

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

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Volume XV, Number 2

May 2024

Town Manager Resigns Abruptly

AFTER SERVING OVER TWO YEARS

By Bill Price

Despite expectations of fireworks from the floor, order and decorum prevailed at the Select Board’s final meeting in April, on the 29th.

At least two dozen residents attended in person with another seventeen joining on Zoom. One Town resident said, “I’ve never seen so many people at a Select Board meeting.”

The audience was drawn by a potential Select Board conflict, precipitated by the sudden resignation of Town Manager Jon Sylbert on Friday, April 19.

Despite expectations of divisiveness, the three board members addressed the situation in a cooperative manner, averting more heated debate. In doing so, they perhaps set a tone for the Annual Town Meeting which will take place on May 18.

The Town Manager resigned in an abrupt two-sentence note at the end of an email exchange with Board Chairman Steve Seddon regarding the Town’s budget for Fiscal Year 2025. He wrote, “Steve, I’ve had enough from you. I am resigning as Town Manager effective Monday at noon. Jon.” The email also went to the other Board members.

Seddon accepted the resignation and began a search for a new Town Manager.

At a work session the following Monday, the meeting turned acrimonious when Selectman John Field sought to initiate negotiations with the former Town Manager and perhaps invite him to return to his office. Chairman Seddon pointed out that negotiations were moot because Sylbert, having resigned, was no longer a town employee. The board eventually moved to other agenda items before amicably adjourning.

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April 2024 sunrise, Peter Baiamonte's backyard in Sandisfield Center.

Photo: Peter Baiamonte



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Sandisfield Memorial Day Parade and BBQ
Sunday, May 26th

Sponsored by the Sandisfield Fire & Police Departments and the Recreation Committee

- 9AM Bike Decorating* at Old Town Hall
- 10AM *Sharp* Parade begins at Old Town Hall, Parade participants must arrive at 9AM
- 10:15AM Honor Guard & Service at New Boston Cemetery

The parade will make a stop at Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center and end at the American Legion with the wreath ceremony. BBQ to follow.

If you would like to decorate a float, drive in the parade, or volunteer to assist with the BBQ, please email us at sandisfieldevents@recreationcommittee.info

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SLOW! Moose Crossing!

Sally Davis spotted this tall four-legged on Rt. 57 and posted her photo of him on Facebook's ConnectSandisfield. Local farmer Brigitte Ruthman of Joshua's Farm, who knows her woodland animals, contributed, "Young bull. Does not need his mama. Searching for territory/his place in the world. Drive carefully. I believe we need a 'SLOW! Moose Crossing' sign, even temporarily."

In a note to *The Times*, Sally described how she spotted the moose, Thursday evening, April 25, around 7:30-8:00 p.m.

"My husband, Jeff, and I had gone into town earlier and were on our way to our home on Sandisfield Road (Rt. 57). We'd been talking about the moose and wondered whether or not we'd see him.

"Within moments after we crossed the bridge over the Clam River in West New Boston, Jeff spotted him standing on the

right side of the road. We turned around at Carr Field to go back and get a better look.

"He was still standing by the road and just stared at us. We tried to coax him to cross the road and head into the woods adjacent to the cemetery; however, aside from clopping down the road a bit, he was mostly unreactive to our efforts. He seemed bewildered about where he was and where he was supposed to go, but didn't seem distressed at all.

"We were initially concerned for his safety, but are relieved that he has apparently found his way back into the woods.

"I named him 'Buddy Bullwinkle' because in less than 24 hours he went from being a random 'moose on the loose in Sandisfield' to an endeared furry friend that captured the hearts of those who had the privilege of meeting him. He needed a name."

Town Manager Resigns Abruptly

Cont'd from p.1

During the ensuing week, it was as if barricades had suddenly been thrown up between Sandisfield residents, some hoping for Sylbert's return and others opposed. Both camps began lobbying the three selectmen – and each other.

The matter threatened to come to a head at the regular Select Board meeting on April 29 where it was possible that a dramatic change of the board leadership, i.e., a new chairman, would be proposed.

At the April 29 meeting itself, however, order prevailed. In the end, the crisis was averted.

John Field said, "What happened was that a divide happened and a wedge began. We've had several hard things thrown at us. We're just three guys trying to do a job." Later in the meeting he apologized for his stridency at the previous meeting.

The Board agreed that it would reorganize itself at the first meeting following the May 21 election, when it normally makes changes in the chairman's position. For now, they would stay the course.

The Board went on to approve the formation of a 3-7 person search committee for a new Town Manager. Seddon said that State Representative Smitty Pignatelli had reached out to let him know his office would provide support if necessary.

Next the Board discussed the need for an Interim Town Manager. The selectmen invited Administrative Assistant Janey Beardsley to join the leadership team as Acting Interim Town Manager.

It was noted that Beardsley, in her role as assistant to the Town Manager and the Town Clerk, was familiar with the job. Her current duties include one day a week working with the Town Treasurer. Chairman Seddon pointed out if the Treasurer could forgo that support, Janey would gain time to serve in her new duties. She was offered a slight increase in salary for the duration of the interim appointment.

Janey, who watched the proceedings over Zoom, agreed to the offer.


The Selectmen divided the Town Manager's oversight responsibilities among themselves:

John Field, who owns a tree service company, will supervise the Department of Public Works; Bob Fedell, a licensed EMT, will oversee Public Safety; and Steve Seddon will work with Town Hall and boards and committees.

Reached by phone, Jon Sylbert said he preferred not to speak to the press at this time. A resident of Monterey, Sylbert was hired in March 2022 as Sandisfield's Interim Town Manager, and later was given the title of Town Manager. He was featured in The Times' last issue regarding his additional role as interim director of the Department of Public Works (DPW), but he gave notice at the April 15 Select Board meeting that he would no longer serve in that capacity. He was also serving on a committee that is drafting changes to an agreement with the Farmington River Regional School District. He was also an advisor to the Planning Board and was overseeing at least two road grants which may be handed over to a hired grant writer.

The Board moved on to other items on the meeting agenda, including the search for a new DPW superintendent.


At the end, the Board agreed to finalize the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting at their May 6 meeting. The Town budget for FY2025 as initially proposed included a more than 7 percent increase in Town expenses. The Board has been trying to whittle that down, and to aid that effort the three agreed to forgo their Select Board salaries for the year.

The Town moves on. 



