginner's luck at the game of Keno: I wagered five dollars and won ten times as much on the single turn of a piece of paper, thus covering the victuals for us all.

After much fun of this nature we left – with Seth now driving my car, me riding shotgun and Ron driving along behind. It was a long and uneventful ride – save for one telephone call which Seth, in the driver's seat, prudently left unanswered. We got home by ten, happy on all counts.

### OOPS AGAIN

Except that on waking Wednesday morning, there came a call from Ron. It turned out Seth's call was actually Ron, and he had been calling for help – since on a long and lonesome upslope out of Russell his car had unexpectedly spluttered, choked, and rolled to a stop on a hairpin curve.

Ron spent a harrowing half-hour then as most of the very few motorists who were heading west all-but rear-ended his stranded car; all apologized, asked if he needed help, and then one lady turned her own car around and waited, shining her headlamps down at any other car who dared approach Ron at speed.



### Times Awards Prize to Local Student

*Former sixth-grader Xavier Caesar following commencement exercises at Farmington River Regional School on June 8. As the winner of the newly established Sandisfield Times Award for Academic Excellence, the Times awarded him a two-volume edition of the Oxford English Dictionary as the school's best Sandisfield student of 2021. Xavier builds Lego-brick rockets, flies drones and hoverboards, loves the Bronx Zoo, cruise ships, car shows, and karate – and will soon have a vocabulary to die for. Xavier is the first graduate to receive this prize. The Times will continue to fund the annual award to recognize academic achievement at the school.*

*Times Photo*

Practical help eventually arrived, Ralph Morrison's tow-truck operated by trusty Frank Hyrckvich -- quite possibly the same machine that earlier hauled the young turtle-avoiding driver of the red car out of the Route 23 lake. By the witching hour Ron was back at home and hearth, no harm done.

And still, placid in the midst of all the drama, was young Xavier Caesar, sixth-grade graduate and awardee. I like to think that he was up late that night riffling through the two volumes of his new dictionary, careless of all the mayhem that was enfolding the three journalists who had so fearlessly decided to come and write about him and had experienced first-hand the perils of getting a good story.

For as I hope you agree, this was a good story – all of it, turtles to hairpins, and all things in between. And we few Sandisfield reporters risked life and limb to bring it to you. 🍷

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

# The Colorful Past of a Montville Gateway Property

## PART THREE: THE SAD AND FOWL BIDWELL EPISODE

By Ron Bernard



*The Beardsley place today.*

This is the third and final installment of the history of 90 Sandisfield Road and three families—Manleys, Pinskys, and Bidwells—who lived at that address between the 1870s and the 1970s. Aside from the land itself, the only thing the families had in common were chickens.

Adriel and Dorothy Bidwell, poultry farmers from Glastonbury, Conn., arrived in September 1964 with several of their six children to continue their farming practice.

In Glastonbury, Adriel Bidwell had been conspicuous from 1948, the year he bought residential property on Griswold Street. But not in a good way. For 17 years his transgressions appeared in the Hartford Courant—all manner of zoning violations, arrests, fines, law suits, injunctions, failures to appear and forfeited bonds, contempt of court, and more and worse.

The neat Martin Pinsky farm at 90 Sandisfield Road and its commodious two-story laying house promised a new beginning for the family. But Bidwell did not care that he was to be a part of a venerable and respectable Montville tradition. They had chickens of course but also kept ducks, guinea hens, turkeys, and geese. Lots of geese. An unsuspecting Sandisfield was about to get the full treatment from Mr. Bidwell who would bring new meaning to poultry farming in Montville.

Before long the property, which he dubbed Fancy Feather Farm, became unsightly and then a public health concern, just as his place in Glastonbury had become. His 13 acres resembled a scrap metal yard but with some 3,000 poor birds. Roosters and geese squawked incessantly and wandered everywhere, even across busy Sandisfield Road. Decomposing birds and excrement littered the grounds, including in and about a "vast accumulation of inoperative (vehicles)" which he had trucked up from Glastonbury.

