

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

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Volume XIV, Number 5

August 2023

## Learn About the Town Charter Draft

AND ADD YOUR \$2 WORTH

PUBLIC HEARING ON AUGUST 11

*By the Town Charter Committee*

The Sandisfield Town Charter Committee will hold a Public Hearing on Friday, August 11, at 6:00 p.m., at Old Town Hall, to review and receive public input on a proposed Charter that the Committee has been drafting in its public meetings since March.

### WHAT IS A CHARTER?

A charter is a legal document that describes the form and structure of local government and is, essentially, a constitution for a municipality. The charter establishes the system under which a local government operates by distributing powers, duties, and responsibilities

among local offices and by defining certain procedures representing high-level matters that are expected to guide towns for many years.

### WHY CREATE A CHARTER?

In Massachusetts, each local government is unique, due to a patchwork of state laws, acceptance of optional legislation, adoption of special legislative acts, and the approval of local bylaws. In towns as old as Sandisfield, with more than 260 years of governance, the numerous policy and administrative decisions made over the years can become inconsistent or be forgotten.

A charter establishes long-term and consistent governance while allowing for periodic formal updates. A clear description of how the town operates contributes to a transparent and responsive town government that is accessible and instructive to the public, businesses, government agencies, and other organizations.

Drafting and approving a charter allows the town to make its own choices about the structure and form of its local government rather than accept the default terms of state law.

### WHAT DOES THE CHARTER INCLUDE?

The Charter addresses:

- The legislative branch, consisting of the Open Town Meeting and duties of the elected moderator;
- The executive branch, consisting of the elected Select Board and an appointed town manager; elected officials and boards, including the Town Moderator, Town Clerk, Board of Assessors, Board of Health, Planning Board and Library Trustees;
- Appointed Boards and Committees, including standing bodies required by state law;

*Cont'd on p.6*

## Minister to Depart New Boston Church

*By Ron Bernard*

A groan of dismay arose from about fifty attendees at a recent Sunday service at the New Boston Congregational Church when their highly regarded pastor, Eric Kriebel, confirmed his forthcoming but unexpected departure.

Some had already learned of it from an open letter to parishioners. Some heard it through the grapevine. Others however were stunned to get the news at their pews.



*Reverend Eric Kriebel has announced his forthcoming departure.*

*Photo: Ron Bernard*

Rev. Kriebel, 42, a resident of Torrington, Conn., has presided at "the Little Brown Church," as it is called, for almost seven years, a relatively long tenure for this position. He was the church's 45th pastor since the congregation's inception in 1874.

Mr. Kriebel is credited with a remarkable revival in New Boston, including sustained increased attendance by Sandisfield residents, newcomers, and even out-of-towners. Children are appearing for the first time in quite a while.

All agree that his affable nature, sense of humor, and easy-going, unpretentious style are behind the success. Eric knows everyone by name. He mails personal notes to each member family or individual – every month!

Services are family affairs. Faithful assistant Jennifer Kriebel organizes everything and their son, Jacob, 6, passes the collection plate. Old-timey New England.

When he arrived, the greatly diminished congregation thought it was "prayers answered." Only age 36 at the time but ordained, he performed like a pastor with decades more life experience,

*Cont'd on p.4*

### Annual Steak Roast

*Benefit for the*

Sandisfield Fire Department

Sat., Aug. 12, from 5:00 to 7:00, music continuing until 9:00

Steak, baked potato, corn, salad, and dessert.

Firehouse #2 on Sandisfield Rd. (Rt. 57)

Tickets \$30 must be pre-purchased from any fire or EMS volunteer or call A&M Auto (258-3381)

# Sandisfield Historical Society



## A NEW OPTION ON THE ATV RAFFLE

By Ann Wald

A second option has been added as a prize. **The winner can choose between the ATV or \$5,500.** The winner will be able to select whichever option they prefer. Winners will be responsible for required taxes.

Tickets are \$50 each and available from members of the Historical Society, or by contacting Barbara Cormier (413) 258-4402 or Joanne Olson (917) 686-1985.

Only 500 tickets have been printed and the odds are darn good, better than regular lottery tickets!


Time is running out!! The drawing will be held on August 31 at the New

Boston Inn. The winner does not have to be present to receive their prize and will be notified by the contact information they have provided.

During the town-wide tag sale on August 19, Charlie Flint will hold appraisals at the Meeting House on Rt. 183 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. The price for each item appraised will be \$5. No jewelry appraisals.

For the Town-Wide Tag Sale taking place August 19, if you want to take part and don't live on a main road, you may set up in the parking lot at the New Boston Inn or join us at the Meeting House on Rt. 183.

In September, Lorraine German will speak about maple sugar. It was not just a way to sweeten food in the 18th and 19th centuries; it played an important role in our country's history and our town had a role to play in that history as well.

Our next meeting will be August 12 at 11:00 a.m. at the Meeting House on Rt. 183. I look forward to seeing you all there! 

# Lead Assessor Resigns TWO OTHERS LEAVE THE DPW

By Bill Price

The Board of Assessors lost its long-time chairperson Bethany Perry, who resigned abruptly near the end of July. Perry was first elected in 2004 as a write-in candidate.

Perry told The Times that she had been contemplating the move for some time but had stayed in the position hoping that pressures applied by town leaders would ease. "Basically," she said, "I tried to talk to the current Select Board and Town Manager but I feel their expectations for the assessors have become absurd."

She said that between phone calls and emails and unrealistic expectations the pressures on the assessors "have become too heavy. You can't expect people to turn a part-time position into full time when they all have jobs and families." She added that she believed the town would soon have to hire an outside assessor company full-time.


The Town has posted the open assessor job, which is an elected position. A person who applies and is appointed will serve in a temporary role until the election following the Annual Town Meeting in May 2024, and then possibly run to fill out Perry's unexpired term. The position pays a stipend of \$2,294.

Town Manager Jon Sylbert said that former Town Assessor Jackie Bitso has been helping with the assessors' office one day a week, and that the Mayflower Valuation from Brimfield had earlier been hired to support the office. He said he believed it was a good opportunity for someone who wanted to serve to get involved with Town governance. He said that the Town appreciated Bethany's long service.

On the agenda of the July 31 regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Assessors was an item to reorganize the Board due to Perry's resignation, another to review and take action on an Open Meeting Law Complaint, and a third to review staffing and resources in the Assessors' office.

Two other recent resignations, both at the Highway Department, have impacted the road crew. The Town has posted the job openings (see sandisfieldma.gov/employment opportunities).

Ralph Leavenworth, who had been employed in the department for seven years, said that he has accepted a "better offer." Keith Larson, formerly the Town's Transfer Station attendant, resigned from the road crew because of health issues and will return to his former role at the Transfer Station.

Mitch Birkett, who began serving as temporary attendant at the Transfer Station only in June, got a call that the position of medical scribe at the Fairview Hospital Emergency Room, which he previously filled part-time, was open full-time. Since Mitch intends to follow the long path toward a medical degree, he accepted. Bon voyage, Doc. 



## Our Store Expands

*Megan Smigel, proprietress of the Farmington River General Store, stands next to her new beer display featuring a dozen different varieties. Sandisfield's only grocery, near the American Legion on Rt. 8 in New Boston, was awarded a beer/wine/liquor license in mid-July. Shop locally for groceries, tobacco, your happy hour necessities, winning Lotto tickets, and all those pesky items you forgot when you were shopping Downtown. Another new feature is that you can now cruise the aisles online at farmingtonrivergs.square.site.*

Photo: Bill Price

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**SAMPLE SANDISFIELD** 9:30 to 3:30

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 19TH**  
 Rain Date: Saturday, August 26th

Visit local farms, farmstands, crafters, goods makers, artists and studios. Buy fresh produce, eggs, maple syrup, fruit, crafts, art and more! All while driving through the bucolic scenery of this quaint Berkshire community.

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sandisfieldevents@recreationcommittee.info

- FR General Store
- Post Office
- Transfer Station

Maps Available

sample Sandisfield Map 2022 Town of Sandisfield.

# recreation COMMITTEE



## The Line Up

By Laurie Seddon

Wow! Do we have a line-up of events for Sandisfield? Yes, we do!

We are excited to announce the return of Sample Sandisfield. This year we have coordinated dates with the Town-Wide Tag Sale hosted by the Sandisfield Historical Society. By doing so, we are hoping to encourage a lot of visitors for the day.