The Annual Town Meeting

COMING UP, MAY 18, SATURDAY

The Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting will be finalized at a Select Board meeting May 6, too late for our print deadline for May. At the ATM, residents will be asked to vote on the FY25 budget and new town bylaws for Commercial Tent Camping. The proposal for the Town to move to a Charter-type government will be postponed until a Special Town Meeting can be called this summer. The opportunity to view the Town Meeting on Zoom will not be offered this year. Check town website for details. 




Pilbin Property Dispute Resolved

Judge Jeffrey M. Winick of Western Housing Court in Pittsfield issued an injunction to Jennifer Pilbin that she is no longer allowed to use her property at 12 West Hubbard Road in any capacity. The sanitary situation is such that she has to vacate the property.

Sandisfield Sanitarians and DPW crew assisted in securing the property, removing generators, extension cords, gas cans, and other items.


Described as 76 acres, the property was listed for sale in March for \$385,000. At the same time, Pilbin made a bankruptcy filing which stops some of the proceedings but not all.

Select Board Chairman Steve Seddon thanked Jayne Smith, the Town's health agent, for her dedication to the case. The Town has decided not to attempt to recoup its legal expenses nor pursue the collection of accumulated fines. 

Nominees for Town Offices

At the Town Caucus, the following residents were nominated as candidates for election to town offices. So far, only one of the offices is contested. Other nominees may be added as write-ins. The election will be held May 21, the Tuesday following the Annual Town Meeting, May 18

OFFICE (TERM)	CANDIDATE
Moderator	Dominic Konstam (incumbent)
(1 year)	Janey Beardsley
Board of Assessors	Steven Kopiec (incumbent)
(3 years)	
Board of Assessors	Jeff Bye (incumbent)
(1 year)	
Select Board	Robert Fedell (incumbent)
(3 years)	
Board of Health (3 years)	Keith Larson (incumbent)
(3 years)	
School Committee (3 years)	Carl Nett (incumbent)
(3 years)	
Planning Board.	Dominic Konstam, 44 Sears Rd.
(5 years)	(write-in)

(For write-in candidates, must provide address.) 

Select Board, Three Years

Bob Fedell

To help introduce Bob Fedell, who is running unopposed, we are reprinting our Candidate Statement from last season, edited.

Bob is running for a three-year seat on the Select Board, following his one-year term that he won last year in order to fill the seat opened when Selectman Alex Bowman resigned with one year to complete his term.

Bob said last year, "I thought I could get my feet wet with a one-year term. Then run for three years, if I thought I could contribute more."

Bob won last year with no opposing votes, and he is expected to win again with, once again, no opposing candidate.

Bob grew up in New Marlborough, moved to Sandisfield's Town Hill Road about twenty years ago where he and his wife Tess built a home together. They have three daughters, Emelia, 20, Honora, 18, and Siobhan, 16.

Bob is a long-tenured EMT volunteer in New Marlborough, where he is still a member of the EMS department. He was president and is still a member of the New Marlborough First Responders and formerly owned Hill Town Recycling in Sandisfield.

Bob's employment as a crane operator with Radius Crane and Ribbing of New Marlborough briefly created a conflict-of-interest question because Radius Crane is owned by John Field, another Sandisfield selectman. Select Board Chairman Steve Seddon said he was unconcerned about the potential for a conflict of interest. Steve said last year, "Bob has filled out his disclosure form for the appearance of conflict of interest and submitted it to the authorities for consideration. In the meantime, John Field is a very respected member of the community with a solid moral compass. I would make the same statement for Bob Fedell."



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★ UPCOMING EVENTS ★

- May 4th Full Burn Band 8pm
- May 5th Small Business Fiesta Fair 1pm
- May 10th Brett Potter 6:30pm
- May 11th Mr. Doubtfire Band 8pm
- May 12th
Happy Mother's Day!
Join us for Brunch.
- May 18th Chalk Dust Band 8pm
- May 19th Hilltown Blues Jam 2pm
- * Memorial Day Weekend *
- May 24th Evan Lanoue 6:30pm
- May 25th ROCK 201 Band 8pm
- May 31st Jon Berman 6:30pm



Letters to the Editor

WRITE-IN CANDIDATE FOR PLANNING BOARD

“Dominic Konstam, 44 Sears Rd.”

After many years as a conscientious member and one-time chair of our town's Planning Board, Paul Gaudette has decided not to run for re-election. Fortunately, Dominic Konstam has agreed to run for Paul's seat on the Planning Board.

Those who have been attending our town meetings for the past few years have observed Dominic professionally, calmly, and competently moderate those meetings. Recently, during the critical budget season and learning our town's Finance Committee needed another member just so that they could make a quorum, Dominic stepped up and filled that position which helped enable the town to complete its budget in a timely manner.

Once again, Dominic is offering to volunteer his time, energy, and ideas by running for this now-open seat on the Planning Board.

I urge all registered voters to write in "Dominic Konstam, 44 Sears Rd." this election for Planning Board. Dominic will be an excellent addition to this important board that is responsible for determining how land is used in Sandisfield.

*Melissa Bye
New Hartford Road*

YOGA RETURNS to SANDISFIELD



Erica Fay will be offering yoga classes in Sandisfield beginning May 22, 2024. Yoga increases physical confidence and awareness and adds flexibility in a safe manner. Growing strength, balance, and coordination allow a greater appreciation of your body's individual characteristics and abilities.

Presented in 6-week sessions, classes will be held on Wednesdays beginning May 22nd from 10:30 - 11:30. This initial session is excellent for beginners or anyone returning after an absence. With enough interest, a class for experienced yoginis will be added.

Students must bring their own mats. Two yoga blocks, a strap and a prop such as a firm cushion or folded towel, are helpful tools. A blanket is optional for padding on the floor and the cool down period at the end. If you need advice on obtaining these items, please let Erica know.

Erica lived in Sandisfield in the 1990's and helped to create and lead the non-profit group that restored the Arts Center building. She began her yoga practice after decades in ballet that left her with injuries. She has been a certified Kripalu teacher for 15 years.

Classes begin Wednesday May 22, 2024. Session ends June 25th. Sandisfield Arts Center 10:30 - 11:30 am

Please email ericafayyoga@gmail.com with your interest and questions.



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Town of Sandisfield Planning Board

PROPOSED COMMERCIAL TENT CAMPING BYLAW

1. PURPOSE

Sandisfield is fortunate to have abundant open space and natural beauty which attracts outdoor enthusiasts from all over. This bylaw will provide important regulations and guidelines for landowners who wish to develop portions of their property and allow access to the public while preserving the character of our town that our residents value.

2. DEFINITIONS

A. Tent - A collapsible structure which has a soft, readily foldable fabric (such as nylon or canvas) or fabric-like material as its basic component stretched and sustained by poles, and is designed to be used as a temporary outdoor dwelling by persons travelling from place to place while on vacation or while on a recreational outing.