Incredulous and shocked neighbors complained. The Board of Health issued warnings. An intransigent and combative Bidwell ignored the selectmen's summonses. He may have thought, "This is a farm after all. What do they expect?" An in-law later told a reporter, "He cared about chickens more than people, money, anything." Some wondered if there might be mental health issues.

"The Bidwell situation" was a regular agenda item for an exasperated and overmatched select board. He refused to pay his property taxes. Very experienced, he dug in; the standoff continued – and got worse.

An incident generated a report in the May 2, 1974 Eagle titled, "Bidwell Refuses to Move Trailer." *Edward R. Charity appeared at the selectmen's meeting Monday to request assistance in the removal of a mobile home from his property off Route 8 in the New Boston area. The trailer, leased from Adriel J. Bidwell of Route 57, has been vacant for a year since he and his family moved out in compliance with a court ruling in late 1972 after being found guilty of a by-law violation in a suit brought by the town. Charity said Bidwell wouldn't move it and he shouldn't have to pay money to have it done. The selectmen, although saying it wasn't a problem for the board, said they would seek [advice] from Town Counsel. In support of his request were neighbors, Robert Carpenter and Frederick Slater, who termed the trailer 'an eyesore.'*

But Bidwell's maddening behavior became instantaneously trivial in light of what happened the next year.

Writer Bernard Drew summarized what is probably the most shocking incident in Sandisfield's living memory.

*Three young men were brought to trial for killing Montville poultry farmer Adriel J. Bidwell in a failed robbery attempt. Bidwell was known to carry large amounts of money – but apparently had none of it on him at the time of the assault. The trio was arrested in Westfield. The assailants were found guilty of manslaughter, and were sentenced to 20 years in prison.*



JAMES OVERMYER  
STATE POLICE enter the house of Adriel J. Bidwell of Sandisfield, found dead in the yard of the home Friday morning by a woman seeking to buy some of the chickens he raised. The investigation reportedly centers around the possibility Bidwell, 63 may have been a homicide victim. The body showed a gash on the back of the head.

*Berkshire Eagle, July 26, 1975*

State police interviewed 75 persons. A valuable tip led to three teenagers including one with local ties, who were quickly apprehended along with the murder weapon, a baseball bat. Four officers were commended by Gov. Dukakis. Locally sensational, the incident was also featured in a national crime stories magazine.

Adriel Bidwell was interred in his native Bloomfield, Conn. Mrs. Bidwell, estranged, had previously moved as far away as she could to her daughter's home in San Diego where she died in 1999, age 87.

A year after the incident Berkshire Eagle columnist Robert Rushmore wrote an afterword, "Murder in Sandisfield," which concluded:

*For a year the Bidwell house has stood unoccupied and unwanted for the stench of excrement and putrefied birds within its old walls. Gradually junk dealers and people looking for large storage containers on the cheap, have hauled away the wrecked cars and carcasses of trailers, many of which were stuffed with the droppings of birds. Now the house has finally been sold. Meanwhile,*



the long grass and overhanging trees have done their work, camouflaging the property to resemble other, less singular run-down homesteads. Today, the passerby on Route 57 sees just another house – not a strange monument to misanthropy and murder in Sandisfield.



East elevation, c. 1980.  
Photo Sheila Gamradt

Subsequently ....

Zigmund and Sophie Lutynski, retirees from New Britain, Conn., then residing on Silverbrook Road, bought the property from Bidwell's estate in 1976 as an investment. Their son, Mike recalls that his parents faced a daunting challenge. "The place was disgusting. There were birds rotting in old freezers. They were overwhelmed and thought about giving up." But for the perseverance of the Lutynskis, this now-comfortable home and lovely property, an asset for Sandisfield, would have likely languished and deteriorated to the point of no return. Unfortunately, any photos from that period were lost in a fire that destroyed their primary home in 1994. Ziggie is remembered as being a great neighbor, active in community life. He died in 1997; Sophie in 2005.

There were several owner-residents between the late-1970s and 2005 when Dana and Tara Beardsley of Southbury, Conn., arrived. Tara said, "We wanted a quiet, less busy life in the country and we have found it." Gardens and goats and a stream connect the family to an agricultural tradition here.