On Saturday, August 19, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., we encourage everyone to get out and sample Sandisfield. See the poster on this page for details.

With over a dozen places to stop, your day will not be dull.

Maps will be available at Farmington River General Store, the Post Office, and the Transfer Station. Maps will also be available via social media, Town Website, Email, and QR Code. We have arranged for a handicap accessible portable potty to be available at Yanner Park.

Drum roll please . . . for the Pig Roast

All Sandisfield taxpayers and employees (proof of tax paying and employment required) are invited to a PIG ROAST!

That's right. The Sandisfield Recreation Committee and the Massachusetts Cultural Council are co-hosting a Pig Roast on Sunday, September 10, at 5:00 p.m., at the American Legion Pavilion. There will be live music by Harms Way, a bouncy house, and of course plenty of food. Some of the menu items include; roast pork, roast beef, rolls, beans and more (we are still developing some menu details).

Please note, unlike our other events, the Pig Roast will NOT be free to non-Sandisfield taxpayers or non-Sandisfield employees. The cost for those guests will be \$10 per/person, child or adult. Please RSVP by August 26 to (413) 269-7357 or sandisfieldevents@recreationcommittee.info.

Sneak peek into October . . . Oktoberfest is happening, a Halloween Costume Dance, and of course the annual Sandisfield Halloween Trail. More details coming soon.

# Dreaded Detour Arrives

By Bill Price



The new culvert will be laid in place soon and carrying water under one side of Rt. 57 to the other.

Until then motorists, bikers, and hikers will have to find another way around. Out-of-towners heading west are welcome to the circular route up Rt. 8 to Cold Spring Road and over to Town Hill Road and down the hill back to 57 and on their way (or vice versa if heading east). It's a long detour.

For a much shorter route, locals can find their way up or down Silverbrook Road, a well-maintained dirt road that is often level but has some steep places that require a bit of caution. In places the road is narrow and drivers have to give way to other vehicles heading in the opposite direction. You can tell if the other driver is from Sandisfield by the courteous way this is accomplished.

For sure always give way to emergency vehicles and town trucks. These vehicles are on the job and always have the right-of-way.

Road Superintendent Brad Curry says that the job is proceeding on schedule and may be finished and possibly Route 57 reopened by mid-August.

Join the Sandisfield Recreation Committee

**FOR A PIG ROAST**

**LIVE MUSIC • FOOD • BOUNCY HOUSE**

**Sunday, September 10th, 5pm**

This event is **FREE** to Sandisfield tax payers and employees ONLY. Proof required. All others, \$10 child and/or adult.

**RSVP by 8.26.23**

(413) 269-7357 or sandisfieldevents@recreationcommittee.info

Co-Sponsored by: Mass Cultural Council

## New Boston Church Minister to Depart


Cont'd from p.1

whether from the pulpit, comforting the seriously ill, or one-on-one. This continuity, devotion, and level of care and concern for people had not been seen here in perhaps sixty years.

At first, attendance at intermittent Sunday services was meager, usually less than ten. Today, attendance at year-round semi-monthly services in the 90-capacity church regularly tops fifty. The house is practically full on major holy days. News reports tell of a long-term trend in church closings all over the country. What has happened in New Boston is counter-trend, extraordinary.

His departure date is not yet set but is expected by the end of the year, possibly around New Years, leaving time for the congregation to plan and for people to enjoy more of Rev. Kriebel's uplifting sermons and positive messages about all that is good in this life and in this country and to wish him well.

## REV. KRIEBEL'S FAREWELL MESSAGE TO THE CONGREGATION AND SANDISFIELD COMMUNITY.

"I believe God called me to serve for these seven years as Senior Pastor of the wonderful New Boston Congregational Church. It's been a privilege for me and a blessing for our family to be associated with such a loving, nurturing, and supportive faith community that is this church. We will miss you dearly. May God bless each one of you, and we are so thankful for you and for this church and community." 

### He Will be Missed...

New Boston resident **Steve Hoekstra** said, "Eric epitomizes what a pastor should be. He engages with each member and genuinely cares about us and our families. I will miss my friend."

**Christine Nadelman** of Sandisfield Center, credits Rev. Kriebel with his, "amazing way of connecting people and creating a sense of community." She said, "When I moved to town full-time a few years ago, I was intrigued with the church building and wanted to see what was inside. Although I was raised Catholic, I decided to attend a service. I discovered

not only a beautiful interior but a welcoming place and a very likeable, down-to-earth minister, a regular person who resonates with everyone. Even my Jewish husband comes to every service."

**Gary Leveille** of Lee said, "Audrey and I were saddened to learn that Pastor Eric will be leaving. We drove a good distance to attend his services. He is kind, caring, inspiring, and everything you hope for in a minister. The little church in New Boston became a sparkling gem under his leadership."

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# New History Book To Be Offered

By Times Reporters

Ron Bernard, author of the definitive history of the town, *Sandisfield Then & Now: 1762-2012*, published in conjunction with Sandisfield's 250th anniversary, is nearing completion of a significant new book very relevant to Sandisfield.

A limited edition of 400 pages, it is a history of the iconic New Boston Congregational Church and its importance to Sandisfield since 1874.

*The Little Brown Church of New Boston, Mass. and the Lives of its Pastors: 150 years of Heritage and Revival*, is the result of more than a year of original research and writing by Bernard.

"This is foremost a book about Sandisfield and its lows and highs, struggles and revivals since 1874," he told The Times.

"It is also the story of a congregation that included well-known residents and civic leaders and groups previously unsung or not enough appreciated, and many new stories."

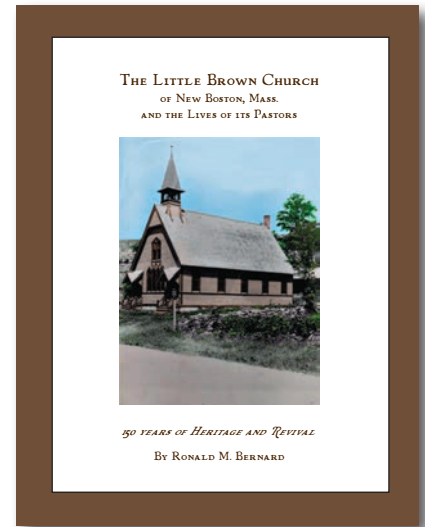
Bernard said the book includes a detailed account of the history of the building, an architectural gem that is a major contributing element in the New Boston Village National Register Historic District approved last year.

"In *Then and Now*," he said, "I used old houses, some 100 of them, as a vehicle to tell the story of Sandisfield. Old houses intimately connect families, eras, major events and turning points like wars and changing social mores over our 250 years.

"In *Little Brown Church*, readers will find biographies of all 45 pastors, their lives and times and their contributions to this church and community, a fascinating unbroken chain through time. Coming from all social strata, many interned or were ordained here and went on to illustrious careers. Another group, accomplished, retired in the Berkshires but were intrigued with this wonderful church and its plain spoken, hard-working, God-fearing people. All of them left a mark here and all of them were better for their experience at the Little Brown Church."

Next month The Times will include information on how to pre-order the book at a discounted price for a limited period. Advance orders are important to help cover printing costs. One hundred percent of net proceeds will go to the New Boston Congregational Church. The book is expected to be available late this year.

Seeking photos: If you have pictures or recollections of reunions, events, and people, or anything to do with the care of the church building, please contact Ron at ronbernard@aol.com or 413-269-0012. Time is short, so act fast. Any comments, questions, or suggestions, please contact Ron.



Soon to be published, a history of our local church and its pastors.

## Group Photo

On Sunday September 10, following the 10 a.m. service, a group photograph of the congregation to be included prominently in the book will be taken by a professional photographer. Past members are welcome and encouraged to be there. Save the date!



Just out of curiosity...

**If I could sell my house for \$\_\_\_\_\_, I would list my home this spring.**

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## Learn About the Town Charter Draft

Cont'd from p.1

- And Financial Policies and Procedures, including the responsibility to prepare, review and approve the annual budget and a Capital Improvement Plan. There are also sections dealing with administrative organization, general provisions, and transitional language.