B. Tent Camping - A form of outdoor recreation or outdoor education involving overnight stays with a tent serving as a temporary shelter.

C. Glamping - A more luxurious form of traditional tent camping involving camp site accommodations and amenities provided by the property owner (e.g. platform, tents, sleeping bags, mattresses, blankets, and other camping supplies). Recreational vehicles, yurts, cabins and similar structures are excluded.

3. TENT CAMPING REQUIREMENTS

A. Total camping area: The maximum size of a designated area for tent camping on a property shall not exceed TBD (requires input from the community).

B. Camping site size: Each individual camp site shall be a minimum of 1400 square feet, including parking.

C. Site Setbacks: Camp sites shall be setback thirty (30) feet from all property lines.

4. SANITATION

A. Property owner shall provide proper toilet facilities for all camp sites per Massachusetts sanitary code

B. Non-potable water must be available to all camp sites for cleaning purposes.

C. Property owner shall provide bear proof food storage containers and adequate trash disposal at all times.



5. FIRE PITS

A. Fire pits are optional and shall be restricted to certain areas designated by the Sandisfield Fire Chief.

B. Property owner shall provide a means, approved by the Sandisfield Fire Chief, to extinguish fires at the fire pit areas at all times.

C. Fire danger postings shall be provided by the property owner and updated daily. No fires shall be allowed outside of fire pit areas at any time.

6. DRIVEWAYS

A. Driveways to gain access to camp sites on a property shall comply with Section 8 (Driveway Bylaw) of the Sandisfield Zoning Bylaws.

B. Property Owner shall provide adequate parking on the property for all camp sites. No roadside parking is permitted at any time.



7. SAFETY

A. A lighting plan shall be approved by special permit.

B. First aid shall be made available by the property owner.

C. Quiet hours for the tent camping area are to be observed between 10 PM & 7 AM.

8. RENTAL PERIOD

Camp site rental period shall not exceed two (2) weeks per party.

9. PROCESS REQUIREMENTS

Property owner shall apply for and be granted a Special Permit for tent camping on a property in compliance with Section 10 of the Sandisfield Zoning Bylaws.

Special Permits for tent camping on a property require approval from the Sandisfield Board of Health, the Sandisfield Conservation Committee, and the Sandisfield Fire Department.

10. CONTACT INFORMATION

A. Property owners shall provide their contact information, as well as contact information for emergency services, to all campers on a property in the event of an emergency.


B. The property owner shall ensure that adequate staffing is present on the property at all times. Contact information made available to campers shall include:

- i. Property owner(s) name(s)
- ii. Property owner(s) phone number(s)
- iii. Sandisfield Police Department phone number(s)
- iv. Sandisfield Fire Department phone number(s)

C. Property owners shall collect the following information from all campers:

- i. Camper(s) name
- ii. Camper(s) phone number
- iii. License plate numbers for all vehicles on the property.

11. BYLAW ENFORCEMENT

Noncompliance with this bylaw may result in fines determined by the Sandisfield Select Board. Special Permits for commercial tent camping on a property can be revoked as determined by the Sandisfield Select Board. 



Out On A Limb

Vote “No” on Camping Bylaw

BENEFITS VS. “WORST CASE”

By Alex Bowman

Please vote against any camping bylaw proposal that fails to provide strong noise and privacy rights to neighbors, as well as clear mandates for strict and prompt enforcement procedures. Tent camping will not overrun Sandisfield, but if you are unlucky enough to live within earshot or downwind of a new campground, expect your summer peace to be destroyed.

Despite the proposal's vision of the campground as a place for quiet communion with nature, it is frequently characterized by activity and noise.

I grew up next to Windy Acres, a small campground in Westhampton now known as the KOA Westhampton. The shared boundary of the campground and our lot was ~300 feet away through the woods and across a brook. Campers flock there to have a good time, and as evidenced by the sounds arriving at our home, they certainly did.

In the warmer, more popular camping months, the cacophony of noises emanating from the campground made it impossible to enjoy the peacefulness of nature that most of us now enjoy: breezes through the open windows, a leisurely meal on the deck, or the tranquil practice of gardening, without having to constantly endure a party-like atmosphere in the distance.

The proposed bylaw allows campsites only 30 feet from your property line and it provides no guidance to the special permit granting authority about what may qualify as “detrimental to the neighborhood”. After seeing cannabis growers granted permits despite nearby homes, I know special permit granting authorities can easily underestimate and downplay negative impacts, thus forcing neighbors to pay for expensive legal assistance.

With any proposed zoning bylaw allowing new uses, townsfolk must thoughtfully consider the benefits and the worst-case scenarios. It's clear that the benefits are meager, yet costs are substantial because the proposal fails to sufficiently protect neighbors. 🗳️

**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. Opinions in Out on a Limb articles are those of the authors and do not represent The Sandisfield Times.




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Zoning Bylaw Report

By Jeff Bye, Planning Board Member

As the Town prepares for its May 18, 2024 Annual Town Meeting (ATM), the Planning Board wants to remind voters of new zoning bylaws they have approved within the last two years, and to be made aware of their effectivity status. Zoning bylaws must be reviewed and approved by the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office subsequent to the Town's approval.

In 2022 voters approved two new zoning bylaws and one in 2023.

CANNABIS BYLAW AND LOT SIZE

During the May 14, 2022 ATM, voters approved a Cannabis Bylaw. Recall the purpose for the Cannabis Bylaw – to allow licensed marijuana establishments to locate within the Town of Sandisfield in accordance with applicable state laws, rules and regulations, and to impose reasonable safeguards to ensure proper consideration of public health, safety, well-being, and undue impacts on the natural environment. Subsequent to the 2022 ATM, the MA AG's Office provided its review findings to the Town Clerk on May 17, 2023.

The AG's Office approved the Cannabis Bylaw with the exception of 1) the definition provided for a Marijuana Treatment Center (MTC); and 2) the minimum lot size requirement of 50 acres for all commercial cultivation. MTC refers to the site(s) of dispensing, cultivation, and preparation of Marijuana for medical use. The AG's Office disapproved the 50-acre lot size minimum stating that it imposed an "unreasonably impracticable" requirement that conflicts with MA General Law Chapter 94G, Section 3. The definition for MTC in the bylaw has been revised per MA Cannabis Control Commission

(CCC) regulations, 935 CMR 501.002. The Town Clerk has confirmed that the Cannabis Bylaw is in effect with the AG's Office changes incorporated. The effective date for the bylaw is the date it was approved by the Town (May 14, 2022). At this time the Planning Board is taking no further action regarding this bylaw.