While the house had been saved, the 40'x 80' (two floors, 6,400 sq. ft.) iconic former laying house was in terrible shape, a tear-down candidate according to Tara and verified by her photos. Dana, a carpenter and builder, was unfazed. Over two years and considerable expense he salvaged this unique building, now a spacious barn, garage, and workshop – with provenance. If these walls could squawk.

To the casual visitor the pleasant grounds reveal no evidence of decades of chicken farming or of the notorious junkyard. However, despite the mountains of refuse that previous residents contended with, the Beardsleys were confronted with still more. Tara said, "There was a pile of seventy tires. Car parts and metal objects were everywhere including in the barn which was collapsing. For five years we couldn't walk barefoot in the yard. You still can't go very far without spotting something else."

It seems that there will be plenty left for archeologists yet unborn to unearth and to ponder what happened at this place way back in the 20th century. 🐔



The novel laying house as it appeared in the early 1930s vs. today.

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# The New Look of Old Stone Walls

By Times Reporters

Times reporter Tom Christopher of Sears Road is the author of a gardening column featured in several publications. During a recent conversation with a young New York horticulturist, published in the January 9 issue of *The Berkshire Eagle*, he wrote about something he'd noticed about reconstructed New England stone walls. His interview subject was Wambui Ippolito, an immigrant from East Africa.

Tom wrote: "I shared with Ms. Ippolito my favorite example of the immigrant influence on the landscape, the transformation of the stone wall. An iconic element of the New England landscape, stone walls as built by Yankees were often relatively crude linear piles of rocks cleared from fields and used to mark property boundaries.

"These days, however, in western Massachusetts, where I spend my weekends, the walls are commonly built in a more finished style by Central American masons. They like to place 'jumpers,' larger rocks high up in the structures, to give them a distinctive look. In central Massachusetts, I once interviewed a Tibetan mason who had learned his craft working on lamaseries. In central Connecticut, where I am based during the week, stone wall building is the work mostly of Albanian masons.

"All over New England, this United Nations of masons are leaving their various imprints, creating a spicy horticultural stew. What sort of walls will African masons contribute? Perhaps they will copy the magnificent stone ruins of Zimbabwe, Ippolito speculates. But only if they, and we, learn to value the traditions they bring with them."

To listen to Tom's full conversation with Ippolito, visit Berkshire Botanical Garden's Growing Greener podcast at [thomaschristophergardens.com](http://thomaschristophergardens.com). 🎧

*Above photos: Two examples of stone walls constructed recently by Central American masons. The large stones placed high in the structure, known as "jumpers," give a distinctive look to the walls.*

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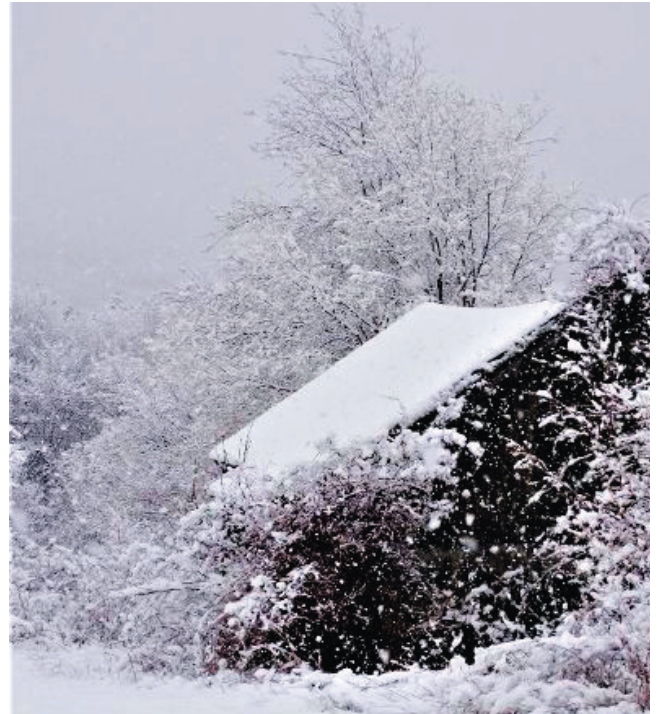






## Remember This?

Images by Cindy Ragusa of scenes near Spectacle Pond in the Beech Plain section of the freak snowstorm that hit New England on April 16. Sandisfield received about three inches of heavy wet snow, much less than some hill towns to the east, but adding to the town's total of 65 inches of snow to that point. Then, a week later, residents awoke to a windy 25 degrees and another improbable inch making our total seasonal snowfall, 66 inches.