### HOW DOES THE PROPOSED CHARTER DIFFER FROM THE CURRENT OPERATION OF THE TOWN?

The proposed Charter intends to capture the fundamental form of Sandisfield's local government as it operates today. The Charter incorporates changes adopted recently by Town Meeting relating to the establishment of an appointed Town Manager position, the renaming of the Board of Selectmen as the Select Board, and will offer an alternative to the appointed Finance Committee.

When appropriate, the committee uses different language to clarify and enhance the intent of Town Meeting. The draft Charter also proposes the Town hold two scheduled Town Meetings a year in order to alleviate the length of the Annual Town Meeting and to take up unexpected business or complex bylaw proposals formally, rather than ad hoc.

Another area that the Committee chose to clarify relates to the appointment of town boards and committees. In order to enhance robust participation in town government, the Committee has proposed that the Charter allow each appointed committee to appoint up to one member who may be a part-time resident.

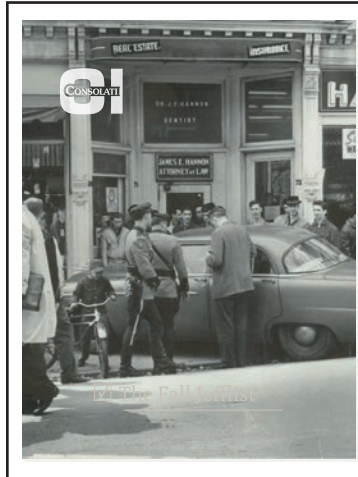
### HOW WILL THE CHARTER BE REVIEWED FOR LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS?

Town Counsel will review the proposed charter for compliance with all state laws. Furthermore, the proposed charter will be reviewed by municipal experts in legislative committees during the legislative approval process.

Additionally, through a state grant, the Town contracted with the Collins Center for Public Management, a division of UMass Boston, to provide technical expertise to the Committee, including sample language, research, and best practices from around the state. The Collins Center has extensive experience in drafting charters for many Massachusetts towns.

### WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The Town chose to enact a charter by Special Act of the state legislature and appointed a Town Charter Committee that has met in public session since March. After the public has weighed in and any



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necessary changes are made, the Committee will report on its draft charter to the Select Board.

The Select Board will then seek Town Meeting's authorization at a Special Town Meeting in November 2023 to submit the Charter to the State Legislature for approval. It is likely that the State Legislature will approve the Town's petition within six to nine months. The Legislature may require the Charter to be submitted to Sandisfield's voters for a final step in the approval process.

The members of the Town Charter Committee—Melissa Bye, Barbara Cormier, Douglas Miner, Joanne Olson, and Brigette Ruthman—strongly encourage residents to attend the Public Hearing on August 11, and to review the proposed Charter beforehand.

The Committee met on July 20 to make its final edits, and the draft Charter is available for download from the Town Charter Committee webpage of the town website. Hard copies can be requested at Town Hall.

Please join us Friday, August 11 at 6:00 p.m., at Old Town Hall, in person or remote (link will be listed on the Town Charter Committee webpage under Agendas), to participate in creating a Town Charter for the future of Sandisfield.

# Beside the Falling Stream, the Oak Stood Tall

Photo and caption by Bill Price

A mighty oak that shaded the stream that flows beside the Silverbrook Café has been cut down and politely stacked beside the ancient willow on the other side of Sandisfield Road. The stump, still in place beside the Silver Brook, is 4 feet 3 inches in girth.

The historic "witness" tree was recently cut down by Eversource, concerned that its limbs or even the entire tree could fall and interrupt Sandisfield electric services and create internet complaints from fiber-optic customers. In defense of the tree cutters, the stump revealed that the tree had hollowed out.

According to an impossibly rough count of its rings, the oak shaded the road and the stream for over 200 years, maybe 250. If so, its seed took root not long after Sandisfield became Sandisfield in 1762.



## NEW MARLBOROUGH MEETING HOUSE



Aug 12

**Karen Allen** The actor and director (*Raiders of the Lost Ark, Animal House, The Perfect Storm, Starman*) will be interviewed about her life and career.



Aug 26

**Alison Larkin** Hailed by *The New York Times* as 'hugely entertaining,' the internationally acclaimed writer/comedian/audiobook narrator will entertain us with excerpts from her new solo show, "Grief ... a Comedy."



Sept 2

**Simone Dinnerstein** The internationally renowned pianist returns by popular demand. This event is usually a sell-out performance. Buy tickets now!



Sept 9

**Melissa Clark and Madhur Jaffrey** "Tasting the World" *New York Times* cooking legend Melissa Clark, and cookbook author, writer, and actress Madhur Jaffrey share stories and recipes.

### UPCOMING:

**September 23: Trio Calore**

**October 7: Simon Winchester**

with Chandra Prasad, Francine Prose, and André Bernard

Tickets available Online!

[nmmeetinghouse.org](http://nmmeetinghouse.org) | 413.229.5045



# New Home for Our 18th Century Church Register

By Ron Bernard

While perusing through archives at the Sandisfield Historical Society recently, a researcher came upon a long-forgotten early parish register from the First Congregational Church at Sandisfield Center.

Labeled simply as "Book No. 2," the register includes a variety of hand-scribed information such as congregation membership, society officers, meeting notes and more from the period, July 1, 1797 to December 29, 1835, and vital statistics from 1850 to 1868 with some gaps.

Last month, Sandisfield Historical Society directors donated Book 2 to the Congregational Library in Boston. The Library was established in 1853 and maintains more than 225,000 historical items that document the history of the Congregational Church in America. The Library is open to the public for research and has climate-controlled, secure facilities, a strict user policy, and supervision by full-time archivists. Because the original book is in poor condition, it was decided that the best option to save it for posterity was at the Congregational Library.

Acknowledging the Society's gift, Kyle B. Roberts, Executive Director of the Congregational Library & Archives, said, "This volume is a wonderful example of an essential primary source which will be valuable for genealogical, community, religious, and historical research."

Although the book is priceless Sandisfield heritage, due to its poor condition it probably has little monetary value and would not be of interest to antiquarians. The whereabouts of the first register (1756-97) is unknown but there is a good chance that it is in an archive somewhere, at least that is the hope.



There is no known written account of what happened to a large amount of other original files, documents, and correspondence from the three successive church buildings at the Center. The assumption has been that these materials were lost in the terrible fire of May 1908, which destroyed the beautiful third church (1852) or in certain later house fires or due to other mishaps. Fortunately, at least the information in these two registers was transcribed for official use long ago.

It is not clear if or how Book 2 was saved from the fire or how it otherwise avoided oblivion, but somehow it found its way to the Society. The book was probably part of the contents of the South Sandisfield Congregational chapel which was built in 1909. The society assumed responsibility for the building and contents in 1979. Or, it may have been donated later by an anonymous previous caretaker. Correspondence relating to Book 2 has not (yet) been found. However, a number of years ago the Society or the donor had the pages professionally scanned and bound into a handsome volume.

The volume of scanned pages will be physically retained in the society's headquarters. The volume will also be posted on the websites of the Town and the Congregational Library.

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★ **UPCOMING EVENTS** ★

Aug 5th Brass Attack Band 8pm

Aug 11th Adelaide Punkin Trio 6pm

Aug 12th Dice Game Lobster Roll 2pm

Aug 6, 13, 27- Musical Bingo 2pm

★ **Aug 18th COMEDY NIGHT!** ★

Dinner Buffet & Show \$75pp

Tickets available @ Eventbrite.com

Aug 19th Hairballz Band 8pm

Aug 20th The Hilltown Blues Jam 2pm

Aug 25th Misty Blues Band 8pm

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# LET'S GO CAMPING

## LOCAL BROTHERS SEEK TO FILL A NEED

By Bill Price

Two brothers born in Sandisfield and now living in Winsted are planning to build an area for tent camping on the west side of the Farmington River to host Hanging Mountain climbers and Clam River hikers. Plus anyone else who would like to stop awhile in Town and camp out.

The Sandisfield property, owned by brothers Willard and Robert Platt, has been in their family since the 1940s. Located on the far side of the Clark Street Bridge off Roosterville Road, it is the former home of their father, Willard Platt II, and is the only house over there.


They have a good idea. Several Hanging Mountain climbers have told the brothers that they'd like a place to camp overnight when they visit Sandisfield. Many of the climbers cannot afford the New Boston Inn or an air bnb and most would prefer to camp out anyway. Hikers on the now completed Yanner Park/Clam River trail combinations may also enjoy access to overnight camping.