With the 50-acre lot size requirement deleted from the Cannabis Bylaw by the MA AG's Office, the cultivation area setback requirement of 250 feet from all property lines will be what regulates the required lot size for commercial cultivation. As an example, assume a cultivation area of 100 feet by 100 feet (10,000 square feet). A cultivation area this size would require the lot size to be no smaller than 8.25 acres. A 100,000 square foot cultivation area (Tier 11) would require the lot size to be no smaller than 15.3 acres.

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT AND DRIVEWAY BYLAWS

Also in 2022, during the November 17 Special Town Meeting, voters approved a new zoning bylaw for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU). The MA AG's Office provided its approval and bylaw review findings to the Town Clerk on May 3, 2023. The AG's Office made no changes to the bylaw. The effective date for this new bylaw is the date it was approved by the Town (11/17/2022).

Voters also approved an amendment to Section 8B of the zoning bylaws, which permits a single driveway to serve up to three parcels. The effective date for the amendment is 11/17/2022.

SHORT-TERM RENTAL BYLAW

And last year during the May 13, 2023 ATM, voters approved a new zoning bylaw for Short Term Rentals (STR). The MA AG's Office provided its approval and bylaw review findings to the Town Clerk on February 16, 2024. The AG's Office made no changes to the bylaw. The effective date for this new bylaw is the date it was approved by the Town (5/13/2023).

All Short-Term Rental operators are encouraged to attend an STR workshop on May 25 from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Town Hall. The Town Clerk and members of the Planning Board are hosting the workshop to assist STR operators with the registration process, and will be available to answer questions pertaining to the STR bylaw. Refreshments will be served. 🍷



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Short Term Rental Bylaw Approved



The Short Term Rental Bylaw, approved by a 2/3 vote at Town Meeting in May 2023, has been approved by the Attorney General without any changes.

Taxpayers have until June 1, 2024 to register with the Town Clerk and comply with the bylaw. The registration fee will be set by the Select Board.

Please be aware there are strict violations for noncompliance. In the event that there are three or more violations within a twelve-month period, the right to renew registration

shall be denied by vote of the Board of Selectmen.

See the Town website for the full bylaw regulations.

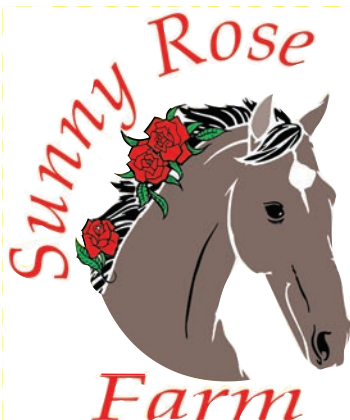
A Short-Term Rental Workshop will be held Saturday, May 25, from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Town Hall. The Town Clerk and Planning Board members are hosting the program to assist STR operators with questions regarding the new Town bylaws, the registration process, and regulations. Refreshments will be served. 🍷



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Photo: Ben Garver, *The Berkshire Eagle*

Our Local Crossword Master SANDISFIELDER FEATURED IN THE EAGLE

Adapted from The Berkshire Eagle

A Sandisfielder made the front page of *The Berkshire Eagle* in April.

Michelle Arnot of West Street was featured in a celebration of the 100th anniversary of crossword puzzles appearing in newspapers.

Michelle is an acknowledged master of the craft. She constructed her first crossword for the *New York Times* in the late 1970s, later wrote a book on the history of the crossword as well as “*Crosswords for Dummies*.”

She is a former professional constructor of crosswords, a publisher, educator, and, according to *The Eagle*, “one of the few authors and historians of the much loved puzzles.”

The Eagle quoted her, “I made my hobby into my career.”

The Eagle recounted how previous *Eagle* articles had explained about “the day [Michelle’s] high school history teacher noticed she was solving the *Times*’ daily crossword before class. He told her that he’d constructed that puzzle and she could make puzzles of her own if she contacted the paper’s crossword puzzle editor.”

“That tidbit sat in her mind until 1977, when her husband Roger Brown challenged her to write and submit a puzzle to the *Times*. She mailed in her puzzle from Columbia University where she was a graduate student studying French.”

Her puzzle was accepted and she was paid \$20. From then a series of contacts in the puzzle world kept her at her new interest and before long she abandoned her French studies and “dove wholeheartedly in to the world of crosswords. She became the publisher of Kappa Publishing Group, a magazine publisher responsible for more than 100 puzzle publications.”

With Will Shortz, the current *Times* crossword editor, she helped found an annual gathering of crossword fans in Stamford, Connecticut. Michelle is now a regular judge at the competition. She also taught a course on crossword puzzle solving at the New School in Greenwich Village, which became her book “*Crossword Puzzles for Dummies*.” She’s published three books on crosswords.

Michelle told the *Eagle* that “she’s happy the puzzle form is still going strong and spurring new offshoots in its wake.”

“In a time of so much tension, division and strife,” the *Eagle* continued, “she’s happy humanity has something like the puzzle to turn to.”

“I’m addicted to puzzles and I can’t think of my troubles because I have so many puzzles,” Arnot said, “Anyway, it’s cheaper than Prozac.”

The article, “It’s been 100 years since a crossword puzzle first appeared in a newspaper. This Sandisfield resident is making sure the puzzle gets its due,” was published April 21, 2024. Written by Meg Britton-Mehlisch, it is adapted here with permission.

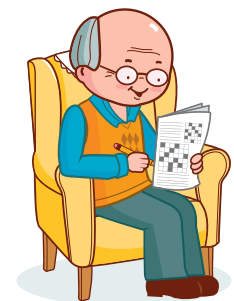
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BE A BETTER GARDENER

Annuals With Style

By Thomas Christopher

This is the time of year when gardeners in the North Country (especially procrastinators like me) start thinking about annual flowers. So we run down to the garden center and buy a couple of six packs of seedlings to add a shot of color to the holes in our landscaping. And maybe we pick up a packet or two of some fast-growing, heat-loving annuals such as marigolds or zinnias, natives of Central America which flourish even after the summer weather settles in.

Annuals, in short, are too often the Rodney Dangerfield of flower gardening – I know that reference dates me, but I'll bet you also remember his trademark complaint that "I don't get no respect." Even those of us who use annuals routinely tend to view them as second best, what you resort to when your perennial flowers have failed. That's a mistake, because if you examine the intrinsic qualities of annuals, you'll find that they offer unique potential for self-expression and beauty.