### Route 57 on the New Marlborough Village Green



## NEW MARLBOROUGH MEETING HOUSE

## Meeting House GALLERY

August **14** **Environmentalist Bill McKibben with Author Sue Halpern**  
3:00 pm A discussion about technology and climate change

August **28** **Pianist Simone Dinnerstein**  
4:30 pm A program of Couperin, Schumann, Glass, and Satie

Sept **11** **Shakespeare and Co. with Joan Ackermann**  
4:30 pm Star performers of Shakespeare and Co. in a staged reading of Joan Ackermann's touching period comedy, "Ice Glen"

Sept **18** **Pianist Jeewon Park, Cellist Edward Arron, with Narrator Ben Luxon**  
4:30 pm A program of Beethoven, Barber, Beach, and Schubert

Sept **25** **Magician Carl Seiger**  
4:30 pm An interactive performance combining illusion, jazz, and storytelling

Oct **2** **Author Simon Winchester**  
4:30 pm On his latest book, "Land: How the Hunger for Ownership Shaped the Modern World," with guest panel

July **24** **Sticks and Stones**  
thru **Aug 15** **Opening Reception July 23, 5-7 p.m.**  
Representing what the words "sticks and stones" allude to, or how they're used referentially in speech. Works in many media

August **7** **Young Artists Celebrate New Marlborough**  
1-4 pm New Marlborough artists ages 5 through 14 present their celebration of New Marlborough in a one-day outdoor show

Aug **21** **Go Figure**  
thru **Sept 12** **Opening Reception August 20, 5-7 p.m.**  
Figurative Art, from real sources, or works from a process such as figuring things out, or a numerical process, animate or inanimate objects, numerals, or the human figure

Sept **18** **Wonder in the Wander -**  
thru **Oct 10** **Emerging Berkshire Artists Under 40**  
**Opening Reception September 17, 5-7 p.m.**  
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# Arts Center Opens After Covid

## THREE GREAT EVENTS KICK OFF NEW SEASON

By Barbara Penn, SARC Program Chair/Vice President/

Thanks to our volunteers, performers, Program Committee, and Board members, the Arts Center re-opened on a jam-packed Saturday, June 5. Although two events were Zoom-based, we in effect did re-open the building, socially distanced, and using hand sanitizers and new air filters that Jean Atwater-Williams had installed.

The starter, via Zoom, was phenomenal – Suzanne O’Connell’s report/discussion of her studies of what’s beneath the ocean, what it tells us about our past as well as our future life on this planet. Suzanne makes science pop! She broke down difficult concepts to things fun and easy to understand. Plus, she showed us via video her life at sea. A remarkable presentation.

Then Jess Cofrin, the new chair of our Art Gallery, hosted an outdoor opening reception

for the first show of the season – Peter Hason’s brilliant photography. If you were unable to attend last week, Peter’s work will be on display until July 4. His show is in memory of his mother, our beloved long-time Arts Center volunteer, Jane Hason, who died this winter..

The third event was our concluding Saturday program, held via Zoom – Sharing Our Talent Open-Mic. Thanks to Linda Mironti and Jean Atwater-Williams for their terrific work. Wonderful and fun. Lots of diverse talent including Linda, Jean, others, a terrific comedic skit by Ben Luxon and Anni Crofut, a special appearance by Brian De Lorenzo, and of course resident comedians like Allen Liberman, John Skrip, and Ron Bernard. Linda made everyone feel welcome and appreciated.

Our special thanks goes to our president, Hilde Weisert, for her leadership and all the work that goes into creating our web pages, marketing, social media, and making it all flow of a piece and get the attention it deserves. We expanded our audience through Berkshire County and even had people attending from California, Florida, and North Carolina.