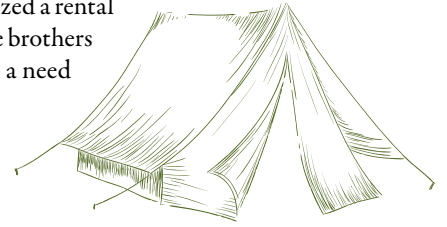
Remembering that their father had organized a rental camp site on the property in the 1970s, the brothers decided to follow in his footsteps and fill a need for today.

To help the Platt's accomplish their goal, the Planning Board, under the chairmanship of Barbara Cormier, held a Community Outreach Night on July 21, open to full-time residents and second-home owners alike.

The Board, concerned that a special permit issued to the Platt brothers could encourage a large professional camping business to assemble a few large properties and build a campground covering several acres with minimal supervision, felt obliged to draw up a bylaw in order to regulate public campsites.

About thirty people attended, along with the full Select and Planning Boards and representatives from the Conservation Committee. They discussed concerns that were outlined by the Board, including sanitation requirements, firepits, driveway configuration, parking, lighting and noise, record keeping, and enforcement, among others.

The Planning Board made extensive notes of residents' concerns and said they would schedule another hearing after reviewing them and also learning how neighboring towns handle tent-camping permits. They plan to present a bylaw draft at the Annual Town Meeting in May. 



## Nuisance Weeds

*What weeds are these creeping over Cold Spring Road?*

*They thrive on the gravel sides of sunny paved roads where, at least along Cold Spring Road, they are spreading like, well, weeds.*

*The Times needs help identifying them. The wall of weeds is up to six feet high and threatening to take over a lane of the road, maybe both lanes eventually. Next spring, they could be blooming and spreading along all our paved roads.*

*Photo: Bill Price*



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# Moreover...

## Take a Good Look at China

By Simon Winchester

When we started this newspaper fourteen years ago we pledged to keep it as much as possible Sandisfield only. There'd be precious little Lee, we'd be as minimally Monterey as possible, we'd likely run nothing at all from Lanesborough or Dalton.

There have been occasional lapses - a solid foray into our Ode to Winsted in 2019; some percolation of news from Otis, mostly about its school attended by many Sandisfield kids. Otherwise, we have been pretty good and 01255 has reigned supreme most of the time.

So why, you may ask, am I writing today about China?

And not just China as in that nice, friendly, democratic Taiwan. But about the People's Republic of China, no less. The supposedly evil Communist Empire of the East. The whole megillah, Xi to Mao to the tank man of Tiananmen Square and back again? A country and a people with whom, perhaps within the decade, we might find ourselves at war.

Why upend the tranquillity of the hitherto, by writing about something so alien to all our wants and hopes?

Well, first, and to state the obvious: our country's relationship with the world's next superpower is going to have a profound effect - along with climate change, naturally - on the way that all of us - in Sandisfield as everywhere else - live our lives in the years ahead.

And if we can agree on this, then the second reason follows: although even the most implacably knuckleheaded now accept that human-caused climate change is upon us and will gain in ferocity unless we do something about it, which we can - there seems to be no similar certainty about how we view and should view and so deal with China.

And that is because, I would argue, most of us view China through a lens that is being woefully and maybe wilfully distorted by politicians and by the press.

So it is in my view a sacred duty of those of who know a little of, and admire and like China, to speak the truth - even to so small and marginally significant a cohort as the readers of this newspaper. It is our duty to try to nudge the needle, to suggest something that you rarely hear these superheated days.

China is not our enemy. Nor is it a diabolical place populated by a people bent on wreaking damage and destruction to our way of life. It is instead a great and noble and ancient country, proud and protective of its legacy, true; and yet keenly wanting only understanding and friendship from the west. From us.

I first went to China in 1978, arriving in Peking, as we called it then, on a bleak winter's day grey with desert-dusted snow. It was memorably soundless: no wind, no cars, no music, no chatter among the thousands of men and women who, in identical blue serge suits, cycled in stoic masses along the wide boulevards around the Forbidden City.



*Why I was there: a book tour for the Chinese edition of **The Perfectionists**. For this event, I was told: "Sign these books. You have an hour."*

*Credit: Yiwen Zheng, Cheers Publishing, Beijing*

But just two decades later, during the years that I dipped in and out of China from my new home in Hong Kong, all was changing fast. There were cars, and bustle and a slightly forced sense of *joie de vivre*. There were privately-run shops, and I managed to use my Visa card in a restaurant - Maxim's of Paris, as it happened - in what was now Beijing.

And there were odd encounters. As I was settling my bill, I met Elizabeth Taylor, no less, who was loading up with *patisserie* from a glass cabinet. She noticed my puzzlement, gestured toward a weary-looking blond man back at her table: *to fortify my husband*, she explained with a cheery

wink, *for the long and arduous night ahead*. It was suddenly chic to go to China.

From then on there seemed no stopping the country.

Deng Xiaoping, after all, had famously cleared the way for capitalism to flourish (though he never actually uttered the phrase with which he is credited, *To Get Rich is Glorious*). During those years I travelled the length and breadth of his country - up to Mohe on the Russian frontier to the north, to Shandong, once German, in the east, to Hainan Island, once French, in the tropical south, across to far Kashgar, once a Himalayan outpost of British India, in the far west.

And therein lay part of an enduring problem: the indelible memory of foreign intrusions, of those imperial powers who had been gnawing away at China's very existence ever since the 1840s. To be sure, they were being cast off - British Hong Kong would cease to be in 1997, Portugal's hold on Macao lapsed two years later. But the sense of national humiliation remained, and the new Chinese were going to show off, proudly, that they were well and truly done with being dominated by anyone, ever again.

Last month having returned from three weeks in this brand-new China - and from my vantage point here on Silverbrook Road I have to say that I came home impressed beyond measure.

There are now 155 cities in the country with populations of more than a million, and last month I was in five of them: Shenzhen (which has thirteen million people: 20 years ago, when I last lived in Hong Kong it was a tiny village just over the border); Dongguan; Suzhou, the old silk-making capital; Shanghai; and Beijing. Each of these places was clean, safe, efficient, modern, prosperous, proud, happy.

And I do mean happy: the population, the ordinary people with whom I had contact, seemed quite as bent on the pursuit of happiness as Americans have long supposed themselves to be. Only - look at us: our lives nowadays, if we can tell the truth about ourselves, seem so crabbed by so much that is wrong - by inherent violence and political and social polarization, by poor health-care and indifferent transportation, by suspicion and fear . . .

I could go on, but will not, for this essay is not designed to condemn, but rather to try and persuade folks in this one village to look at China anew, with fresh eyes, and consider it as possibly a country with a standard of life to which we



– incredible as it may sound – might ourselves one day aspire.

My principal conclusion, after half a lifetime of connection with the East, is this: China is a country now to be copied, not condemned; it is a country enjoying on many levels a far greater degree of personal freedom than most of us here are led to believe; it is developing a system of governance that the world could well be persuaded to follow, to the general benefit of all.

Once, a long while ago, I noticed a huge signboard in far western China, outside a spaceport, proclaiming in English, as I would recall: *Without Haste, Without Fear, China Will Rule the World!*

I put this to people I met on my journey last month, and they chided me for remembering it improperly. What the slogan had said was *Without Haste. Without Fear. China Will Lead the World.* Not Rule. Lead.

“We have no wish to Rule anyone,” a Chinese friend said to me. “But Lead, yes. We have had thousands of years, thousands of years, to create a system that we believe is best for everyone. We would like people to understand that, to listen to us, to consider what we are saying, to look at what we are creating here. And maybe learn.”

*Winchester’s been drinking the Kool-Aid*, I can hear people saying. I’m ignoring the June 4th massacres; I’m forgetting the Uyghurs; I’m dismissing the very apparent ruination of Hong Kong. I’m turning a blind eye to China’s all-seeing surveillance systems, its censorship, its harsh suppression of dissent.

In response I would make a single point.

The event that led to the phrase “drinking the Kool-Aid” originated with a 1978 mass suicide in the jungles of northern Guyana, when more than 900 followers of a crazed American evangelist whom he had persuaded to swallow brimming glasses of cyanide-laced Flavor-Aid died horribly in a moment of mass insanity. As a reporter I covered that horrifying story, and to this day I bridle at the notion of ever following a mass movement, of any kind. Not then, not now.

