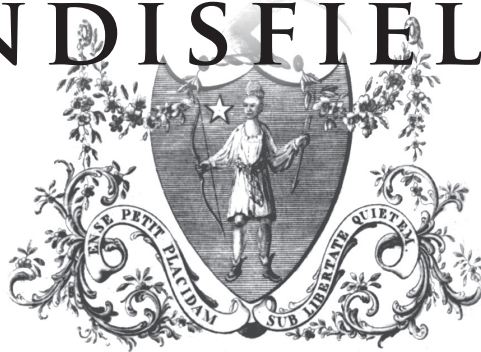




THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume XIII, Number 1

April 2022

Broadband Is Here!

10 YEARS OF STRUGGLE, NEARLY DONE

By Tom Christopher

This article summarizes the announcement by the Town's Broadband Committee outlining the process Charter/Spectrum will follow in connecting homes to the just-completed broadband internet network. The full announcement from the Committee, which was posted on the Town website, is included on pages 16-17 of this issue as a public service.

The Broadband Committee announced in March that Charter Communications has at last finished stringing the 66 miles of fiber optic cable along Sandisfield's winding roads.

This spring, during April and May, the company will begin connecting residents to the worldwide web via direct broadband links.

If residents so choose, they can give up their individual internet services – from Verizon, which requires a landline hookup, or satellite, which requires a clear sight-line from the stars to your front yard – and join the rest of the world in direct link to the internet, that elusive magic that has been flourishing for so many years without, for the most part, our participation.

Ten years ago, the then governor of Massachusetts stood in front of Firehouse #2 and promised broadband internet would flow across Sandisfield "soon." Following the subsequent decade of hard choices, disappointments, successes, hard work, meetings, disagreements, more meetings, more disappointments, more work and finally successes, the Town is ready to rock and roll.

The process is somewhat involved and includes Spectrum's internet, telephone, cellular, and television services. To review the full guide to connecting with Spectrum, readers are urged to review the Committee's report at Town News on www.sandisfieldma.gov. Or see pages 16-17 of this issue of The Times, where we've reprinted the report at the direct request of Jeff Bye, Chairman of the Broadband Committee.

COMING TO YOUR HOUSE

Spectrum sales representatives will visit door-to-door to establish what services – if any – residents want to subscribe to. The reps will provide brochures to help with decision making and information on pricing.

Cont'd on p.4

Villa Mia to be Cannabis Shoppe

By Tom Christopher

The now-closed Villa Mia Restaurant will become a retail cannabis store, possibly by the end of this year.

While Sandisfield already has or is scheduled to have two or more pot-growing and distributing facilities, the new store, not yet named, will be the first in town serving the public. It's location, only 3 miles from the border with Connecticut, is expected to draw significant clientele from south of Town.

On March 24, the Select Board met with representatives of Berkshire Mountain Cannabis LLC (BMC) to consider granting a special permit that would allow BMC to operate a retail cannabis store in Sandisfield.

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DRIVERS, WATCH FOR TURTLES!

Get Ready for Change

RECYCLING AT THE TRANSFER STATION

By Ron Bernard

Recycling. Most of us love the concept but hate the process which can be confusing and can change seemingly overnight.

A dramatic change is coming. Cans and bottles and cardboard and paper are staying the same, no changes there.

But some items you used to pitch into the regular garbage should now go somewhere else. Clothing, textiles, many kinds of household items should now be disposed of in new recycling bins.

You may have already noticed them: two new, bright blue containers on-site at the Transfer Station, ready to accept items. You can begin using them next time you visit the Station.

If everybody pitches in the payoff will be positive for the environment, economically beneficial for a worthy nonprofit, and may even make some money for the Town. So far the situation is voluntary, but it may soon be mandated which will give us no choice whether to pitch in or not. At some point it might be a case of comply or keep it yourself.

WHY THE CHANGE?

Increased aggressive planning by Massachusetts began last year following China's decision to no longer accept recyclables of any kind from the rest of the world. States, municipalities, and haulers were suddenly confronted with extra volume and higher costs. This unwelcome news came on top of already ambitious plans to reduce the amount of landfill waste.

Massachusetts, a leader in municipal waste management practices, passed legislation requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to "Develop and maintain a comprehensive statewide master plan for reducing and managing solid waste." The agency last October issued its final "2030 Solid-Waste Master Plan."

Goals were established to reduce statewide disposals in two categories: organic waste and textile/household items. The intention is to reduce the total waste stream by 30 percent over the next decade up to 90 percent by 2050. It is likely that the State



will distribute guidelines or rules soon but it is not clear if and when these policies will be mandated.

Highway Superintendent Brad Curry, who is in charge of the Transfer Station, was recently approached by a company with the acronym CMRKNE that works on behalf of Big Brothers and Big Sisters, the well-known mentoring organization.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

They proposed a no-cost, no-hassle service for the Town with immediate impact in advance of new State guidelines or rules. The company will accept even marginally serviceable textiles and small household items, things we normally feed to the trash compactor. Think stuff that might be swap-shop rejects but with a little TLC or repurposing could live on. Missing button, no problem. Shoes with worn out soles, also OK.

"Clothing with a conscious" is how company representative Taylor Millspaugh framed it in a conversation with The Times.

The company will accept all types and sizes of clothing as well as shoes and sneakers, household items including textiles like blankets, towels and curtains, and accessories such as backpacks, belts, jewelry, gloves, socks, etc., as long as everything is bagged.

Ms. Millspaugh emphasized that deposits have to be clean. "We cannot accept anything wet, moldy, soiled, or stained," she said. Those things can still go in the trash compactor.

Not only will the Big Brothers/Sisters benefit but the Town will get an amount based on volume while also potentially avoiding a portion of previous disposal charges. Time and experience will tell us if and how much income might be produced for the Town.

The company operates today in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Locally the program is underway in Blandford so Sandisfield will be out in front, helping to pioneer the concept. The company intends to expand the service to as many Berkshire towns as possible for better efficiency. According to them, most of the processing and labor will be in the U.S.

CMRKNE is also ready to work with local groups or organizations like the Boy Scouts on recycling projects.

WHAT DOES KEITH SAY?


Transfer Station attendant Keith Larson is enthusiastic up to a point. He remembers how clothing collections didn't work in the past, with sporadic pickups and bins overflowing with clothes soaking in the rain.

He said, "I don't think that will be the case this time, but if stuff piles up like before, that's it as far as I am concerned."

Ms. Millspaugh promised that the company will empty the containers as soon as they get a call that the bins are near capacity.

There is another attractive component to this service for residents: home pick-up is available. A sign posted near the office provides phone and text numbers.

The receptacles are located at the rear of the Transfer Station, opposite the exit gate. Keith said that a new yard configuration is in the works. Hopefully it won't be long before the bins are more conveniently positioned.

Questions should be addressed to Keith Larson at the Station. 

Memorial Day Parade

SUNDAY, MAY 29

It gets better every year. Don't miss it.


The Sandisfield Fire and Police departments are doing the lead planning, with assistance from the Recreation Committee.

The Parade will start at Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road, at 10 a.m., continue down Rt. 57, stopping at the West New Boston Cemetery and later at the New Boston Rehab Center for ceremonies, ending at the American Legion Pavilion with a Community BBQ.

This year decorated bicycles can join the parade, and non-motorized vehicles. Old cars, fancy cars, and decorated floats (contact Ralph Morrison at 413-441-2126).

Drummers who can keep a beat should call Tom O'Gara (258-4537) to join the Drum Contingent.

The Lee High School Band will join us.

Submit photos of family or friends who were veterans and who are no longer with us for the Honor Wall at the Pavilion. Call Lynn Rubenstein (413-269-7357) or kowgirlruby@yahoo.com. 

Election 2022

INTERIM TOWN CLERK APPOINTED

By Hannah Van Sickle

To elect or not to elect seems to be the question on residents' minds leading into the homestretch between now and mid-May's Town election.