See July events schedule, page 3. 🇺🇸



## Sculpture on Display

“Field Day” is an outdoor sculpture exhibit featuring 20 local artists in Liana Toscanini’s field at 186 Sandisfield Rd. The opening reception is Saturday, July 3, 4:00-6:00 p.m. The exhibit will remain open on weekends through July.

“Pay what you can” benefits the Sandisfield Arts Center. “This is an outdoor event that uses the arts to bring people together again,” says Liana. The Sandisfield Arts Center has suffered major event-related revenue loss, like many arts organizations across Berkshire County. “This is a nice way to help not only the Arts Center but also any artist who sells a sculpture during the exhibit.”

Above, Richard Rook (left), a part-time resident of Sandisfield since 2011, installs his work with the help of Doug Deville. Rook is a retired builder with a passion for renovation. “Birdhouse” is a replica of a bird tower seen outside of Great Barrington. “Birdhouse” is for sale and Rook is donating the proceeds to the Sandisfield Arts Center.

Other artists to date include: Jaye Moscariello, Jamie Goldenberg, Gar Waterman, Jon Riederman, Karl Saliter, Robert Adzema, Bill Cunningham, and Nancy Johnson.

For more information call Liana at 413-441-9542 or email liana@npckerkshires.org.



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# The Recreation Committee Strikes Again

The Recreation Committee presented all the Sandisfield Heroes – including cops, firemen, EMTs, nurses, nurses’ aides, moms, pops, in fact all of us – with giant hero sandwiches, along with potato salad and other wonderful lunch dishes, at a Heroes Event in June at the Library/Community Event field. The committee would like to thank all those who volunteered their time and venues for our Heroes and Ice Cream event. Thanks to you, a great time was had by all who attended. We’ll have more fun later on this summer.



Heroes who planned the Hero Event: from left, Laura Messina, Nina Carr, Lynn Rubenstein, and Terry Spohnholz.



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# Sandisfield Historical Society




## Good News

By Ann Wald, President

At a recent meeting of the Historical Society, Joanne Olson, the head of our membership committee, reported that we gained 79 new members over the winter. What wonderful news. As residents of Sandisfield, you are part of this town's history. Whether your ancestors were the original settlers or came here anytime since 1962, you are part of this town's history.

We need your help now to preserve the history of this town. Please become a member and encourage your friends and family (whether they live in town or not) to do the same.

Remember we sponsor the Farmer's Market on Friday's from 4:00-7:00 p.m. at the American Legion lawn on Rt. #8 in New Boston. There are varieties of flowers and vegetables and other vendors. Depending on the weather, of course.

We will be hosting a few other activities in the coming months, definitely our Christmas fair. Our next meeting is July 10 at 11:00 a.m. at the meeting house on Rt.183. Pot-luck reception follows the meeting. We hope to see you there 



# Northwestern Conn. Community College Announces Fall Reopening Plans


The Winsted-based community college has recently announced its reopening plans for the Fall 2021 semester with more on-ground classes scheduled as the pandemic protocols are adjusted within the state.

Northwestern's classes have been primarily online since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, with the exception of some clinicals for both the Allied Health and Veterinary Technology programs where required student clinical testing was managed with strict safety protocols.

According to recent student polls, students at Northwestern were roughly 50/50 on their preference of how they preferred to attend class. With enrollment down across the country, campus administrators understood that some students may have decided to wait until on-ground classes were an option again.

"Our registration for fall is open," said Dr. Dave Ferreira, Dean of Academic and Student Affairs. "We are hoping those students who prefer on-ground courses will continue their studies with us. The most common question from prospective students is if we will have on-ground classes in the fall. We are happy to be able to offer them this option again in a safe environment."

Space planning to allow for distancing protocols are being managed by adjusting classroom size and shifting regular classes to different locations that will allow safer distancing. "Our students' safety has been our number one priority throughout the pandemic," said Dr. Michael Rooke, Northwestern President. "We have continually followed the state guidelines and are now pleased that we can adjust protocols to allow students the options they need. We will continue to manage and adjust as needed."

Registration for fall is currently open with classes scheduled to start on August 26. Because they qualify for in-state tuition, Berkshire County residents can take courses at NCCC at far cheaper rates than many Massachusetts community colleges. For more information visit <https://www.nwcc.edu/admissions/>. 