I am only too well aware of all the evils of China, today and in the past. But they seem to me now to be eclipsed a new kind of thinking, a new kind of hope and new set of prospects for good.

Americans – here in this one village, and maybe far beyond – should perhaps take note, stop accepting as true so much that is on our screens and in the public prints and what is professed and promised in the candidates’ stump speeches, and consider instead whether we might, after all, learn something from the world’s most ancient civilization.

It is surely a more constructive course than to imagine ourselves picking once more a faraway enemy and, if we are not careful, going yet again to war with them. 🍷

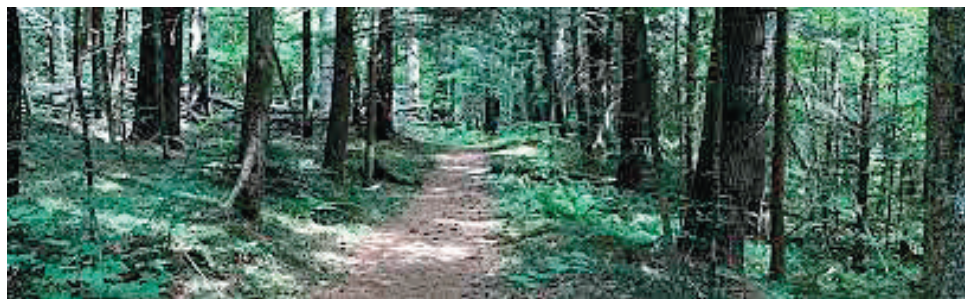
# We Have the Most Beautiful Trails in the Berkshires

## SO SAYS THE BNRC

By Bill Price

Three hiking trails in our own backyard are described in a Berkshire Natural Resources handout as “the most beautiful in the Berkshires.”

The brochure, titled “Go Wild!”, describes all 17 of the council’s trails throughout the Berkshires, including ridgeline walks, dramatic boulder fields, diverse forests and marshes. But our three trails through the Clam River Reserve are deemed the “most beautiful.” Very nice for Sandisfield.



Two loop trails, each about a mile and a half long at the southern and northern end of the reserve, are connected by the Clam River Trail, itself a little over a mile in length.

The Clam River Loop, on the southern end, starts next to Town Hall and heads into the woods and over a hill to the Clam River and around another hill and back along what might once have been the main thoroughfare through Sandisfield. The trail has gentle grades and easy walking.

The connecting trail to the Hammertown Loop extends north along the Clam River and includes a modestly steep climb before it reaches the Loop. This trail’s difficulty is rated “moderate (uneven footing, elevation changes).”

The northern Hammertown Loop, partially along Hammertown Road, follows steep embankments close to the river and wanders under a thick canopy of hemlocks.

A trail map, which can be found at kiosks at either end of the trail, describe hikers as “never far from the sound of running water.”

The trail map describes the three hikes:

“Hikers can explore 1.5 miles along this wild river and see evidence of a time when the stream

and its surrounding area were not so wild: traces of a dam, extensive stone walls, and an intact house foundation. The 550-acre property offers three connected trails of 4.3 miles with moderate change in elevation.”

For the natural history of the Clam River Reserve, the trail map explains:

“The diverse habitat along the river and away from its banks has supported a panoply of wild-life, from the Eastern Pearlshell mussels and brook trout of the river to moose, deer, and bear. The newly created young-forest area should bring even more species into the preserve, increasing its attraction to hunters. The mature forested areas include hemlocks, white pines, including a few of immense girth, and a wide range of hardwoods. Large grape vines have been found on the property.”

Folks who have hiked the trail describe it on the BNRC website:

- “A few tree blow downs, but easy to get around. Bridges all in excellent condition. Boardwalk on Clam River Loop ends in a big puddle, but easy to get around. Some water on the trail. Not a problem. Gorgeous day.”
- “Beautiful tranquil trail. No traffic. Make sure you do the Hammertown loop. Much of it goes right by the Clam River.”
- “Awesome. Walk along a road and river. Really cool trees and bridges.”
- “Trail was well maintained. River was relaxing. There were signs everywhere, impossible to get lost. I enjoyed every minute.
- “That may have been the best marked trail I have ever hiked in the woods. Perfect for the directionally challenged.”

And for winter enthusiasts: “Clam River is a beautiful hike. Trail was snowy but not deep. Some wet spots but doable. Hammertown Road was icy so bring your crampons. Enjoy.”

The trails begin either along Hammertown Road (an easily-seen kiosk is just downstream from the paved bridge over the Clam) or at the parking lot at the Sandisfield Town Hall on Rt. 57.

GPS: 42.1081.-73.1080 (four-season trailhead parking). 🍷



# The Sandisfield Arts Center

## August at the Arts Center Features “You”

by Hilde Weisert

Open Mic Night returns August 5. Bring your talent or your receptive ears for the talents of your neighbors. Past open mic nights have included storytelling, joke-telling, poetry, singing, banjo and uke playing, possibly a harmonica. We hope there'll be surprises this year. Arrive at 7:00 p.m. to sign up, or by 7:30 if you're just coming to see new stars being born. Light refreshments will be served.

The Daniel Manacher Prize for Young Artists had one winner this year, Falcon Laina. Falcon was born in Washington State in 2002. His family soon moved to Berkshire County where he was raised. After taking drawing and painting classes at BCC in high school and achieving local and national recognition for his work, Falcon enrolled in Bard College at Simon's Rock where he is currently a rising senior pursuing a Bachelors in Visual Studies. Falcon's work will be included in the fall show of regional artists with an opening reception on November 4 at 4:00 p.m. when he will receive his award.

Jaye Moscariello's show of terrific paintings, including Sandisfield scenes and people, has been extended until August 19 with a closing reception 4:00-6:00 p.m.

You'll see an interview with Josh Luxon-Robinson on page 9. Josh is the young pianist who performed half a dozen difficult piano classics to an enthralled crowd in July, ending with a heart-melting “The Man I Love” encore. Thanks to generous donors, we were able to present this recital free. The turnout proved there are many music lovers in our community. Please let us know (email [community@sandisfieldartscenter.org](mailto:community@sandisfieldartscenter.org)) if you'd like to see more musical events.

When you come to Open Mic Night or Jaye's show, take a few minutes to visit the memorial garden, where you can sit on one of the new benches and appreciate the flowers and other plantings installed by Sue Tarasuk of Snow Farm. We plan on an official opening of the memorial garden this fall in honor of Val Coleman. 🍷

## Fire Chief Morrison Reports EMT/FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING AND BYLAWS

By Bill Price

At the end of May, Fire Chief Ralph Morrison drove from his shop at A&M Auto to the Select Board meeting, as he often does. He was on the meeting's agenda to report about the EMS/Fire Department training and bylaws. Morrison has led the department for 42 years.

According to minutes for that May 30 meeting, posted July 12, Fire Chief Morrison reported that he “has a better first-responder roster than he has had in many years. There are currently seven first-responders who can respond during the day, all of whom regularly attend training programs.”

He explained that seven members of his department “have completed the MIIA training, which qualifies for their Risk/Rewards Program and that there would soon be a three-night vehicle-extrication training session where first-responders practice removing victims from vehicles using the jaws of life.”

A new training feature is titled Active-Shooter Hostile Environment Response (ASHER) which is to accommodate the new government request that firefighters/EMTs enter a site with the police in the event of an active shooter. Morrison said, “While entering an active-shooter situation as a firefighter/EMT is not mandatory, bullet-proof vests are recommended to be purchased for all firefighters/EMTs.”

Other training involved procedures that would be required in the event of breaks or leaks in the natural gas pipeline that traverses northern Sandisfield.

Morrison added that “EMTs must complete forty hours of training before the end of the year. They have already completed half of that.” The Fire Chief added that one of the main issues with scheduling training sessions is the lack available trainers.

He reported that as of the date of the meeting, May 30, there had been 143 EMT and Fire calls in Fiscal Year 2023, which began October 1, 2022. Eighty-six of the calls were to the Berkshire Rehab Nursing Home.