While Annual Town Meeting (May 14) attendees can expect the customary back-and-forth banter about the usual pair of hot topics — the staggering school budget and the declining condition of our rural roads and the costs thereof — a particularly unique (and never seen before) item appears on the ballot in this year's Town Election (two days later, May 16).

Namely: Whether or not the position of Town Clerk, in keeping with more than two centuries of tradition, should remain elected by the people or shift to being appointed by the Select Board.



Doug Miner

Complicating matters, the Select Board appointed resident Douglas Miner as Interim Town Clerk effective March 28; as next steps remain pursuant upon results of the May 16th election, Miner has taken out nomination papers to be included on the ballot, just in case.

"I love the town of Sandisfield, and I am happy to serve its residents in this most important position," Miner said in a March 24 statement, one that coincided with Temporary Town Clerk Mary Kronholm's final day at Town Hall.

Upon her appointment in July, 2021, Kronholm had recommended that the Select Board find and appoint an Assistant Town Clerk whom she would train to take on the Town Clerk position long-term. Her fourteen years of experience as a Town Clerk coupled with deep knowledge regarding Massachusetts State Laws rendered her more than up to the task. To this end, Miner and Kronholm worked together unofficially in order for the former to learn the ropes and the latter to pass the proverbial baton.

An agenda item to address Town employee hierarchy structure, specifically with regard to elected and appointed positions, was tabled without discussion at the March 7 Select Board meeting. Minutes of that meeting reflect Miner reporting that Kronholm suggested appointing him Assistant Town Clerk, in order to "learn and operate under her supervision." Select Board Chair George Riley noted that "the Town Clerk appoints this position, not the Select Board."

Of Miner's elevation to Town Clerk, Riley said, "We are very pleased to have Mr. Miner join our team and are confident he will be a great asset to the town."

Miner holds an undergraduate degree from New York University and a Master of Business Administration from the Zarb School of Business at Hofstra University. He and his wife Johanna, along with their three children, have been Sandisfield residents for the past six years. In May, they


will establish an American Chestnut seed orchard with the American Chestnut Foundation on their property.



WHO IS RUNNING FOR WHAT

In addition to resolving the issue of appointment versus election regarding the Town Clerk, nine offices are open this year. Potential candidates who have taken out nomination papers are listed below. One more opportunity exists for those wishing to run for office is nomination at the Town Caucus to be held at Old Town Hall, April 4, 6:00 p.m.

The candidates' background and qualifications will be outlined in the May issue of The Times. The fact that no one has stepped up to run for the two vacancies on the Planning Board is problematic for Town government.

- **MODERATOR:** 1-year term, Dominic Konstam (incumbent)
- **TOWN CLERK:** 1 year, Douglas Miner (to fill unexpired term)
- **SELECT BOARD:** 3 years, George Riley (incumbent)
- **BOARD OF ASSESSORS:** 3-year term, Bethany Perry (incumbent)
- **BOARD OF HEALTH:** 3-year term, Dr. Steve Rubenstein
- **SCHOOL COMMITTEE:** 3-year term, Paul Adams
- **PLANNING BOARD:** 3-year unexpired term, vacant
- **PLANNING BOARD:** 5-year term, vacant
- **LIBRARY TRUSTEE:** 5-year term, Mary Turek (incumbent) 

Select Board Report

NEW APPOINTMENTS INCLUDE TOWN CLERK, TOWN MANAGER

By the Select Board

Budgets, budgets, and more budgets! Aside from a raft of new hires and position swaps, most of the Select Board's meeting time is taken up with budget meetings.

In the wake of the Town Manager's sudden departure on March 10, it was discovered that we are even further behind in putting together the budget for Fiscal Year 2023 (to be voted on at the

Town Meeting on May 14) than we had previously feared. Due to requirements for posting, printing, and review by the Finance Committee, Select Board, and Town Counsel, the Town Meeting Warrant needs to be finalized at the beginning of April.

So we need to compress a two-month process into a little more than three weeks. This fast-track effort has the Board meeting three times a week for several hours each time with department heads, the Finance Committee chair, and others to review each department's budget requests, capital requests, and other accounts, at the same time keeping a watchful eye on the bottom line so as to keep the total within bounds.

At the same time as budget-season is roaring ahead, we are negotiating a new three-year contract with the DPW Union, with a completely revamped pay

scale based on licensing credentials in addition to the previous seniority scale. The entire approach is new, but we are making progress.

AND THE POSITION SWAPS:

Douglas Miner, newly appointed as Assistant Town Clerk, has been appointed as Town Clerk as of March 28. He has in turn appointed former Interim Town Clerk Mary Kronholm as the new Assistant Town Clerk in order that she can mentor him in his new position. We welcome Douglas to the Town Hall team! Come in and say hello to him when you can.

And as the wheel spins, next month Building Inspector Don Torrico will become Alternate Building Inspector, Paul Greene is now Building Inspector, Mark Levernoch will resign as Assistant Plumbing and Gas Inspector, Brian Middleton

Cont'd on p.5

Broadband Is Here

Cont'd from p.1

If a prospective customer is not at home when the sales representative stops by, the rep will leave a business card with contact information to schedule an alternative day and time for an appointment. If you can't be home for the door-to-door visit, send Bill Haines, a Broadband Committee member, your contact information at whaines@gmail.com, and Bill will advise Spectrum how to reach you. This applies to full-time and seasonal residents and business owners.

The Committee has been informed by Spectrum that pricing for Sandisfield will be similar to that Spectrum charges its New Marlborough customers, which is an introductory charge of \$50 to \$90 per month for internet, depending on range of service, and an additional \$100 or so for 125 TV channels. After the initial 12 months in New Marlborough, the charge jumps by \$25 per month. The range of what is charged in New Marlborough can be seen at www.spectrum.com and by searching a New Marlborough address with zip of 01230.

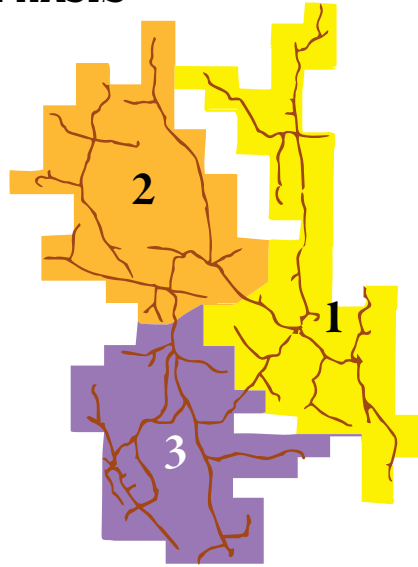
Pricing is as complicated as that for cellphone services and depends on what a customer signs up for. The sales rep who visits your door will review numbers and options. The standard service installation fee will be waived for customers who subscribe to a television package along with internet service.

During this initial visit, potential subscribers will arrange a mutually convenient date for service installation and activation. Subscribers must be present during installation as the service technicians will need access to the residence or business office.

INSTALLATION WILL BE IN THREE PHASES

Currently, a tentative schedule calls for each phase (outlined below) to take three weeks for completion, dependent on weather and the availability of subscribers.

SANDISFIELD INSTALLATION PHASES



PHASE 1 TO BEGIN APRIL 1
PHASE 2 TO BEGIN APRIL 25
PHASE 3 TO BEGIN MAY 16

Phase 1 will include the east side of town. This includes businesses and residences along North and South Beech Plain Roads, Cold Spring Road, addresses 82 and higher on Hammertown, addresses 76 and lower on Sandisfield Road, 53 and lower on Silverbrook Road, upper Fox and upper Sears Roads, and River, Elk, Clark, Roosterville, Tolland, Tannery, Smith, and Perry Roads, and North and South Main Street.