This truth was revealed to me by my mentor from my days as a horticultural student at the New York Botanical Garden, Mike Ruggiero. Mike is surely the most skilled and versatile gardener I have ever met. In his long career at that institution, Mike mastered everything from hybridizing orchids and day lilies to the cultivation of native plants (decades before the rest of the country woke up to their appeal and importance) and supervising the planting and care of NYBG's extraordinary rose garden.

Mike was, and still is, a tireless educator. Today, although officially retired, he returns to the botanical garden four days a week to teach basic horticultural techniques to aspiring gardeners and horticulturists. In my day, the tuition was informal. Mike was the Native Plants Gardener then and he invited me into his domain to introduce me to cultivation of wildflowers and the concept of planting in habitats. He showed amazing patience as I also peppered him with questions about almost every other aspect of the craft. The months I spent with Mike made me understand how endlessly fascinating gardening could be.

I stayed in touch with Mike after graduation, following his moves around the NYBG campus as he took on an endless series of different challenges. One such move was when he began managing and continually redesigning the Botanical Garden's two parallel annual borders. These flanked a path and were enormous. The border on the path's sunny side stretched 220 feet and was 10 feet deep; the shady border across the path was 125 feet long and 5 feet deep.

Mike began this venture by expanding the definition of this class of plants. Botanically, an annual is any flowering plant that sprouts from seed, and bears flowers and dies all within the span of one growing season. Gardeners have added to this flowers such as impatiens that may be perennials in their tropical homelands but which cannot survive northern winters and so die at the end of the growing season.



Mike decided this meant that any plant he found decorative that would not survive a New York winter outdoors qualified for his borders. He began borrowing citrus trees from the greenhouses to serve as focal points for annual displays, mixing them up with giant, red-leaved castor beans and ornamental grasses, and then infilling with a kaleidoscope of brilliant flowers that he and the other gardeners grew from seed. These borders soon became the talk of the New York gardening scene.

Mike still urges students to be bold with annuals. Because it takes at least three years typically for perennial flowers to mature, you may be loath to take risks with a perennial border. But annuals? These mature in just weeks and, if you grow them from seed, cost so little money, you can feel free to explore with them the outer limits of your creativity. Color combinations that more sober souls have warned you will clash? Go ahead and try them, and if you don't like the result — here Mike stomps with his foot as if crushing an offending flower. Just replant, he adds, soon you'll have something different.

Eventually, I co-wrote a book with Mike, *Annuals With Style*. In the 22 years since its publication, the cultivars Mike recommended then have long since been replaced by newer introductions. But the philosophy and horticultural techniques he recommended are as fresh as ever. But if you'd rather plant than read, just dive in. Because annuals were made for experimentation. 🌻

Be-a-Better-Gardener is a community service of Berkshire Botanical Garden, located in Stockbridge, Mass. Its mission, to provide knowledge of gardening and the environment through a diverse range of classes and programs, informs and inspires thousands of students and visitors each year. Thomas Christopher is a volunteer at Berkshire Botanical Garden and is the author or co-author of more than a dozen books, including Nature into Art and The Gardens of Wave Hill (Timber Press, 2019). He is the 2021 Garden Club of America's National Medalist for Literature, a distinction reserved to recognize those who have left a profound and lasting impact on issues that are most important to the GCA. Christopher's companion broadcast to this column, Growing Greener, streams on WESUFM.org, Pacifica Radio and NPR and is available at berkshirebotanical.org/growinggreener



The Librarian's Corner

Library hours:

Mon., Tues., and Wed. 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Wednesday evening 5:00–7:00 p.m.

Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Closed Thursday, Friday and Sunday

Phone: 258-4966

Email: sandisfieldlibrary@gmail.com

Our new website: sandisfieldlibrary.org

EVENTS AT THE LIBRARY

May 23, Thursday at 6: p.m., the **Sandisfield Ladies Book Club** will meet to discuss “The Cuckoo’s Calling” by Robert Gallbraith.

May 15 starting at 6:00 p.m. we have **Games Night** at the Library. Join in for the flavor of the month, Pinochle, Rummy, Apples to Apples, Scrabble and more. All ages are encouraged. Bring your wits and your smiles. We’d love see them both. Bring your friends, too.

All month long – it is never too late to participate in the **Massachusetts Center for the Book 2024 Reading Challenge**. May’s book is a graphic novel. Now that is a challenge for me!!!

LATEST ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY SHELVES (adult fiction and non-fiction)

- *Anita de Monte Laughs Last* by Xochitl Gonzalez
- *Her, Too* by Bonnie Kistler
- *A Better World* by Sarah Langan
- *Lilith* by Eric Rickstad
- *Age of Revolutions* by Fared Zakaria
- *The Cemetery of Untold Stories* by Juila Alvarez
- *Fourteen Days* by Margaret Atwood
- *A Calamity of Souls* by David Baldacci
- *Miss Morgan’s Book Brigade* by Janet Charles
- *The Museum of Lost Quilts* by Jennifer Chiaverini

- *An Unfinished Murder* by Jude Deveraux
- *Crow Talk* by Eileen Garvin
- *The Last Word* by Elly Griffiths
- *Lost Birds* by Anne Hillerman
- *Extinction* by Douglas Preston
- *Toxic Prey* by John Sandford
- *The Summer We Started Over* by Nancy Thayer
- *The Extinction of Irena Rey* by Jennifer Croft

YOUNG ADULT / OLDER CHILDREN

I Survived 9/11 by Lauren Tarshis

Tree. Table. Book. by Lois Lowry

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Ahoy by Sophie Blackall

Zonia’s Rain Forest by Juana Martinez-Neal

MAY FLOWER

BY EMILY DICKINSON

PINK, SMALL AND PUNCTUAL,
AROMATIC, LOW
COVERT IN APRIL
CANDID IN MAY,
DEAR TO THE MOSS,
KNOWN BY THE KNOLL
NEXT TO THE ROBIN
IN EVERY HUMAN SOUL.
BOLD LITTLE BEAUTY,
BEDECKED WITH THEE,
NATURE FORSWEARS
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RETURN TO SENDER

UNDELIVERABLE AS ADDRESSED

By Jean Atwater-Williams

When I was a teenager in the 1970s, my mother would come home from her position as clerk at the local Post Office upset that she had been reprimanded for doing what she saw as her job – making sure the mail got to the right people.

As a longtime resident and postal clerk in town, she knew everyone. So if “Joe Smith’s” mail didn’t have the post office box number on it, well, she knew him and she made sure that his mail got to the right destination – his post office box.

Even then, that was against the rules.

Fast forward 50 years. It is still against the rules.