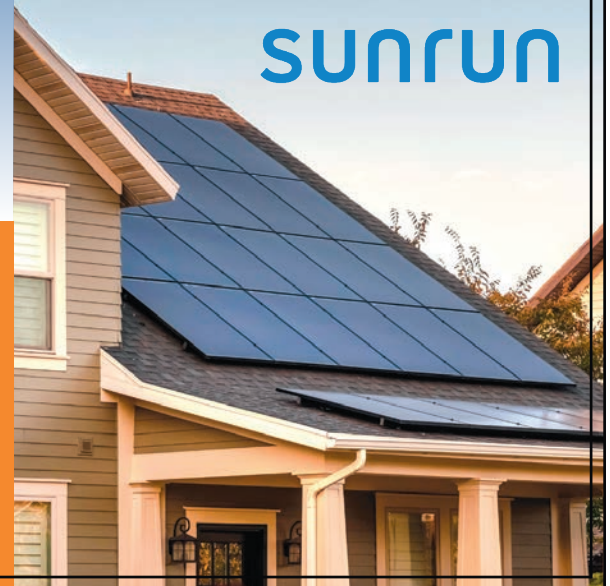
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# Comings and Goings



## WILLARD R. PLATT, JR. 1929-2021

Willard R. Platt Jr, 92, died Saturday June 19 at his daughter's home, surrounded by his loving family.

Willard lived in Sandisfield nearly his entire life, over 80 years. He was involved with town government for many years. From 1996-2003 he served as Selectman and for over two decades was elected to the Planning Board. He was a member of the Sandisfield Historical Commission.

Willard was born in Brooklyn, New York on June 14, 1929, the son of Willard R. Sr. and Frances (Potter) Platt. He graduated from the Baxter Seminary in Baxter, Tennessee.

His family moved to a farm on Clark Road on the west side of the Farmington River when Willard was 10. The house, the former Levi Lloyd house built in about 1830, was the only dwelling on that side of the river and its only access was across a bridge at Roosterville. The Platt family farm was known as Little Bridge Farm.



*Willard, right, in 2017 with his life-long friend Francis Deming of Tolland.*

Among Willard's best childhood friends were Francis Deming and Tuffy Campetti. Willard told *The Times* in 2015 that he remembered, at age 11, standing on the bridge at the New Boston Store talking with Francis, then 7, a few days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Willard said, "We had a long conversation about how long the war would last, about who would win. Then we went off to do other boy stuff."

After high school, Willard proudly served his country in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, where he was a member of the Chemical Corps stationed in France. He worked for many years as a machinist and a farmer.

In his retirement, he enjoyed making and selling crafts with his wife Rosemary (George) Platt, who predeceased him.

Willard remembered when the family's bridge over the Farmington, the only access to the house, washed out during the 1955 flood and the family had to resort to a rowboat attached to a pulley rope to get back and forth. For a talk at the Sandisfield Historical Society in 2014, Willard remembered: "The family was a hardy bunch. Everybody took it in stride. It was classified with the family as no super big disaster everybody just coped with it and went right along with their normal life. Today, it would have been classified as a super disaster but at that time it wasn't."

The bridge was rebuilt and, during the winter of 2015, needed to be rebuilt again. During that winter of construction, Willard, living alone at age 86, crossed the river on a temporary footbridge, often aboard an ancient Craftsman riding lawnmower which, remembered neighbor John Kuzmeh, Willard saw no need to upgrade. Because he used coal to heat the old house – Willard deemed coal heat superior to wood – he hauled coal on a pull-cart behind his lawnmower, up to nine 40-lb bags at a time which he loaded and unloaded by himself. Kuzmeh remembers Willard telling him, "It was a fun experience. Not something many people get to do." His only challenge on the trip, John said, was an icy incline near the house where his wheels spun a bit, even though the tires were chained

Willard is survived by three sons, Willard Platt III and wife Terry of Winsted, Conn., Robert Platt of Winsted, and Daniel Platt of Springfield, Illinois; three daughters, Sara Platt of Springfield, Ohio, Lois Platt of South Egremont, and Shirley Beauchaine and her life partner Ken Williams of Cheshire; six grandchildren, Jeff Platt, Dana Platt, Ryan Platt, Denise Platt, Daylee Platt, and Stevie Murphy; 12 great-grandchildren; and his lifelong friend Francis Deming. In addition to his wife Rosemary Platt, Willard was predeceased by daughter Barbara Platt, daughter-in-law Beth Platt, sister Anne Moore, and his beloved dog, Nemo.