Regarding the bylaws that govern the fire district, the Chief said that the bylaws were in need of updating and that a time would be scheduled for the Fire Department's Corporation to review and update its bylaws. Select Board Chairman Steve Seddon requested a copy of the bylaws to better understand the relationship between the Town and the Fire Department. Fire Chief Morrison said he couldn't provide the bylaws in that way because once they are given to the Select Board they become public information, which the Corporation does not want. The Chief said that he would share them with the Select Board once they have been updated. 🍷

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# At the Beginning of a Career

## IT HELPS THAT MUSIC IS IN THE FAMILY

Report and photo by Bill Price

Josh Luxon-Robinson, a young pianist from Yorkshire, England, performed an afternoon piano recital at the Arts Center July 16 that included music by J.S. Bach, Chopin, Mozart, two pieces by Tchaikovsky, two by Rachmaninoff, and a ferocious, no-holds-barred sonata by Prokofiev described as “ridiculously technically difficult.”

Then, once he finished this list of heavy-hitter composers, the pianist lightened the atmosphere for his audience with an encore of George Gershwin’s “The Man I Love.”

He was rewarded with a standing ovation.

Josh, a youthful 20-year-old who is spending part of his summer in Sandisfield, only became serious about his music a few years ago. For a youngster to have progressed that fast to master the music he performed in July is remarkable.

He has a musical lineage. His grandfather, Sandisfield’s Ben Luxon, is a retired British baritone with a worldwide following whose career included a long association with the English National Opera. In fact, Josh said he thinks he has a bit of his grandfather’s “tunnel vision,” that when he starts something he pushes on until he’s accomplished the task.

Josh and his family are visiting for about three weeks at Ben Luxon and Susie Crofut’s home at the top of the hill in Sandisfield Center. He is accompanied by his mother and father, Rachel and Dean Luxon-Robinson, and his sister, Safia Luxon-Robinson.

When Josh was in Sandisfield a year ago, he and his grandfather performed Richard Strauss’ “Enoch Arden,” a melodrama based on an epic poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. “It was a fantastic and character-building experience learning the music and performing with my grandfather,” he said. “After two performances here in the States, we took the work to Wales to perform at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, a concert that sold out and was quite a success. I look forward to our next venture.”

Josh had taken lessons for several years during his childhood, with the usual foot-dragging of a kid being pushed to learn to play. But he did keep on until about four years ago when he was invited to perform at a local music festival. Entering many classes, he said he was surprised that he won in every category. This vastly increased his interest in music, realizing that he had talent and could take it further.

The interest was enhanced when he was chosen to represent the music festival in a regional championship. He said that he chose a “rather easy piece” and played it well enough but when he heard much more difficult pieces being played by others in the recital he thought, I want to do that. He decided to buckle down.

He has now completed his second year of a 4-year program at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama in Cardiff, which will lead to a Bachelors in Music – after which he may seek a Masters in Music. He credits his piano teacher, James Kirby, with his rapid progression.



“It’s all about the music and finding what you love,” he said.

The long spate of Berkshire rain and high humidity this summer caused concern that some parts of the Steinway S on which he would perform might have swollen and could have sounded flat or sustained longer than they should have. But with Josh at the keys, the 1930’s Steinway performed very well.

“It’s the work of the tuner, David Locke,” Josh said. “The piano was gifted to the Arts Center in 2018 and wasn’t really to a performance standard, apparently. David completely rebuilt the insides, replacing the strings and hammers. He mentioned that the only thing that hasn’t changed inside is the keys! It’s a great instrument and fits the hall very well.”



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# A Visitor from Yesterday

By Bill Price

A stranger passed through town in mid-July to drop off a book of his mother's poetry at the Library. Because his mother had written some of the poems in Sandisfield, he thought a copy of *Across the Divide* belonged here.

While at the Library, he fell into a conversation with a resident and, being a loquacious sort, soon revealed that as a child he had been a part-time resident of Sandisfield many years ago and did you know So-and-So and This Other Person?

An invitation to coffee at the house was offered and accepted.

The stranger was Nils Sundquist, now living in Poulsbo, on the Puget Sound in Washington State. He was on a sentimental journey to Sandisfield after attending a memorial service for his mother and father, Ralph and Bernita Sundquist, in Hartford.

Nils' father had served as pastor at United Presbyterian Church in Hartford and taught at Hartford Seminary. Bernita retired in 1985 as head of the English department at Ethel Walker School. They died within two years of each other, Bernita in 2020 at the age of 97 and Ralph in 2022 at 99.

In 1969, Ralph and Bernita bought a summer cottage in Sandisfield as a retreat in the woods.

A statement in their memorial service read: "A beloved cabin in the woods of Sandisfield, Massachusetts afforded them peace to consider and enliven their faith and values. There, Bernita read hundreds of books and pursued her love of poetry. Ralph completed his dissertation, and often did the New York Times crossword puzzle using a pen. They were married for 75 years. They are remembered for their love of learning, for their life journeys together to become the individuals they were, and for their kindness toward others, especially those who were out of favor, less fortunate, or both.

The cabin, on Elk Road just beyond Buster Hamilton's wood lot and mill, was on 32 acres, "more or less," Nils remembered. "Mostly less."

They owned the property until 2004. Nils remembers his summers here fishing for brook trout in the Clam River before the reservoirs were built, getting lost in the woods and finding his way home, swimming at the Deep Hole that existed then at the juncture of the Clam and the Silverbrook. He knew Billy Carr and Richie Hamilton.

He remembered all the animals that lived in the woods and rivers. "The otters mostly disappeared after the reservoirs were built," he said.

"My father saw a cougar. He said it was a big yellow cat that leaped and had a long tail. Sounds like a cougar."

He remembered Gene Kearns who owned the house at the top of Elk Road. "He was a Vietnam vet, kept all sorts of things, kind of a recluse. When his house burned down, Gene rebuilt it in stone."

After coffee and conversation, Nils got back into his rental car. "I'd like to come back east," he said, "but our family is now mostly all in the Northwest, and I think we're there for the duration." He drove toward Hartford and his family and a return to Poulsbo.

Nils had pointed out one of his mother's poems in the book that he left at the Library. "It was written in the yard at the cabin on Elk Road," he said. 🐾



Bernita Woodruff  
Sundquist

Photo: Ralph Sundquist



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## SEEING SLANT IN AUGUST

By Bernita Woodruff Sundquist

Nullas boras nisi aureas  
To catch the light as it comes and goes  
In the deep V of the forest clearing  
First we sit in the middle of the contained yard  
Then we keep pushing our chairs east  
To hold the fleeing warmth.  
Finally we're up against the base of the house  
Flicking the occasional dragonfly or yellow jacket.  
Through the long summer  
I have not thought to grasp at plenitude  
And here in this retreat of light  
I lift my open hand  
Into these hours late and golden  
Past and promised.



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# Hike the Yanner Park Trail

By Adam Brown, Chairman, Yanner Park Committee

Construction of the trail system at Yanner Park resumed in July and is expected to be completed August 10.

Greenagers Inc. – a local non-profit youth environmental organization – continued their work on the trails by building the connection down to Hammertown Road from the access trail and the vista loop they completed in 2022. The access trail and vista loop trail are 1.5 miles in length and are open for hiking/biking.