Phase 2 will connect the northwest side of town. This includes addresses 90 and higher on Sandisfield Road, addresses 35 and lower on Hammertown, addresses 87 and higher on Silverbrook Road, addresses 7 and lower on New Hartford Road, and Town Hill Road, West Street, Cronk Road, West and East Hubbard Roads, Stump, Bosworth, Shade, and Sullivan Roads.

Phase 3, scheduled to begin May 16, will be the southwest side of town. This includes addresses 21 and higher on New Hartford Road, Dodd Road, Viets, South Sandisfield, Gremler, lower Fox and Sears Roads, Roberts, Prock Hill, Norfolk, Rood Hill, Sage, and Webster Roads, and Sandy Brook Turnpike.

Our neighbors in Otis Woodlands, over half of whom are in Sandisfield, are already receiving broadband through the Otis internet system which was created in Otis and is owned and operated by the town.

WHAT WILL BE OFFERED

In Sandisfield, Spectrum will offer service for television programming, telephone service over the internet (VoIP), and three levels of internet service: 200 Mbps download /10 Mbps upload (adequate for most residential users); 400 Mbps download /20 Mbps upload; and 1 Gbps download /500 Mbps upload.

For further details regarding these services, readers can wait for the Spectrum representative and brochures to come to your door or visit the Broadband Committee's report on the Sandisfield town website or review pages 16-17 of this issue.

SEE A PREVIEW OF THIS SERVICE

Spectrum has installed temporary internet service in the downstairs meeting area of the Town Hall Annex for demonstrating the services that will be offered. George Doin, a Spectrum Field Operations Manager, will be on site for consultation and demonstrations at the Annex from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. on March 31 and again on April 5.

Sandisfield has been waiting a long time for this upgrade. Many thanks to the Broadband Committee for making it happen. 🙏

Dine in or Takeout!

Our restaurant & outdoor patio is safely & socially spaced

WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY 5-9PM
 SATURDAY 12-9PM SUNDAY 12-7PM

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(available thursday-saturday)

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 KNOX FISH & CHIPS
 PULLED PORK MAC & CHEESE
 GRILLED RIBEYE
 CHICKEN PARMESAN

LOTS OF APPETIZERS & SOUPS
 GRINDERS & SPECIALTY PIZZAS
 BUILD A BURGER & SALADS
 WINGS, WINGS & MORE WINGS

Many Gluten Free options too!

Town Manager: One More Out, One More In

By Simon Winchester

The revolving door that for the last six years has marked the entrance to – and exit from – the Sandisfield Town Manager's office has spun around yet again, with the last incumbent passing through it before most of us really knew he existed, and a hastily-appointed replacement now hurried in for at least the next six months.

Following last year's chaotic turnover of staff at Town Hall, there was a palpable sense of relief at the appointment last November of one Kevin Flynn, who came to us from the almost equally small town of Phillipston, in Worcester County, where he had also been town manager.

Hopes were soon dashed, however, when the entirely amiable Mr. Flynn claimed he had difficulties finding a place to live locally, tried gamely to perform a daily five-hour round trip commute, then attempted working from his home before finally giving up last month, becoming entirely uncommunicative and eventually scribbling a few words of resignation onto a single piece of paper, dropping it off with his key fob and computer password at Town Hall and driving the 2½ hours home, this time for good.

He had been hired at an annual salary of \$76,500, and earned maybe a third of it while achieving pretty nearly nothing of consequence during his brief sojourn in town.



Jonathan Sylbert

Photo: Christina Lane Photography.

In his place our Select Board has lately made a temporary appointment of a highly experienced former Monterey official, Jonathan Sylbert, who served his town for 23 years in various capacities, including eleven years on the Select Board and periods on the Finance and Planning committees. It should not escape notice that the town


of Monterey has suffered in recent months from even more spectacular personnel crises of its own, marked by lawsuits and the hiring of special investigators. Mr. Sylbert may well regard his new posting eastward as jumping from the fire back into the frying pan.

With Mr. Sylbert now as Interim Town Manager, he and other town officials are racing to produce a final up-to-date budget for the coming fiscal year – a budget which is central to the debate at the Annual Town Meeting scheduled for May 14.

Normally the Town Manager is responsible for preparing the budget, and it is now up to other officials – most particularly the experienced retired banker Roger Brown, head of our Finance Committee – to deal with the complex raft of required dollar amounts that need to be enumerated before the middle of this month so the numbers can be duly posted in the Town Warrant. George Riley, Select Board chair, has reassured voters that this will be done – although he will be away for a previously scheduled three week leave for most of April. His Select Board colleagues, Alex Bowman and Steve Seddon, are expected to take up the slack, with help from the town finance officials.

Mr. Flynn's departure means that we have now had six Managers – or Administrators as they were originally termed – since 2013, a rate of departure seldom seen in any modern town government. His own three-month tenancy of Town Hall appears to be the briefest, except for the eight weeks spent here by another interim manager, Rick White, in 2017. Lisa Blackmer, appointed in December 2013, stayed for 22 months; Willie Morales for ten months starting in September 2016; Fred Ventresco, hired in October 2017, lasted for a year and six months; Joanne Grybosh for a year and seven months, most of it during the height of the pandemic.

Unlike her predecessors or her successor today, Ms. Grybosh was asked to stay on, and offered substantial salary increase to do so, but declined. She has, however, offered generous help and advice during this most immediate crisis.

We wish Jonathan Sylbert, the seventh and latest on the list, a most hearty Sandisfield welcome. All will fervently hope he decides to stick around. After all, he doesn't live that far away. 

Select Board Report

Cont'd from p.3

will resign as Plumbing and Gas Inspector and be appointed Assistant Plumbing and Gas Inspector, and Charles Pease, Jr. will be appointed Plumbing and Gas Inspector. How many times did you have to read that last sentence?

With a monstrous backlog of projects and the resignation of the former Town Manager, Select Board Chair George Riley was pressed once more into service to play that role on an interim basis. He was rescued after two intense weeks on the job by Jonathan Sylbert, who was recently appointed Interim Town Manager.

A former 10-year Selectman in Monterey, plus Planning Board veteran and current Finance Committee member in our neighboring town, Mr. Sylbert has 23 years of Town government experience. He offered to fill in immediately until the end of the fiscal year to help get the town through its budget and warrant periods. After two interviews and reference checks he was enthusiastically hired by the Select Board for a six-month stint as Interim Town Manager, just in time to allow George Riley to escape for a much-anticipated three-week visit to his family in April.

And so the ship of state, despite battering by storm waves, sails determinedly forward.

Select Board Members:

- George Riley, Chair
- Alex Bowman
- Steve Sedden

Who's Bringing You This News?

Times editor **Seth Kershner** has taken a sabbatical from editing the Times in order to complete a U.S. History Ph.D. program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He's also on leave from his position in the library at Northwestern Connecticut Community College in Winsted. His role at The Times will be filled by former editor **Bill Price**, at least until the July issue.

Hannah Van Sickle of Rood Hill Road, who writes for The Edge and other publications, has joined The Times as Town News reporter. Hannah, however, has a good eye for what makes a good story and will pursue anything that interests her. Hannah is a welcome addition to our staff.



Villa Mia to be Cannabis Shoppe

Cont'd from p.1

This was the culmination of a year of negotiation between BMC and the Sandisfield town government as well as consultation with neighbors of the proposed store, a fact that was evident in the smooth and positive progress of the meeting. Concerned members of the public, present in person as well as participating via Zoom, were generally supportive of the plan.

Brian Shea, spokesperson for BMC, pointed out that the proposed location of the store at 88 South Main Street (Route 8, south of New Boston) already includes the necessary parking area and has a history of servicing retail traffic successfully. The existing building is of an appropriate size and would change little in its outward appearance, although it would require, he estimated, \$700,000 of alteration inside.