GETTING YOUR MAIL OR NOT

Here in Sandisfield, many residents have no home mail delivery or they elect not to get it at a roadside mailbox and prefer a post office box. Caring postal clerks and postmasters have for years made sure that the mail is delivered, even if the addresses weren’t exactly correct.

Now the U.S. Postal Service is making a renewed effort to enforce the rules and require their employees to deliver only mail that is properly and fully addressed. Postal inspectors can pop into any post office at any time and examine the mail in the post office boxes. If not all the mail is properly addressed, the clerk may be in trouble.

Throw on top of that placing orders online, and you don’t even know how your packages are going to come! USPS? UPS? FedEx? And then there’s UPS SurePost where the packages start out with UPS but they don’t actually arrive at your home in that big brown truck because for the final delivery, UPS hands the packages off to the US Postal Service.

SO WHAT’S A PERSON TO DO?

To avoid your mail being marked “NMR” or “UTF” and ultimately returned to the sender, our local postal clerk Amy has a helpful hint: add your post office box number after your name. Just a simple number sign (#) plus your box number is all that’s needed. See the sample below.

The reason the box number should go after your name and not with your street address is that many vendors use address correction services. These services sometimes change the street address to match what is “in the system,” and that may not include your P.O. box, so it can get deleted even when you’ve specified it. But the name line does not get verified and should stay as you’ve entered it. By including the box number after your name and your street address, no matter how something is shipped you should receive it either at your home or at your post office box.

For example, if Joe’s PO box number is 99, list address as:

Joe Smith #99
123 Any Street
Anytown, ST, Zipcode



Circle One (Circle the reason the mail is undeliverable and place the facing slip on the top piece of mail in the tub or bundle.)

ANK

Attempted Not Known

DIS

In Dispute

ILL

Illegible

NSN

No Such Number

REF

Refused

UTF

Undeliverable as Addressed/
Unable to Forward

DEC

Deceased

IA

Insufficient Address

NMR

No Mail Receptacle

NSS

No Such Street

UNC

Unclaimed

VAC

Vacant



Household Hazardous Waste

For Residents of:

Alford Becket Egremont Great Barrington Lee Lenox Monterey
Mt. Washington New Marlborough Otis Richmond Sandisfield
Sheffield Stockbridge Tyringham Washington West Stockbridge

When: Saturday, May 11, 2024, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Where: Lee Wastewater Treatment Plant, 379 Tyler St., Lee, MA 01233

WHAT TO BRING

From The Yard/Garden

Pesticides, Fungicides
Herbicides
Insect Sprays
Rodent Killers
Muratic Acid
Flea Powder
No-Pest Strips
Chemical Fertilizers
Lighter Fluid
Moth Balls

From the Workbench

Rust Proofer
Wood Preservatives
Wood Strippers & Stains
Paint Thinners
Lead & Oil-Based Paint
Varnish
Full Aerosol Cans
Sealants
Adhesives
Solvents

From the House

Drain Cleaners
Oven Cleaners
Floor Cleaners
Metal Polish
Arts & Crafts Supplies
Photo Chemicals
Chemistry Kits
Rechargeable Batteries

From the Garage

Fuels/Gasoline/Kerosene
Brake & Transmission Fluid
Car Wax/Polish
Engine Degreaser/
Motor Oil
Swimming Pool Chemicals
Driveway Sealants
Antifreeze
Car=Lead Acid Batteries

Mercury Products

Thermometers
Thermostats
Other mercury
Button Batteries

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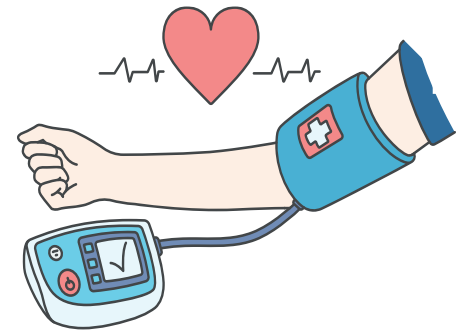
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Sandisfield's Airplane Crash

September 1969

Local history enthusiast Ron Bernard says that from time to time people contact him about an airplane crash that occurred here years ago. The accident happened at a point in the woods just off of Route 8 North, midway between New Boston and Cold Spring Road. It was sensational news for several days, but public interest quickly faded and is now out of memory for most residents, perhaps in part because the young pilot was not a local person. 🇺🇸

AIRCRAFT, BODY OF PILOT FOUND IN SANDISFIELD

Sandisfield—The wreckage of a light airplane and the body of its pilot were found around 2:30 yesterday afternoon in a deeply wooded swamp one mile west of Route 8 here. Searchers on the ground came across the wreckage almost 18 hours after the pilot, Albert Meyer Jr., 27, of Springfield, was reported overdue at Barnes Airport in Westfield. Wreckage was strewn over a 75-foot radius. The single-engine Piper Cherokee plane crashed in trees 2 ½ miles northwest of New Boston, about 100 yards south of the Tennessee Gas pipeline. The aircraft apparently burned after crashing.

Apparently Lost

Meyer, a student pilot with 18 hours of flying time, took off from Barnes at 6:45 p.m. Sunday and was to return to the field a short time later. However, authorities said turbulent air currents accompanying a violent electrical storm in Southern Berkshire County apparently caused him to lose his bearing.

Meyer died from skull fractures, brain lacerations, and third-degree burns, according to medical examiner Dr. Arthur L. Cassel, who examined the body at the crash scene.

The body was removed to Kelly Funeral Home in Lee. The wreck was discovered by firemen Gerald Stevens of New Marlborough and Charles Doane and Gerald Middleton of Otis. Nearly 100 persons, including state and local police, Civil Air Patrol personnel, and local volunteers, comprised the search party. The fact that the plane was wedged in trees in a nearly vertical position made it almost impossible to spot the wreckage from the air. Searchers were hampered by heavy rains throughout the day.

Investigators from the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board were at the scene yesterday and today. Photographers were barred from photographing the wreckage.

Authorities Unchallenged

None of the reporters or photographers barred from entering the area challenged the officials who claimed to have the authority to prevent them. In similar circumstances in the past, efforts to prevent newsmen from photographing crashed aircraft have collapsed when challenged.



Shattered Aircraft, which crashed in Sandisfield Sunday claiming the life of the pilot, Albert Meyer Jr. of Springfield, plunged into dense woods about 2½ miles northwest of New Boston. The single engine craft got lost in a storm.