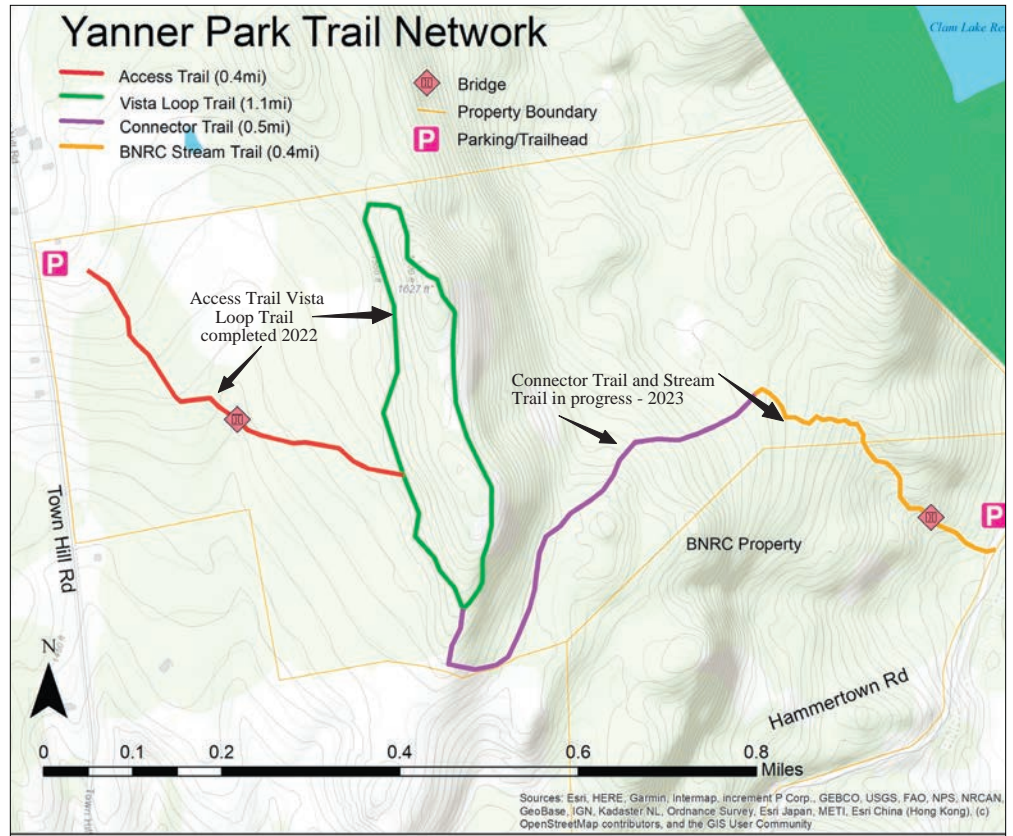


Greenagers Trail Crew  
Courtesy greenagers.org

A portion of the section of trail being built this summer will leave Yanner Park property, crossing land owned by the Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC) for their Clam River Reserve property, before coming to an end at Hammertown Road just uphill from the existing BNRC parking area/trailhead.

This new section of trail will be nearly a mile in length, for a total trail system length of 2.4 miles. This will allow visitors to walk from Town Hill Road to the Town Hall via the Yanner Park and Clam River Trails.

If you encounter the Greenagers crew while they are working, please give them your thanks for helping to make the trail system a reality. The entire cost of the project, \$50,000, has been funded through the Massachusetts DCR's Recreational Trails Grant Program.



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By Terry Spohnholz

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Check out our Gently Used Books!!! Curl up this sultry summer with some old favorites or discover a new author. \$1 a book (hard cover) or six for \$5. Fiction, non-fiction and biography.

**Notary Services** available when the library is open or by appointment. Please call 907-244-6466 for an appointment.

**Sandisfield Woman's Book Club** meets every **4th Thursday of the month** at the Library. The time is 6:30 p.m.. The club reads a variety of books suggested by members and is always looking for new members to join. Selections for the next few months are:

- August – *Rattlesnake Hill* by Leslie Wheeler (Local Author)
- September – *The Little French Bridal Shop* by Jennifer Dupree
- October – *The Elephant Whisperer* by Lawrence Anthony

### PINOCHLE ANYONE?

The Library will host our first Pinochle social on August 9 at 6:30 p.m. If you are an expert or beginner makes no difference. This is all about enjoying and having a bit of fun. If interested please contact the library by email, phone, or in person.

### NEW BOOK ARRIVALS

#### ADULT FICTION AND NON FICTION

- *Out of Nowhere* by Sandra Brown
- *The Librarianist* by Patrick Dewitt
- *After Death* by Dean Koontz
- *The Only One Left* by Riley Sager
- *Flags on the Bajou* by James Lee Burke
- *Kairos* by Jenny Erpenbeck
- *Secrets in the Dark* by Heather Graham
- *The Wager* by David Grann
- *See the Ghost* by David LaRochelle
- *Must Love Flowers* by Debbie Macomber

- *Obsessed* by James Patterson
- *Circle of Death* by James Patterson
- *Hidden Pictures* by Jason Rekulak
- *Somebody's Fool* by Richard Russo
- *The Collector* by Daniel Silva
- *The Puzzle Master* by Danielle Trussoni
- *The Book of Charlie* by David Von Drehle
- *Crook Manifesto* by Colin Whitehead

#### NEW TO THE OLDER CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULT SECTION

- *The Stolen Heir* by Holly Black

#### NEW BOOKS IN THE CHILDREN'S SECTION

- *Why Did the Monster Cross the Road?* by R.L. Stine
- *Woo Hoo! You're Doing Great!* by Sandra Boynton
- *How to Catch a Mermaid* by Adam Wallace
- *How to Catch a Daddysaurus* by Alice Walstead

#### SUMMER EVENTS AT THE LIBRARY TO AUGUST 31

- Bingo Summer Reading Blitz
  - Prizes for all
  - Special prizes for Bingo Blackouts
  - New cards for each month – August now available
  - Super special prize for blacking out all 3 months
- Read to me, early reader, 3rd to 6th grade and young adult reading cards.
- Story Time in the Gazebo
  - Every Wednesday in August at noon and treats too!
- Arts and Crafts
  - August 8 and 22 is crafting time from 10 until noon.

The Children's section is replete with books, games, toys, Brio trains, and lots of arts and crafts supplies. We also offer notary service, public computer and printer availability, free wifi and access to e-books from the 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.



## Our August Poem

HOW OFTEN, IF ONLY . . .

By Abimbola T. Alabi

If only  
We'd have helping hands that lead,  
Open arms accepting those in need,  
Not fingers pointing out misdeeds.

If only  
We'd have tender lips full of smiles,  
Gently speaking the truth instead of lies,  
Not a caustic tongue that beguiles.

If only  
We'd have eyes keen for good results,  
And not leering eyes that insult,  
Or ones always searching for faults.

If only  
We'd have a gentle soul willing to forgive,  
A tender heart that offers reprieve,  
Not one that is flinty and stiff.

How often  
We'd have goodwill with our fellow being,  
Get by with even those who seem mean,  
And enjoy peace without and within.

If only . . .



## A Matter of Balance

AFRAID OF FALLING?  
HERE'S HELP.

Contacts: Beth Hoffman, Kay Purcell, Linda Riiska

Are you held back by fear of falling or unsure of your balance?

The Matter of Balance program may be the solution.

The Councils on Aging of Sandisfield and Monterey will bring the Matter of Balance program to both towns – Sandisfield this summer and Monterey in the fall.

There is no charge for the series.

#### Sandisfield Schedule for August

**Town Hall, 66 Sandisfield Road, basement,  
9:30-11:30 a.m.**

- Tuesday, August 1
- Thursday, August 3
- Tuesday, August 8
- Thursday, August 10

To register, call 413-528-1443 x 112





# Comings and Goings



## THREE CALVES AT JOSHUA'S FARM



All three were born between July 15 and the 25th.

From left, Rosalind, whose mother is Rosemary. A New Zealand Jersey milker.

Middle, Vivienne, whose mother is Genevieve. The Guernsey heifer that owner Brigitte Ruthman has wanted for years.

Right, Unnamed Bull Calf whose mother is Pippa.

All were fathered by bull semen injected by master breeder John Perrotti of Winsted.

The milkers will give creamy milk rich with the flavors of a New England pasture.



**TIM DEMING**  
**Field and Brush**  
**Mowing**



**413.537.6681**  
**1403 New Boston Rd.**  
**Tolland, MA**

**tdeming1@hotmail.com**



## Letters to the Editor

### THANKS, GUYS!

Recently I had to call 911 to take me to Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington. I'd fallen, and it was not getting any better. (I'm okay now, but this isn't about me.)

This is a love letter of appreciation to our wonderful town EMS staff, three of whom went above and beyond with their kindness, professionalism, and dedication.

My 911 call was answered by a man named Shane, who asked me questions about my condition and told me the EMS would be there as soon as they could.

Within a few minutes, Seamus was first on the scene. He gently examined my ankle and knee

and assured me the ambulance would here in a few minutes.

Rico and Alec came into the house. They ensured that I was all right, gave me options for care, and just generally helped me every second, including making sure I had my jacket, putting my dirty bowl in the dishwasher, turning on some lights at my house so I wouldn't come home to total darkness, and assuring that I was comfortable the entire route.

Did you know they have a special chair just for stairs? Did you know that nail polish can interfere with blood pressure and oxygen readings, so they will take it in the old-fashioned way, with fingers and a second hand on a watch? Did you know that one of the reasons they keep you engaged in conversation is to assure your awareness and health?

I feel so lucky to be here in a town that makes sure my life is secure.