A graveside service with military honors was held June 24 at Sandisfield Center Cemetery with Sandisfield American Legion Post #456 officiating, followed by a reception at the New Boston Inn. Expressions of sympathy in Willard's memory may be made to the Berkshire Humane Society in care of the Birches-Roy Funeral Home, 33 South St., Great Barrington, MA 01230. Condolences may be made through the Birches-Roy website.



## JAYE'S PLACE GALLERY

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PORTRAITS:  
HOMES  
PEOPLE & PETS  
CONTEMPORARY ART



## Letters to the Editor

### TWO LETTERS

Thank you for the great service. I've grown to become very fond of the Times

*Fred Newman*  
Winsted, Conn.

Thank you for the delightful Pinsky article ["Buck River Poultry Farm," June 2021]. If my mom were alive she would be showing it to her world. I'll be sure to send copies to the whole family. One of these days I will visit Montville (it won't let go) and thank you for all your time and effort and care about reviving the past.

*Sheila Skolnick Gamradt*  
Boulder, Colorado



## SAVE THE DATE

# DID SOMEONE SAY BBQ??

**Wed, July 28, 2021**  
**3pm-?**

**(Rain date July 29)**

### YORK LAKE

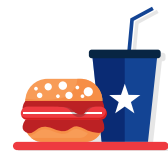


The COA and Rec Comm have joined together, to offer the Community an afternoon of food and fun.

Grab your chairs, beach towels, snorkel gear, etc. and join us at York Lake.

- 3:00 p.m.: Networking & Noshes (see old friends and meet new ones)
- 4:30 p.m.: Firing up the Grill (burgers, dogs, salads, beverages, dessert)
- 5:00 p.m.: Children's Games/Contests (net fishing, egg races, ??)
- 6:00 p.m.: Piñata Time (try your hand at cracking open Mr. Sunshine)

\*\*\*Children's crafts will be available 3:00-6:00 p.m.\*\*\*



Please RSVP by July 14

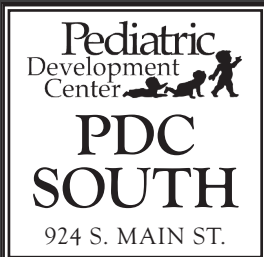
(We need a head count to go shopping!)

Anina Carr 413-258-3314  
Linda Riiska 413-258-4816  
Lynn Rubenstein 413-269-7357

Or

SandisfieldRecComm@outlook.com

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pediatricdevelopmentcenter.org



# NOW HEAR THIS!

*Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.*

*Please send notices for Now Hear This! to [editor@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:editor@sandisfieldtimes.org).*

## JULY EVENTS

**Sandisfield Select Board Meetings** are currently by telephone conference and in-person. Please visit [sandisfieldma.gov](http://sandisfieldma.gov) or call 258-4711 for information. Summer schedule: meets every other week.

**Playgroup** on Tuesdays from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at the Otis Town Hall. Sponsored by South Berkshire Kids. 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.

**Bingo and/or Cards** on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. For location and more information, contact Nina Carr (258-3314).

**Farmer's Market** on Fridays from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the American Legion on South Main Street (Route 8) in Sandisfield. Vendors needed, please call Joanne (917-686-1985).

**SAMA Community Outreach Meeting** on Thursday, July 1 at 6:00 p.m. at the DPW Building on 5 Silverbrook Road and via Zoom. For more information, contact Town Hall (413-258-4711).

**Outdoor Sculpture Show-Opening Reception** on Saturday, July 3 from 4:00 to 6:00 (Raindate: July 4) at Liana Toscanini's beautiful field on 186 Sandisfield Road (Route 57). The Sculpture Show will continue on weekends through July. Visit [www.sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://www.sandisfieldartscenter.org) for more information. \$20 suggested donation for adults (to benefit the Sandisfield Arts Center) and families are welcomed.