The Select Board made approval of the permit contingent upon BMC's commitment to honor the terms of a "Host Agreement" and a list of additional requirements submitted by the Board. These include payment of an annual impact fee of \$15,000 to be distributed by the town as follows: \$1,500 to the Brien Center for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, \$10,000 for town highway maintenance, \$1,000 to the Town Recreation Committee, and \$2,500 to the Town Library. In addition, the town would receive the relevant property tax and a 3 percent excise tax on all products sold.

BMC committed to make "all reasonable effort" to purchase its products to the extent possible from cannabis growers in Sandisfield and to give

preference to town residents in hiring. Mr. Shea estimated the eventual staffing level to be 25 to 35 individuals, which if correct would make it Sandisfield's largest employer after the New Boston Nursing Home.

A discussion of the security of the premises was prominent between the Board and Mr. Shea. Plans for the on-site security system had been covered in detail in BMC's application for the permit; Selectman George Riley inserted a requirement into the conditions for approval that BMC submit a plan for the on-site security system for approval by Police Chief Michael Morrison

Hours of operation for the store will be limited to 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., seven days a week. Lighting of the parking lot will be dark sky compliant. Signage will be limited to what is consistent with the existing town bylaw. Failure to observe these and the other conditions specified in its agreement with BMC by the Select Board will be cause for revocation of the special permit.

After reviewing all the conditions with BMC and the members of the public, the Select Board voted unanimously to approve the granting of the permit.

After the meeting, Brian Shea told The Times that his company will make "every effort" to have the store up and running by the end of this year. 🇺🇸

CRITTER CORNER



Always Look Up
A pair of bald eagles flying over the Colebrook Dam on the evening of March 3 were caught on camera by Zilla Monstella. She posted several photos of the pair, with the good advice to "always look up."

One of the best bobcat pictures ever in The Times

Carl Nett, Town Hill Road

Facebook: Connect Sandisfield, March 4

Bright Future for Local Solar Business

By Ron Bernard

Companies are not flocking to set up shop in Sandisfield these days, so when a new business arrives it is worth paying attention.

Last year Sandisfield resident, Charley Giaimo, a retirement transplant from Brooklyn by way of New Jersey, opened a solar energy franchise serving mostly South County, for California-based Sunrun Solar Systems. The company, which operates in 22 states and serves 750,000 “happy customers” according to its web site, is a major player in a fast-growing industry.

Charley’s original retirement plan was to follow the sun to Florida. But that was before he met Sandisfield resident Estelle Leeds in 2010. They married, and Charley moved north. “I love everything about this place,” he told *The Times*. “Best decision I have made.”

In 2018, the couple installed solar panels on their home, the c. 1850s Olcott Cone House, one-time home to writer Huldah Leonard. Leonard’s novel, *The Rose of America*, achieved national recognition in the mid-19th century.

Of his taking on a solar franchise, Charley said, “We were so pleased and impressed with the whole solar concept that I decided to get in the business.” He has about two dozen systems installed or in the works, including a good number in Otis.

With his enthusiasm and knowledge, he feels that his living in town is a plus for Sandisfield customers. “There are so many different factors driving this business right now,” Charley said. An example is the “Green Communities” program that Sandisfield has.

A major incentive for switching to solar continues to be government subsidies and tax credits. “These incentives won’t last forever,” he advised, “so anyone thinking about converting should act now. Also, there is a limit to the number of solar customers that can be accommodated by the grid in an area.”

Moreover, since early last year home fuel and electric bills have been steadily increasing, a trend most noticeable in places like Massachusetts, one of the highest electricity cost states. With inflation unlikely to abate soon and the war in Europe adding cost and uncertainty, Charley said, “Being electric energy independent is a really good idea right now.”

His industry has been impacted by supply shortages causing longer waiting times for installation, “but,” he said, “it’s getting better.”

While nearly everyone understands that solar power is here to stay, many may be unaware of potential savings and the many options available to home owners. Charley said that people are often amazed at the benefits which can include free new roofs.

“The industry is very customer oriented,” he said. “Our company takes care of everything from surveys and permits to coordination with Eversource and installation. It just takes one call to us,” he said. (For contact information, please see the solar ad on page 13.)

Is This Your Trash?

One or more stupid, selfish persons have been dumping trash, in bags and without bags, including tires, along the pristine, breathtakingly beautiful, rough but still usable road that leads to Upper Spectacle Pond.

The land, in Otis State Forest, lies partly in the town of Otis and partly in the Beech Plain section of Sandisfield.

The Times has notified the DCR and the DEP, who will hopefully identify the dumpers and take action.

Old tires, considered hazardous waste, are a common problem in state forests according to a DCR representative. The Times understands that state authorities have and will charge such offenders. Dumping like this occurs at least in part because culprits are too cheap and irresponsible to pay for proper disposal.

If anyone has a clue about who is committing this act against nature and all of us, contact “Park Watch” at 1-866-759-2824 or by email to the Sandisfield Times at info@sandisfieldtimes.org.

Sandisfield Times photos



Upper Spectacle Pond, not far from the illegal dump site.

WINTER WEATHER

2021-2022 Snowfall to date as measured/estimated at a Beech Plain back-yard weather station.

November 2021	2.0 inches
December	5.5
January 2022	18.5
February	8.5
March	7.5
Season to date	42.0 inches

Extreme temp to date
Jan 12 -11 degrees



Got a Burn Pile? Don't Waste It

TURN IT INTO USEFUL CHARCOAL

By Bill Taylor

You've gathered brush all winter, now you want to get rid of it. You can do that until the end of April, but you'll need a burn permit from the Sandisfield Fire Department. You can find out more on the Town website, sandisfieldma.gov, search for "burn permit," or call 258-4742.

But, all you open pile burners, after you get your permit you can get some extra use out of burning your brush.

Your brush can be turned into charcoal, or biochar. It takes a little more work than striking a match, but you can improve soil fertility and sequester carbon at the same time.

The secret to making charcoal or biochar is to allow the volatile gases to come out of the wood by heating it, and cutting off the oxygen before the charcoal left behind can burn at the higher temperature required.

Historic charcoal making excluded air by tenting over a pit. An ordinary open burn pile requires the moving of still-gas-burning wood aside and dousing water over what has already become charcoal or coals.

A modern pit method, for instance, in a 5-foot wide, 3-foot deep pit, uses top lighting so the fire burns downward. The rising heat and the pit itself limits oxygen getting into it as quickly, allowing enough time to douse the coals on one side with water after raking aside still-burning wood.

The difference from ordinary burning is 1) shorter time to do the burn as there is no need to let coals go to ash and 2) if using a pit, time to cut the brush short enough to get into the pit. Some of this cutting can be done during the burn.

The result is sequestered carbon that will not biodegrade into CO₂ for centuries or more. Inoculated with animal manure, or used in bedding for animals, or putting through a compost process, it has been shown to increase soil life and hence



A former charcoal pit found in the Sandisfield woods.

Photo: Jaye Moscariello

better crop yield and quality, especially in sandy soil such as we have in Sandisfield.

Prior to availability of mined coal, charcoal was used to smelt iron as well as to heat homes and businesses. Our town of Sandisfield has a long

history of charcoal-making in pits, and a lot of our forests were cut down in order to fuel the fires.

Charcoal pits can still be found in the woods. The Colebrook Land Conservancy's "Deer Hill Trail" takes you past a few of them in our neighboring Connecticut town. On a recent ramble through some Hull Forest land in Sandisfield three hikers came across a former burn pit, 12 feet in diameter and probably 8 feet or so deep, perhaps more.

In our time, the most ecological modern burners or "retorts" are the most costly and elaborate; they capture the heat to use in nearby buildings and some even make electricity; for information on these and much more, www.biochar-international.org.

In our region, there is New England Biochar: newenglandbiochar.com.

For open pit burn videos, visit skillcult.com/biochar-and-charcoal. For portable metal kilns that utilize the principle used in the pit method, wilsonbiochar.com.