*Maxene Kupperman-Guinals  
Town Hill Road*



## A Lot of Rain Must Fall

*The heavy rain on July 10 caused a mud slide and small flood across Rt. 8 near the border with Connecticut. Sandisfield's Public Safety Officer Mary Bredenfoerder and Officer Alec Morrison were on hand to ensure drivers slowed down and took it easy.*

*Photo: Bill Price*

**RALPH E. MORRISON**

**413-258-3381**



## A & M AUTO SERVICE

COMPLETE AUTO & TRUCK CARE  
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SANDISFIELD, MA 413-258-3381

# STEAK ROAST

To Benefit the  
**Sandisfield Fire/EMT Dept.**  
**SAT., AUGUST 12**  
5:00-7:00 p.m. Music to 9:00 pm


RAFFLE

MUSIC

FIREHOUSE #2  
Sandisfield Road, Rt. 57.

Steak and baked potato,  
corn, salad, dessert.

\$30/pp. Purchase from any Fire or EMS  
volunteer or call A&M Auto, 258-3381.  
*Tickets must be purchased ahead so  
we know how many steaks to order.*



## Shire Forestry

Adam Brown  
Consulting Forester  
MA License # 461

P.O. Box 171  
Sandisfield, MA 01255

[shireforestry@gmail.com](mailto:shireforestry@gmail.com)  
 Cell: 413.854.7525

- Forest Management/Stewardship Plans
- Chapter 61/A/B Program
- Timber Sales
- Boundary Marking
- GIS Mapping
- Foresters for the Birds
- Wildlife Habitat Improvement
- Recreational Trail Layout



# NOW HEAR THIS!

*Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.*

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

## AUGUST EVENTS

**Sandisfield Select Board Meetings** are currently through Zoom and in-person at 6:30 p.m. on Mondays unless otherwise posted. 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. No pre-registration is necessary. Led by Nina Carr. This fun program includes free play, crafts, stories, and songs! A great time to meet up with friends and meet new friends! For confirmation, please call Nina Carr (258-3314). Free!

**Coffee Hour** on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. at the Council on Aging, Town Hall Annex. Snacks and conversation! For more information, contact Nina Carr (258-3314). Free.

**Story Time in the Gazebo** every Wednesday at 12:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Public Library. Ice cream, too. Free.

**Chair Yoga with Wendy Larsen** 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.

**Farmer's Market** on Fridays from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Farmington River General Store on Route 8.

**New Boston Church Service** on select Sundays at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church, Route 57. All are welcome.

**Blueberries in Season** at Riiska Brook Orchards at 101 New Hartford Road. 650 bushes. Pick your own until mid-August. Open Saturdays and Sundays, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. and by appointment during the week (413-707-3927).

**Open Mic Night** on Saturday, August 5, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road. Bring your talent or your receptive ears for the talents of your neighbors! Free.

**Matter of Balance** on Tuesday, August 1, Thursday, August 3, Tuesday, August 8, and Thursday, August 10 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Town Hall on 66 Sandisfield Road. Are you held back by a fear of falling or unsure of your balance? The Matter of Balance program may be the solution. To register, please call 413-258-1443, ext. 112.

**Charter Committee Public Hearing** on Friday, August 11, at 6:00 p.m. at Old Town Hall, 3

Silverbrook Road, to discuss proposed Town Charter that would replace current Town governance system.

**Steak Roast to benefit the Sandisfield Fire/EMT Department** on Saturday, August 12 from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Firehouse #2 on Sandisfield Road (Route 57). Steak and baked potato, corn, salad, and dessert. Music and raffles, too. \$30 per person. Take out or eat-in. Buy tickets from any Fire or EMS volunteer or call A&M Auto (258-3381). Tickets must be pre-purchased.

**Monthly Wellness, Blood Pressure Clinic, and Coffee Hour** on Wednesday, August 16 from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the Council on Aging, Town Hall Annex. Snacks and conversation, too! For more information, contact Nina Carr (258-3314). Free.

**Second Annual Sample Sandisfield** on Saturday, August 19 (raindate August 26). Visit local farms, farmstands, artists, and studios. Buy fresh produce, eggs, maple syrup, fruits, crafts, arts and more. Contact 413-269-7357 or sandisfieldevents@recreationcommittee.info to be included on the Map.

**Town-Wide Tag Sale** sponsored by the Sandisfield Historical Society on Saturday, August 19 (raindate August 26) from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Registration is \$25 and includes the butterfly site marker, publicity, and inclusion on the map of the town. To register your home, contact Maxene (413-258-4030) or Joanne (917-686-1985).

**Antique Appraisal with appraiser Charlie Flint** on Saturday, August 19 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Historical Society Meeting House on Route 183. Hosted by the Sandisfield Historical Society.

**Sandisfield Woman's Book Club** on Thursday, August 24 at 6:30 p.m. at the Sandisfield Public Library. The book selection is *Rattlesnake Hill* by Leslie Wheeler, a local author.

### SAVE THE DATE

**Pig Roast** on Sunday, September 10 at 5:00 p.m., at the American Legion Pavilion. Free to Sandisfield taxpayers and employees. Proof required. All others, \$10.

### ONLINE EVENTS

**A Farm and Garden Show** with Sandisfield Residents Bill Taylor and Jaye Alison Moscarriello streamed every Monday, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at berkshireradio.org.

### EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

**Playgroup** on Thursdays from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the Monterey Library, sponsored by South Berkshire Kids. No pre-registration necessary. Meet for stories and songs followed by creative

crafts. For information, please call Nina Carr (258-3314). Free!

**Transformational Breathwork** with Sandisfield residents Antonia and Roger Vanoro on the last Friday of every month from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. at the Monterey Community Center. A combination of deep rhythmic breathing, vocalization, self-massage, and energetic movement. Suggested fee is \$30. For more information, visit ccomonterey.org.

**Sheffield Farmers Market** on Fridays from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. in downtown Sheffield at the First Congregational Church parking lot on 125 Main Street. Local farmers, food producers, artists, and educators to promote local business, healthy eating, and social gathering.

**Great Barrington Farmers Market** on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on 18 Church Street in Great Barrington. Featuring locally grown and produced foods, including fruits and vegetables, cheese, meats, breads, and more.

**Bird Puppet-Making** on Friday, August 11 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Mason Library in Great Barrington, sponsored by the Berkshires Natural Resources Council. A fun workshop to make puppets of urban birds found in western Massachusetts. For more information, visit bnrc.org.

**Kids Fishing Derby** on Saturday, August 12 from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m., sponsored by the Friends of the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery, at the National Fish Hatchery in Monterey. Children will learn how to fish while competing for prizes. No child leaves empty-handed!

Actor/director **Karen Allen in a film and live interview on Saturday**, August 12, 4:30 p.m., at the New Marlborough Meeting Hall in an interview Barry R. Shapiro. A short film will start the program and the interview will be followed by a question-and-answer period with opportunity after the interview to meet Ms. Allen. Tickets are available through at [www.nmmeetinghouse.org](http://www.nmmeetinghouse.org) or by calling 413-229-5045.

**Community Day at Jacobs Pillow** on Friday, August 18, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. in Becket. This free event is family-friendly and includes performances and dance-based activities for all ages.

**Artist Reception** on Saturday, August 26 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Becket Art Center on 7 Brooker Hill Road. Gail Gelburd, an artist from Otis, will be featured in an upcoming exhibition "IMPRESS" from August 24 through September 11. Most of the works feature waterfalls and rivers in the Berkshires. The two-dimensional works are photo collages with encaustic paint fabric molded into humanoid forms. Free and open to the public.

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

P.O. Box 584  
Sandisfield, MA 01255



**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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The Times is distributed free of charge to all Sandisfield postal address and boxes. Free copies are available at the following town locations: The transfer station (Wed/Sat/Sun), the Library, When Pigs Fly Farm, and in New Boston at A&M Auto, the Farmington

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The Times can be mailed to your home (non-Sandisfield addresses only) by paid subscription (see form at left) or you can read it (free) online as a PDF document at [www.sandisfieldtimes.org](http://www.sandisfieldtimes.org). Classified ads, 30 words or less, are free.

We welcome submissions, comments and suggestions, including letters to the editor by the 15th of the month prior. Maximum 300 words. We may edit for space, style or clarity. We will try to publish Public Service Announcements when we have room, with priority given to Sandisfield organizations. No portion of the The Sandisfield Times may be reproduced without permission.

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