**Sharpen Your Pencils: Crossword Puzzle Fun** with Michelle Arnot on Saturday, July 10, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. online via Zoom. Michelle will show you how to improve your solving time with The Berkshire Eagle puzzles. She will also give her unique insight into how the crossword has changed since it became a global pastime in the 1920s. Pre-registration required at [www.sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://www.sandisfieldartscenter.org). You will get a Zoom invitation before the event. Free.

**New Boston Church Service** on Sunday, July 18 at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. All are welcome!

**Opening Reception: Light Tells the Story, Paintings by Mel Feldman** on Saturday, July 24, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center located on 5 Hammertown Road, off Route 57 in Sandisfield. Mel paints people and

uses vintage photographs for inspiration, as these often tell a story. Most important to Mel is the light and the interplay with the placement of the figures. The exhibit will be on view weekends or by request through August 22. Free.

**BBQ and More at York Lake** on Wednesday, July 28 beginning at 3:00 p.m. Events until dusk. All invited. Adults visit, children play on their own and organized activities, burgers, hot dogs. Organized by the COA and Recreation Committee. RSVP by July 14 (shopping purposes) to Anina Carr, 258-3314; Linda Riiska, 258-4816; Lynn Rubenstein, 413-269-7357; or [SandisfieldRecComm@outlook.com](mailto:SandisfieldRecComm@outlook.com). Raindate: July 29.

**Roger Street Friedman Band Outdoor Concert** on Saturday, July 31 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. (Raindate Sunday, August 1 at 1:00 p.m.) at Peter Baiamonte's lawn at 3 Hartford Road at Sandisfield Road/Route 57. Roger Street Friedman is an award-winning singer-songwriter. Gates open at 5:00 p.m. No outside alcohol allowed but wine, beer, and soft drinks will be available by donation. Picnicking is permitted. Visit [www.sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://www.sandisfieldartscenter.org) for tickets. \$20.

### EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

**Kids Fishing Derby** on Saturday, July 10 from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. at the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery on 240 Hatchery Road in New Marlborough. For children 13 and under. Masks and social distancing required. Sponsored by the Friends of the Berkshire Hatchery in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**In the Shadow of the Founders: Greatest Generations in American History** at the Bidwell Museum in Monterey on Saturday, July 10 from

10:00 to 11:00 a.m. John Demos, Samuel Knight Professor of American History Emeritus at Yale University, will present the program live and via Zoom. All attendees must register ([bidwellhouse-museum.org](http://bidwellhouse-museum.org)). Free-\$15.00.

**Maker Day** at the Bidwell Museum on Saturday, July 17 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. In honor of the re-opening of the museum, there will be artisans, including a blacksmith, broom maker and wool spinner, onsite to demonstrate their work. Free.

**A Guided Hike Along the Native American Interpretive Trail** at the Bidwell Museum on Saturday, July 24 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Rob Hoogs will lead the walk past 9 stops on the property where you will learn about the history of the Mohicans. Please wear proper shoes for walking and bring water and a snack. For more information and to register visit ([www.bidwell-housemuseum.org](http://www.bidwell-housemuseum.org)). Registration ends July 23. Free.

### SAVE THE DATE

August Date, early in the month. **Soft-opening of Hanging Mountain Climbing site.** Still planning. No big event, but planning underway.

**Steak Roast**, Sandisfield Fire Department, on Saturday, August 14, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Drive up only. Enjoy steak, baked potato, salad, and dessert at home. Tickets from any Fire/EMS volunteer or call A&M Auto, 258-3381. Tickets not available at the drive-up.

**Town-Wide Tag Sale** on Saturday, August 21. Sponsored by the Sandisfield Historical Society. More information next month. Watch this site and [ConnectSandisfield](http://ConnectSandisfield), Raindate August 28.

*The Historic*

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JUL 18<sup>TH</sup> 2-5<sup>PM</sup>  
BLUE WONDER

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

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

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

*Bill Cohn & Rita Kasky*

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

Donations of any amount are needed to ensure the continuation of this newspaper. Please send checks to: The Sandisfield

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