OUR EXPERIENCE MAKING BIOCHAR

Jaye and I have done both open pile burns (in California) and pit burns (in Sandisfield Center on our farm). We will have a workshop in early-mid April and would like to share our experience with you. Please call us at 707-272-1688 as we need to light the fire on a safe burn day. 🌱

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Scholarship Committee Needs Volunteers

By Nina Carr

It's the time of year for awarding scholarships.

The Sandisfield Scholarship Committee has sent scholarship applications to our seven graduating seniors. We hope to get replies and applications from all of them.

The Scholarship Committee has been a mainstay in Sandisfield for a very long time, but we are currently in desperate need of some new members. I would hate to see this long-time tradition fade away because of a lack of interest. Hopefully some interested residents will respond. It's not a huge time commitment for individuals, but it can make a huge difference for our students. If you'd like to join, please contact Anina Carr (258-3314).

Recreation Committee

Bunnies and the Honor Wall

By Lynn Rubenstein

Thanks to everyone who participated in our Lucky Gnome program on St. Patrick's Day. We can all use a little luck no matter what the month.

Springing ahead to our next event. How does Bunnies and Easter sound?

Join us on Saturday, April 9 from 9:30-10:30 a.m. at the Sandisfield Library Community Center (downstairs).

We will host Berkshire Bunnies for an informative, interactive program (yes, you will be able to pet and feed the bunnies). Elizabeth Torsay-Wilson, our neighbor in Otis, raises purebred Mini Rex and Holland Lops for pets and therapy needs. (berkshirebunnies.com). This FREE program is open to all ages.

Afterwards, we will have Easter bags filled with goodies for the children and a sweet treat for the adults.

The Recreation Committee will start collecting photos for the Honor Wall at the American Legion Pavilion for our Memorial Day Parade display.

If you have anyone you would wish to commemorate on the Honor Wall, we will have photo collection boxes at A&M Auto, at the Sandisfield Transfer Station, and at every recreation event until May 15.

We will laminate your photos for the wall, or use plastic protectors if you prefer. PLEASE PRINT the name and service information on the back of the photo.

The photos will be displayed during the Sandisfield Community Memorial Day Parade and BBQ on Sunday, May 29. Save the date, for sure!!

Beyond May, we have a "MAGICAL" family day planned for June 26. Save that date, too.

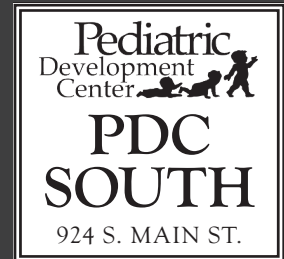
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OUT ON TWO LIMBS TOWN CLERK AND TOWN MANA

Why Electing Our Town Clerk Is Right for Sandisfield

By Ron Bernard

Ron Bernard, a 22-year resident, wrote the definitive history of the Town, Sandisfield Then and Now, in 2012. He believes that elected vs. appointed Town Clerk may be the most important issue placed before Sandisfield voters since the Revolution.

“Elected vs. Appointed” for the Town Clerk’s position has been deliberated in many Massachusetts towns for the past 30 years.

In 1993, 90 percent of Town Clerks were elected. I’m told by the state Association of Town Clerks that today the “split is about even” and that smaller communities lean towards the “appointed” alternative.

However, I wish to make a case why appointed is not a good idea for *Sandisfield*. Please consider the following in your decision when voting on this important question on May 16.

CALL FOR COMMENTS

THE TIMES WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE THE DISCUSSION ABOUT RON’S ESSAY REGARDING THE ELECTION VS. APPOINTMENT FOR THE TOWN CLERK POSITION. WRITE TO THE TIMES AT PO BOX 584 OR EDITOR@SANDISFIELDTIMES.ORG. THIS QUESTION IS BEFORE THE VOTERS AT THE ELECTION ON MAY 16 SO SEND YOUR OPINIONS AND POINTS OF VIEW BY APRIL 15, FOR THE ISSUE TO BE PUBLISHED MAY 1.

THE ISSUES:

Lack of qualified or interested people in town.

This is served up without much thought by Select Boards from small towns as the main reason to switch.

This attitude comes across as patronizing and unfair. There are plenty of smart people in Sandisfield with ability who are invested in their community and can perform. Let’s try a little harder to recruit local people to run for the office. Believe in your town.

And I don’t buy that the job, though busy, has become too technical. That’s a canard. Don’t fall for it. People understand that this is a serious position and not a popularity contest. The system has worked well for 260 years with many eras full of challenges and adaptation. It is not “different this time,” it never is.

What is really going on: *It is easier to find an outsider to boss around than it is to get along with a trusted independent officer chosen by and accountable to the people.*

The whole county is lightly populated and the trend is flat-to-declining. So where are you going to find a talent pool to draw from? Well, from large communities back east of course. That hasn’t worked over eight years of town administrators (see opposite page). Tell me why there would not be the same outcome for hired town clerks who would also have insane commutes?

Let’s assume that an offer is made to a candidate on the express condition that he/she *and family* physically move here. Will the candidate find suitable affordable housing in town? Is the Town prepared to pay for an expensive household move probably including a made-whole guarantee for the real estate transaction? In case of school-age children, will local schools be acceptable and can the relocation be accomplished in summertime? Will the new hire after a dose of reality have buyer’s remorse and abruptly resign in, say, four months?

Transfer of power of this office from voters (the many) to a board (the few) should never happen in a small town. This could be the consequence of the upcoming vote that has been glossed over in a non-debate which I consider shameful. For 260 years the Town Clerk position has been accountable to the voters *directly*. Sandisfield has been served very well. The colonial founders knew what they were doing. It’s called balance of power, and it is a precious, sacred principle in this country.

Don’t give it away so that some future lazy, incompetent, or rogue select board removes an employee they

don’t like, leaving taxpayers with costly lawsuits and/or big payouts and another search.

And remember, additional layers of management do not increase efficiency; the opposite is true.

The Select Board and the Town Clerk report to the same boss: You the voter. An appointed town clerk is a dramatic position *downgrade*. If the town clerk reports to the Town Manager then it is a two-level downgrade, hardly a selling point for prospective hires with experience needed for the long-term. There may be salary limitation issues. Demoting the office will diminish the image and stature of the Town of Sandisfield.

Elected Town Clerks ensure integrity of elections. This is why it is the most important constitutional office, more important than a select board seat. The Town Clerk is the chief election official with responsibilities similar to those of Secretary of State. It is critical in my view that the Town Clerk remain independent to ensure the integrity of that process and never be forced into conflict of interest. For example, to do a favor or the bidding of a selectman running for reelection. It can happen.

And the most important reason to elect a Town Clerk is: Continuity /Stability. This person is your neighbor, someone with local roots who understands and is invested in the community. Town Clerks have been reelected repeatedly – by hundreds of people, not appointed by a committee of three. Our previous two Town Clerks – Flora and Dolores – each served for about 23 years. Before then, in the 20th century the office was typically held for more than ten years.

It used to be that the Select Boards were composed of highly respected, well-known “town fathers” who served for many terms which provided overlap and continuity.

In recent decades capable, mostly, but relatively new residents have run for office which is fine because new people bring new approaches and energy and they should be thanked and supported. It will likely continue this way. However, selectmen do not remain in office like before. I’m convinced that Board turnover is responsible for the careless management and lack of control that has led to several unfortunate incidents at Town Hall and state authorities’ raps on our collective knuckles.

It takes a long time to fully understand the nature and workings of a place like Sandisfield. An elected

GER: ALTERNATIVE OPINIONS




resident Town Clerk who remains in place knows all about the town and procedures and policies and why this or that happened, valuable institutional knowledge.