Credit: The Berkshire Eagle article September 9, 1969; photo September 10, 1969

The last confirmed radio contact with the pilot was at 8:55 p.m. Sunday. Meyer reported to Barnes control tower that "I am unsure of my position." He was told to contact immediately Westover Air Force Base radar approach control. However, Westover was unable to pick him up.

At 9:15 p.m., a single, garbled radio message was received on an emergency frequency by Albany (N.Y.) County Airport control personnel, but contact was not maintained. About an hour later, several local residents reported to [Sandisfield] Police Chief Samuel R. Wilber Jr., that they had heard

what sounded to be a plane in distress. A search was begun shortly afterward.

Had "Buzzed" House

According to an OMNI aviation official, who did not identify himself, Meyer was not checked out for cross-country flying and was supposed to limit his flying to the immediate westfield area. He said, however, that Meyer's father, Albert Meyer of West Springfield, told him Sunday night that his son had "buzzed" his summer home in Greenfield, 40 miles north of Westfield, earlier that evening.

Comings and Goings



STEPHEN MCCUIN

1945-2024

Steve McCuin passed away on April 18 in Sandisfield at the age of 78.

Steve proudly served in the United States Navy from 1962-1966. He continued his service to the community as an EMT and Volunteer Firefighter for many years. He served as Sandisfield Police Chief from 1978-1981.

He was a devoted family man, raising two children with his wife Dale, with whom he shared 57 years of marriage.

Steve is survived by his loving wife Dale, brother Peter, son David and wife Kelly, daughter Deb and husband Scott, grandchildren Zachary, Amy, Brian, Matthew, and great-grandchildren Levin, James, and Alice Ann.

A service to honor and remember Stephen will be held on Saturday, May 5, at 11:00 a.m. at New Boston Congressional Church, Sandisfield.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Sandisfield Fire Department.

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NOW HEAR THIS!

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

MAY EVENTS

Sandisfield Select Board Meetings are currently at 6:30 p.m. on Mondays unless otherwise posted. Available in person and through Zoom. 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 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 of dates, please call Nina Carr at 258-3314). Free!

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

Chair Yoga with Wendy Larsen on Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall at 3 Silverbrook Road, sponsored by the Council on Aging. For more information, contact Nina Carr at 258-3314. Free.

New Boston Church Sunday Worship Service is typically held at 10:00 a.m. on the second and last Sunday of each month. For more information and to view the calendar, visit newbostoncongregationalchurch.org. All are welcome. The New Boston Church is located on Route 57 next door to the New Boston Inn.

Gallery Opening on Saturday, May 4, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. The season begins with an opening artist's reception featuring "After the Thaw," a show of work by members of the Guild of Berkshire Artists. The exhibit runs until May 31. Free.

Spring Fling Dance on Saturday, May 4 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Firehouse #2 on Route 57. Everyone is invited to dance with DJ Johnny Jams, refreshments and non-alcoholic beverages will be served. Please RSVP to sandisfieldevents@recreationcommittee.info.

Memorial Garden Opening Ceremony in Honor of Val Coleman on Sunday, May 5 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road. Val Coleman was a longtime friend, volunteer, speaker, and Board Member of the Sandisfield Arts Center, whose family's gift in his honor helped facilitate the Triple Play Memorial Garden. Poetry and remembrances. Free.

Household Hazardous Waste Disposal for Sandisfield on Saturday, May 11 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Lee at the Wastewater Treatment Plant on 379 Pleasant Street. Pre-registration at www.tritownhealth.org is required.

New Boston Congregational Church Sunday Worship Service, Sunday, May 12, 10 a.m. All are welcome. For more information, visit newbostoncongregationalchurch.org.

Annual Town Meeting, Saturday, May 18, at 10:00 a.m. Location TBA.

Annual Town Election on Monday, May 20 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall at 3 Silverbrook Road.

Ladies Book Club Meeting on Thursday, May 23 at 6:30 p.m. at the Sandisfield Public Library. The discussion will be on *The Cuckoo's Calling* by Robert Galbraith. The June 27 meeting will feature *Under the Southern Sun* by Paul Paolocelli.

Short-Term Rental Workshop on Saturday, May 25, from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Town Hall. The Town Clerk and Planning Board members are hosting a workshop to assist STR operators with questions regarding the new Town bylaws, the registration process, and inspection regulations. Refreshments will be served.

Film and Discussion with Andre Lambertson on Saturday, May 25, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center located at 5 Hammertown Road. Andre will talk about his work around the world as a photojournalist and then screen the inspiring, music-filled "The Whole Gritty City," a unique window into the world of New Orleans school marching bands. There will be a discussion with the filmmaker. For more information visit sandisfielddartscenter.org. 12-under, Free. Adults, \$20.

New Boston Congregational Church Worship Service, Sunday, May 26, 9:30 a.m. Service will also honor those who have paid the ultimate price for our freedoms, followed by libations and snacks and stay for the parade. All welcome for worship and fellowship. For more information, visit newbostoncongregationalchurch.org.

Memorial Day Parade on Sunday, May 26 at 10:00 a.m. Join the Memorial Day Parade! Enter a float, decorated car, or any other dedication to the Veterans. Volunteers are needed for the BBQ following the parade. Please contact sandisfieldevents@recreationcommittee.info for more information.

SAVE THE DATE!

New Boston Inn's Free Car Show on Sunday, June 9 at 1:00 p.m. at the New Boston Inn located at the intersection of Routes 8 and 57 in Sandisfield.

New Marlborough "One Town, One Read" Book Club on Saturday, June 22 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. at the New Marlborough Meeting House on 154 Hartsville-New Marlborough Road. The first selection is *Summer* by Edith Wharton. Wharton scholar Alan Price will provide important context for the book, written during WWI. For more details and to reserve a free ticket, visit nmmeetinghouse.org.

Chris Brubek's Triple Play returns on Saturday, June 22 at 7:30 p.m. at the Arts Center at 5 Hammertown Road. Features Joel Brown on guitar, Peter Madcat Ruth on harmonica, with bassist, trombonist, and pianist Chris Brubek. Reserve tickets ahead, \$25.

ONLINE EVENTS

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

EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Saturday Morning Bird Walks at 10:00 a.m. on the River Front Trail in Great Barrington. Meet at the Berkshire Co-op Market and join Ben Nickley of Berkshire Bird Observatory. For questions and to register, email Ben at ben@berkshirebirds.org. Beginners welcome! Free.

Great Barrington Farmers Market beginning Saturday, May 11 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at 18 Church Street and continuing on Saturdays into November. Featuring locally grown and produced foods, including cheese, meats, breads, and more. Local musicians perform across a variety of styles and genres.