Consider how discombobulated things have been at the Annex especially last year during a long period without the steady and amiable presence of a Town Clerk. We got by somehow, painfully, but Town Hall was like a fortress, unfriendly and uninviting, Covid notwithstanding. “Nobody here. Go away” was the feeling I got and it is hard to shake off.

For many the Town Clerk is the face of the town. The one Sandisfield official you are most likely to encounter is the Town Clerk. They are steeped in the history and culture of their towns, keepers of its heritage. They know who you are; they listen and return phone calls; they respond to emergencies *where they also live* regardless of time or day. They care. And they go to funerals. None of this is in the job description. All of it is important.

Several years ago at Thanksgiving I learned that a couple in my neighborhood was destitute. I mentioned this to Dolores and she immediately took action, knew the people, and what to do. Need more be said?

My suggestion to the citizenry is to vote NO in May on appointing the Town Clerk so that the matter can be properly and soberly reconsidered, not like this bum’s rush.

A committee should study and report on lessons learned in towns that made the switch. Selectmen and voters alike need to know what they are getting into. Meanwhile, for vacancies, which until now there have been none for at least a half century, Sandisfield bylaws can be amended in a very clear way to allow appointees to fill remaining terms only. The office is so important that it warrants a special election in case of a significant period of vacancy. 



Why Do We Need a Town Manager, Anyway?

By Ron Bernard

In the approximately eight years between December 2013 and today, we have had six Administrator/Managers (A/M’s), with two significant intervals when a selectman or the board had to perform the duties. The actual employment periods for our A/Ms was 22, 10, 2, 20, 19 and 4 months, respectively, an average of 12.8 months.

The justification for the position was that running our Town has become very complex and that an administrator would “support town employees” and create efficiency. Preparation of the annual budget was to be a primary responsibility.

None of the A/M’s have been residents. Maybe one lived in South County. At the outset, this was seen as a positive. [This person] “comes in with no ties and an open mind,” said one town official (Sandisfield Times, December 2013).

However, complete lack of awareness about the nature of this town – its history, culture, personalities, and institutions – turned out to be, in fact, *not* helpful.


Originally the position was only 20 hours per week. In that paltry amount of time the A/M, who had *no authority*, would have to learn about the subtleties of this place, gain the respect and cooperation of wary co-workers, and deal with a stack of bothersome matters the selectmen were happy to be rid of. A recipe for failure.

Most out of necessity had concurrent jobs and responsibilities. Several were retired and not likely to stick around. Five lived far away. The first to occupy the office had a three-hour meander on state roads. The next lived in Springfield “only” an hour away. The most recent A/M travelled 80 miles *each way*. Another commuted from a different state no less. From the start everyone knew that gargantuan commutes would be a retention problem and of course it was but they were hired anyway.

We are not alone. Last month the highly-regarded Becket A/M resigned after three years. Reason given: his new town is half the commute. (Berkshire Eagle, March 22, p. B1).

Small towns should be mindful that the town manager career game is based upon gaining experience to puff-up resumes to allow for moves to progressively larger municipalities, a couple of years at a time, until one finally reaches a respectable salary. The website resume of our former A/M who now works in the mid-west boasts that he had been an A/M “in every New England state since 2001.”

Small towns like ours are patsies, essentially springboards for the ambitious or as place-holders for retirees.

Suggestion for the Select Board: Forget about a town manager and hire a mid-career “Finance Administrator” experienced in numbers and strategy who lives in the area. There are plenty of banks hereabouts with underpaid employees who may be induced to join an enthusiastic team of town builders. 



OUT ON A LIMB: OP-ED:

Subjects should be of interest to most of us and have a strong link to Sandisfield, written by and for Town residents. Address either PO Box 584, Sandisfield, or email editor@sandisfieldtimes.org. Opinions in Out on a Limb articles are those of the authors and do not represent The Sandisfield Times.



By Terry Spohnholz

Library hours

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

Wednesday, 2:00–7:00 p.m.

Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Closed Thursday, Friday and Sunday

Phone: 258-4966

Email: sandisfieldlibrary@gmail.com

Library Events

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Story-telling hours with crafting fun will begin again on May 14 from 11:00 a.m. to noon. Every second Saturday of each month. Arts and crafts combined with story-telling.

Saturday, April 9 from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., we celebrate spring and little babies. **Berkshire Bunnies** will have two adult bunnies and several sweet babies to meet, touch and feed at the library.

Saturday, May 21, the library will host **Davis Bates**, performer of stories and songs that speak of the human spirit. Come enjoy an afternoon of engaging and fun family stories.

Saturday, July 23, **Ed the Wizard** will bring his fun and fantastical balloon making to the library.

August 6 – **Something's Fishy!** A Fun show for AN OCEAN of POSSIBILITIES by nationally recognized story teller Mary Jo Maichack who sings, plays guitar, tells tales, and leads the fun in this puppet show with audience participation.

NEW BOOK ARRIVALS

We continue to add new and enlightening books to both the adult section (upstairs) and children's section (downstairs). The children's section is replete with books, games, toys, and a train set. We also offer notary service, public computer, and printer availability, free wi-fi, and access to e-books from Massachusetts libraries with your Sandisfield Library card.

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. It may take a week or two while the book winds its way from one end of Massachusetts to our end.

ADULT FICTION AND NON-FICTION

Shadows Reel by C. J. Box

A Relative Murder by Jude Deveraux

The Lightening Rod by Brad Meltzer

French Braid by Anne Tyler

Chasing History by Carl Bernstein

Paradox Hotel by Rob Hart

The Department of Rare Books by Eva Jurczyk

Gwendy's Final Task by Stephen King

Silver Tears by Camilla Lackberg

Recitatif by Toni Morrison

Diablo Mesa by Douglas Preston

The Betrayal of Anne Frank by Rosemary Sullivan

CHILDREN'S SECTION

Except Antartica by Todd Sturgell

Little Blue Truck's Valentien

Llama, Llama, Let's Clean Up the Pond by Anna

Dewdney

The Snail and the Whale by Julia Donalson

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SPRING

By Christina Rosetti

Frost – locked all the winter,
Seeds, and roots, and stone of fruits,
What shall make their sap ascend
That they may put forth shoots?
Tips of tender green,
Leaf, or blade, or sheath;
Telling of the hidden life
That breaks forth underneath,
Life nursed in its grave by Death.

Blows the thaw-wind pleasantly
Drips the soaking rain,
By fits looks down the waking sun:
Young leaves clothe early hedgerow trees;
Seeds, and roots, and stone of fruits,
Swollen with sap, put forth their shoots;
Curled-headed ferns sprout in the lane;
Birds sing and pair again.



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The Sandisfield Arts Center

Full Schedule Offered this Summer

By Sheila Liberman

Spring is when Old Man Winter starts to fade away, plants that have managed to survive begin to poke through, and the Sandisfield Arts Center Program Committee puts the final touches on its event calendar.

Some favorite performers will return and some new ones will arrive. Workshops will be held on a variety of topics, and monthly shows in the gallery, and Bogart's one-Friday-a-month free children's movies – complete with popcorn.

Details of all this will be available on the website soon.

THREE OUTSTANDING EVENTS

Support from the Sandisfield Cultural Council is helping us present three outstanding events this season.



Cornelius Eady

On Sunday, July 17 at 2:00 p.m., we join with Voices of Poetry for an afternoon of poetry, music, and conversation featuring two world-renowned poets.

Cornelius Eady, a National Book Award winner and Pulitzer Prize nominated poet, has set his poetry to song with the Cornelius Eady Trio. His songs tell of passing time,

the Black American experience, and the blues in the style of Folk & Americana music. Guitarists Charlie Rauh & Lisa Liu join Eady.



Molly Peacock

Also on the program is acclaimed poet Molly Peacock. Peacock is also a biographer, essayist, and writer of tales whose literary life has taken her from New York City to Toronto, from poetry to prose, from words to words-and-pictures, and from self-examination to curiosity about the lives of others.

Award-winning poets Hilde Weisert, president of the Sandisfield Arts Center, and Neil Silberblatt, founder of Voices of Poetry, will introduce the afternoon with short readings from their own work.

We'll end the afternoon with conversation with the poets about poetry and the writing life and a book-signing reception. The event will be held without charge, in order to bring in the widest possible audience, from high school student writers to senior citizens.

On September 17, "Linda Mironi with Special Friends" will offer a new spin on the Art of Song with music from Broadway, jazz, and folk.

On October 16, we're delighted to bring back the popular classical and jazz pianist Fred Moyer with his MoyerCam that allows the audience to see the keyboard as Fred plays.



Fred Moyer

As a non-profit community-based organization the Sandisfield Arts Center depends on volunteers. If you have a particular skill or interest or simply want to help, consider becoming involved. Check our website to see how you can participate: www.sandisfieldartscenter.org

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Bad news on the phone
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 By suicide


How much grief
 Can humans take,
 Before they crack
 Their bodies break?

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 In times like these
 How to see good
 When evil reigns

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 An aneurysm wide

So easy to dwell
 And moan and cry
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 And smile and try

*Karen Garfield
 New Hartford Road*





Comings and Goings



JULIANA ROSE NADELMAN

BORN FEBRUARY 24, 2022

Announcing the birth of Juliana Rose, daughter of Justin and Lena Nadelman of Long Island and first granddaughter of Christine Nadelman and Steven Pincus of Sandisfield Center.



PAULINE (PAT) HAMILTON

Pat, a long-time Sandisfield resident, died February 16 at the age of 73 following a long illness. She is survived by her husband, Richard Hamilton of River Road, her children and grandchildren, three brothers and a sister, and many nieces, nephews, and friends. An obituary will be published in the next issue of The Sandisfield Times.



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The Broadband Committee's report posted on the Sandisfield Town website, March 21, 2022.

Sandisfield, Get Ready To Get Connected!



The time has finally come for residents and business owners to get connected to the new state-of-the-art fiber optic network constructed in town by Charter Communications. The network construction phase of the project Charter began last summer has been completed. Charter is currently finishing all splicing and testing of the 66 miles of fiber optic cable installed on the utility poles on public roads.

The next step in the process will involve residents and business owners to get properties physically connected to the network and services activated. Per a three-phase approach, Spectrum sales representatives will be going door-to-door to establish what services a resident or business will want to subscribe to. Spectrum is Charter Communication's branding of their Internet, telephone, cellular, and television services. During this door-to-door visit the sales representative will be able to describe the full suite of services available with associated pricing information. For residents and businesses that choose to subscribe to one or more services, the sales representative and resident or business owner will mutually agree to a service installation date following the door-to-door visit. **The resident, business owner, or their designated representative must be present during the scheduled installation as Spectrum technicians will need access to the property.** The Spectrum sales representatives will schedule installations and service activations based on the type and number of services to be installed. Spectrum sales representatives will be able to answer all questions during the door-to-door visit.

As mentioned above Spectrum will be connecting properties to the new network and activating services per a three-phase approach. Each phase is scheduled by address boundaries described below. For streets listed in each phase with no address numbers, the phase boundary includes those property addresses reached during construction of Charter's network per the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) coverage requirements. As each phase commences, Spectrum will be

sending sales representatives out to all addresses within that phase. Sales representatives will be clearly identified, trained in COVID safety and precautions, and do not need to enter your property during the sign-up process. If sales representatives attempt to meet with you when you are not present, they will leave their business card with contact information for you to schedule an alternative day and time for an appointment. **Waiting for the Spectrum sales representative to meet with or contact you is the only way to sign up for services. Calling a Spectrum 800 number will not get you connected to services.**

Phase 1 (East side of town).

N Beach Plain Rd, S Beach Plain Rd, Cold Spring Rd, Hammertown Rd addresses 82 and higher, River Rd, Sandisfield Rd addresses 76 and lower, Silverbrook Rd addresses 53 and lower, upper Fox Rd, Elk Rd, upper Sears Rd, Clark Rd, Roosterville Rd, N Main St, S Main St, Tolland Rd, Tannery Rd, Smith Rd, and Perry Rd.

Phase 2 (Northwest side of town).

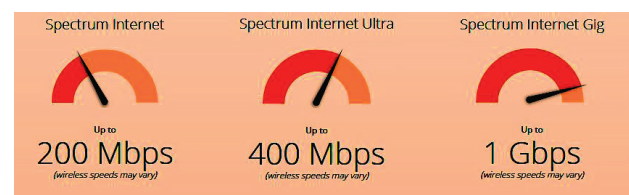
Sandisfield Rd addresses 90 and higher, Town Hill Rd, West St, Cronk Rd, West and East Hubbard Rd, lower West St, Stump Rd, Bosworth Rd, Hammertown Rd addresses 35 and lower, New Hartford Rd addresses 7 and lower, Shade Rd, Silverbrook Rd addresses 87 and higher, and Sullivan Rd.

Phase 3 (Southwest side of town).

New Hartford Rd addresses 21 and higher, Dodd Rd, Viets Rd, S Sandisfield Rd, Gremler Rd, lower Fox Rd, lower Sears Rd, Roberts Rd, Prock Hill Rd, Sandy Brook Turnpike, Norfolk Rd, Rood Hill Rd, Norfolk Rd, Sage Rd, and Webster Rd.

The tentative timeframe for Spectrum sales representatives to reach out to properties located within the address boundaries for **Phase 1** is three weeks **beginning April 1**. However, variables such as weather, sales representative and property owner availability can impact this tentative schedule. The tentative timeframe for Spectrum sales representatives to reach out to properties located within the address boundaries for **Phase 2** is three weeks **beginning April 25**. And finally, if things go according to schedule during Phase 1 and Phase 2, the tentative timeframe for Spectrum sales representatives to reach out to properties located within the address boundaries for **Phase 3** is three weeks **beginning May 16**.

- **Important Note #1:** If a resident, business owner, or their representative will not be at the property and available for a Spectrum sales representative door-to-door visit during the tentative time frame for a given phase, **please send Bill Haines (Broadband Committee member) your contact information at wchaines@gmail.com**. The Spectrum sales team will be provided this information in order to reach out to you remotely during the scheduled timeframe for a given phase. **This applies to full-time and seasonal residents and business owners.**
- **Important Note #2:** During the installation process, Spectrum technicians will assess the best way to bring fiber optic cable from the utility poles to the property. Some properties will get connected aerially (above ground). Some will get connected with the fiber optic cable buried directly underground. For properties with existing underground conduit from the street to the property, **Spectrum will make every attempt to utilize this existing underground conduit.**



SPECTRUM SERVICES OFFERED

►INTERNET SERVICE:

Spectrum currently offers three different residential broadband Internet options.

1. 200 Mbps download / 10 Mbps upload.
2. 400 Mbps download / 20 Mbps upload.
3. 1 Gbps download / 500 Mbps upload.

During the sign-up period the Spectrum sales representatives may be able to offer additional Internet service options, as new

options become released and available. The basic 200/10 Mbps data package should be adequate for most subscribers.

There are no data caps on the Internet services being offered. Spectrum provides and installs a modem (inside the property) that connects to the fiber optic cable for establishing service. A wifi router connected to the Spectrum modem can then be used to connect all devices within the property to the service. Customers may use a wifi router provided by Spectrum for a monthly fee or choose to use their own device. Most newer wifi routers with a standard ethernet connection will work with the Spectrum supplied modem as long as it is capable of supporting the data rates associated with the Internet service option a customer chooses.