Creative Day at Whiting Mills on Saturday, May 11 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on 100 Whiting Street in Winsted, Connecticut. A full day of free demonstrations, workshops, classes, and make and take sessions. Free.

Historical talk. Did you miss Ron Bernard's presentation at the Arts Center about the Churches of Sandisfield? You have another chance. Enjoy "The Churches, Pastors and People of Sandisfield and Monterey," 7 p.m., May 16 at the Monterey Library. Free.

THE 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 Times, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or donate online at our website: Donations to The Sandisfield Times are deductible under section 170 of the Federal Income Tax Code. Donations do not include subscriptions. Subscriptions do not qualify as donations.

The Times is distributed free of charge to all Sandisfield postal address and boxes. Free copies are available at the following town locations: The transfer station (Wed/Sat/Sun), the Library, and in New Boston at A&M Auto, the Farmington River General Store, and the New Boston Inn. The Times is also available in West Otis at the laundromat, library, and Paige's Place; in East Otis at Katies, Pappas, and the Knox Trail Inn. Also at the Monterey Library (outside box), in Colebrook at the post office and the general store, and at the New Marlborough General Store and the Mill River General Store. Back copies are available for purchase.

The Times can be mailed to your home (non-Sandisfield addresses only) by paid subscription (see form below) or you can read it (free) online as a PDF document at 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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☰ How to Contact Us ☰

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 The Sandisfield Times, PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255.
 If internet accessible, all letters, news events and tips, ideas,
 obituary and family announcements, photos (600 dpi if possible)
 and advertisement queries to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org

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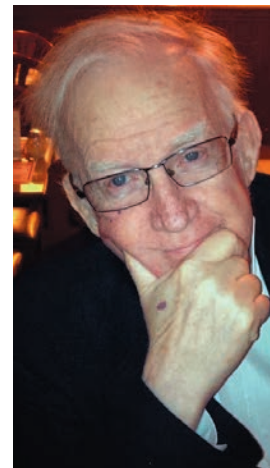
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Sandisfield's Poet Laureate

Val Coleman, who died in 2021, wrote the following poem in honor of the Town's *Sestercentennial* (250th) birthday in 2012. The poem was first published in *The Sandisfield Times* July of that year. Val's contributions to the Art Center and the Town will be honored at a ceremony at the Center's new Memorial Garden on Sunday, May 5, from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

SANDISFIELD

This old town
 Was hammered out of the 18th Century
 And set down among the timber
 And fresh rivers
 Of a strange continent.
 And here it sits
 For two hundred and fifty years,
 By turns growing and dying,
 Beginning over and over again
 Like the tune of a fiddle
 Or a memorized prayer.
 Born before America was born,
 It set its cap alongside three rivers
 Fed by a weave of streams
 And made a place where one could fill
 Some pioneering dreams.
 They all came here:
 Tanners and chicken farmers,
 Dancers and scoundrels,
 The English, German, Irish, Italians ...
 The Baptists and the Jews,
 All looking to start again.
 But this, after all, is an American town,
 A New England town,
 With the veterans of nine wars
 In its cemeteries
 And maple sugar on its breath.



Sandisfield Arts Center

We Begin Again

SARC SEASON NOW OPEN

By Suzanne O'Connell

Once again, the Sandisfield Arts & Restoration Center (SARC), located at 5 Hammertown Road. in Sandisfield, will host a vibrant season of gallery shows and performances.

The 2024 season opened on Saturday morning, April 27, with "Churches of Sandisfield," a richly illustrated talk by Sandisfield historian Ron Bernard. The presentation encapsulated the history and importance of churches and a synagogue as the lifeblood of our small town. (Note: A version of the talk, "The Churches, Pastors and People of Sandisfield and Monterey" is set for May 16 at 7:00 p.m. at the Monterey Library. Free.)

The second annual Guild of Berkshire Artists exhibition opens with a reception on Saturday May 4, 4:00-6:00 p.m., and runs until May 31. The theme, "After the Thaw," highlights the joys of the coming of spring expressed in a variety of media. Gallery hours are Saturdays and Sundays 11:00 a.m.– 3:00 p.m. and by appointment. Call (310) 970-4517.

The next day, Sunday, May 5, from 2:00-4:00 p.m., long-time Sandisfield resident and active SARC member and our poet laureate, Val Coleman, will be honored with the opening of a new Memorial Garden. (See his poem, "Sandisfield," on the facing page.)

The Memorial Garden is on the site where the two-story Montville School stood for decades. Once it was no longer needed and became derelict, the building was burned in 1961 in a fire department training exercise.

Donations from the Coleman family and other individuals combined with the vision and work of many SARC members began the process of transforming the site. C.W. Nelson Landscaping (which donated its services) and Snow Farm provided professional assistance with installing the landscape plan. Today, this tranquil spot with a rock wall and all-weather benches is available to the entire community.

Last season the award-winning photojournalist and filmmaker Andre Lambertson mesmerized the audience with his powerful slide show and photographs. He'll return on Saturday, May 25 at 7:30 p.m. to screen the inspiring, music-filled "The Whole Gritty City," a unique window into the world of New Orleans school marching bands. The screening will be followed by a discussion with the filmmaker.

Early June brings a new gallery show "Notes from the Interior" with a selection of works on paper. The Opening Reception will be June 8 at 4:00-6:00 p.m.

The following week, Saturday, June 15 at 7:30 p.m., the Arts Center will host internationally renowned comic performer Tomáš Kubínek, whose performances at the Mahaiwe and Simon's Rock have made him a local favorite. Kubínek will give a 90-minute performance (for mature audiences) entitled "Certified Lunatic and Master of the Impossible."

For more information, prices for events (many are free), and tickets, please go to sandisfieldartscenter.org/events.

**SAVE THE DATE
SAT JUNE 15**

TOMÁŠ KUBÍNEK
CERTIFIED LUNATIC & MASTER OF THE IMPOSSIBLE



"ABSOLUTELY EXPERT AND CONSISTENTLY CHARMING" THE NEW YORK TIMES
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sandisfield ARTS CENTER

★ 5 HAMMERTOWN ROAD, SANDISFIELD, MA ★

Sun., May 5 2-4 pm

**Memorial Garden Opening and Reception
in honor of Val Coleman**

Poetry and remembrances. Light refreshments. Free

Sat., May 25, 7:30 pm

**Andre Lambertson,
award-winning photojournalist and
filmmaker**

Screening of the music-filled "The Whole Gritty City."

A unique window into the world of New Orleans school marching bands.

Discussion with filmmaker. \$20 / 12 and under: Free

FOR DETAILS, RESERVATIONS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS, PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE.

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