►**HOME PHONE SERVICE:**

Spectrum's home phone package provides local and long distance calling via the "Voice over Internet Protocol" (VoIP) that replaces the need for a traditional landline (Verizon) service. Switching to this service does not require new handsets and most important, **you can keep your current Verizon phone number.**

►**TELEVISION PROGRAMMING SERVICE:**

Spectrum offers a range of television packages accessible via an Internet connection using a Spectrum application that requires one of the following:

- A Samsung smart TV model year 2012 or newer.
- An Apple TV box plugged into your TV via an HDMI port.
- A Roku device plugged into your TV via an HDMI port.
- An Xbox One plugged into your TV via an HDMI port.

The list of channels and packages available will be provided online at Spectrum's website as soon as your sign-up phase begins. Spectrum sales representatives will also review the current lineup and packages available as part of the sign-up process. Spectrum's Internet service supports all other regular streaming services to which you may subscribe to directly (e.g. Netflix, Hulu, Disney, Amazon Prime, HBO, Showtime, etc.). Via the Spectrum application Spectrum TV can be watched on Apple devices, Android devices, and Kindle Fire tablets.

Spectrum Service Pricing.

Spectrum offers a range of packages including Internet, television programming packages, VoIP home phone service, as well as mobile

phone services. These services can be mixed and matched to address your needs and preferences. Spectrum will offer introductory pricing offers for these services and packages with discounts as part of the sign-up process. All service option pricing will be presented in detail by the sales representative during sign-up. **The standard service installation fee will be waived for customers who subscribe to a television package along with an Internet service.**

Spectrum has installed temporary Internet service in the downstairs meeting area of the Town Hall Annex for demonstrating the suite of Spectrum services. **Mr. George Doin, a Spectrum Field Operations Manager, has offered to be available at the Town Hall Annex March 31 and April 5 from 12:00-6:00 pm** both days. Mr. Doin will be able to demonstrate services via "show and tell", and answer any questions regarding equipment needed and used to distribute Internet, telephone, and television services within a home or business. **No appointment is necessary to stop by the Annex to learn about Spectrum services and to have Mr. Doin answer your questions.** The Spectrum Sales Manager for our area has also offered to join Mr. Doin during these informational sessions to help answer questions.

Stay tuned for all the latest information regarding the schedule for network connection and service activation. Dates for Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3 will be revised and reported as necessary.



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Letters to the Editor

HELP WHEN NEEDED

While Rita Kasky's account of her and Bill Cohn's recent winter evening was indeed harrowing, I found it even more heartwarming. That so many in the Sandisfield community responded with concern and compassion proves that the lyrics of the classic Beatles' song really do ring true: we all can only "get by with a little help from (our) friends."

*Melissa Bye
New Hartford Road*



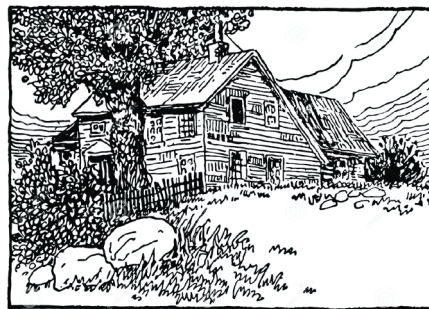
FOLK ART BEAR SCULPTURE

We're grateful for the Times; thank you for your work in producing it.

My husband, Mike Murray, son of the New Boston Store's owners, remembers the bear in the photo last month.

He said it resided behind the town library on the playground, but has no idea where the carving is now.

*The Murray Family
Town Hill Road*



Financial Help Still Available

APPLY THROUGH APRIL 30

By Bill Price

We may be past the months where help was needed with home heating, but help with other household necessities is still available.

Over the winter, the Berkshire Community Action Council (BCAC) provided help paying heating bills. Eligible households that did not apply this year should keep the reference below to apply next fall.

In the meantime, applications are still being accepted through April 30 and if your household qualifies for fuel assistance, you may also be able to receive help through the Refrigerator and Washing Machine Replacement Program which replaces older high energy-using models with new, more energy efficient models.

Households whose gross yearly income falls at or below gross income guidelines for the number of people in the household should apply for the support. For instance, a household of one can be eligible with an gross income of up to \$40,951; a household of two can have an gross income of up to \$53,551; a household of four can have an gross income of up to \$78,751; and a household of five can have an gross income of up to \$91,351.

For information, call BCAC at 413-445-4503 for Central/South County, Monday-Thursday between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., or the 24-hour information line at 866-215-6200. The website is www.bcacinc.org.

BCAC reports that they have funding available to serve all eligible Berkshire County households.

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NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

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

APRIL EVENTS



Sandisfield Select Board Meetings are currently through Zoom 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. Sponsored by South Berkshire Kids. Weather permitting. No pre-registration necessary. Led by Nina Carr. Meet outside behind the Otis Town Hall in the gazebo for stories and songs followed by creative crafts. For confirmation, please call Nina Carr (258-3314). 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.

Town Caucus on Monday, April 4, at 6:00 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3 Sandisfield Road. Last chance to sign up to run for Town office at 2022 election, May 16. For procedure, call Town Clerk, 258-4711, x 2.

Berkshire Bunnies on Saturday, April 9, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Sandisfield Library (downstairs). The Recreation Committee is sponsoring an informative and interactive program with Elizabeth Torsay-Wilson and her bunnies Mini Rex and Holland Lops! A free event open to all ages. There will be Easter bags filled with goodies and a sweet treat for adults following the program.

Palm Sunday, New Boston Church Service on April 10 at 10:00 a.m., at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. Weather permitting. All are welcome!

Easter Sunday, New Boston Church Service on April 17 at 10:00 a.m., at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. Weather permitting. All are welcome!

EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Guided Tour on the Forestry Plan on Saturday, April 9 from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Bidwell House Museum in Monterey. The Museum is planning on a forest cut in the future and would like to share the plans with residents. Free.

Guided Wildflower Walks at Bartholomew's Cobble on Saturdays, April 16, 23, and 30 and Sunday, April 24, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Join veteran wildflower guides for a guided tour of the Ledges Trail to learn about the flowers, insects that pollinate them, and what makes these flowers unique. The trail is 0.5 mile and has a few steep staircases and hills. Not recommended for young children or

families. Visit thetrustees.org to register for the walks. \$5 for members, \$10 for nonmembers.

Berkshire Grown Farmer's Market on Saturday, April 16, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Housy Dome on 1064 Main Street in Housatonic. Featuring locally grown and produced foods, including fruits and vegetables, cheese, meats, breads, and more.

Barkhamsted Earth Day Nature Festival on Saturday, April 24, from 12:30 to 5:00 p.m. at Matthies Grove Pavilion in Peoples State Forest in Barkhamsted, Connecticut. Talks, walks, and birds of prey show. Covid restrictions permitting. Free food and event.

Crafting Bird Habitat on Tuesday, April 26 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Bidwell House Museum in Monterey. Join Tom Ryan, DCR Service Forester, for an evening hike on established trails to view proactive forest management activities that have benefitted migratory song birds. For more information and to register, email bidwellhousemuseum.org. Free.

The Three Codes of Adonijah Bidwell on Wednesday, April 27, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom, sponsored by the Bidwell House Museum. Reverend Bidwell left copious shorthand notes in code and cipher and unpacking them presents unique challenges. Scholar David Powers theorizes that in addition to the two obvious ciphers Bidwell employed a third code – not lexical, but semantic and that while he ostensibly spoke of the devil

his actual subject was the Revolutionary War. For more information and to register, email bidwellhousemuseum.org. Free for members, \$10 for nonmembers. Via Zoom only.

Nature Journaling with Nanci Worthington on Saturday, April 30, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at Bartholomew's Cobble in Sheffield. Observe the changing seasons in this nature journaling group sponsored by The Trustees of the Reservation. For more information and the required registration, visit thetrustees.org. Free.



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*Easter
Dinner
April 17th 12-7*

*Reservations
recommended*

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



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*The Times is grateful to readers who
contributed in March:*

Susan Diamond

Katherine Duclos

Hilde Wiesert



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