

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



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RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume XV, Number 5

August 2024



BEN LUXON
MARCH 24, 1937 - JULY 26, 2024

(SEE PAGES 10-11)



Our Magnificent New Road

By Bill Price

The final piece of Rt. 57 was repaved in July from the juncture at the New Boston Inn to the small bridge at the foot of the hill below the Transfer Station.

The work was funded entirely by an MPP grant, with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation responsible for implementing the project. This repaving pretty much completes the paved road projects in Sandisfield.

According to the Select Board, the driveway aprons, rumble strip, and line painting will be completed in August. This includes the apron leading to the Post Office that has plagued patrons for the last couple of years.

The Town thanks MassDOT for its commitment to Sandisfield and for the incredible work team, the easy drive-arounds during the project, and the absolutely beautiful result.



Cow Parsnip: A Giant Hogweed Imposter

By Tom Christopher

Last month, The Sandisfield Times issued a warning concerning giant hogweed, a rare invasive plant that has been seen along a roadway in South Sandisfield.

Our warning brought a few responses from readers who feared that they had spotted this truly noxious plant on their own property or environs.

Most concerning was a report from David Hubbard that his daughter had encountered something similar on the side of Dodd Road and that contact with this had caused a rash on her arm. A rash is a common symptom of an encounter with giant hogweed and can lead to serious medical complications.

As author of the hogweed warning, I made a site visit to Dodd Road and identified the offending plant as cow parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*). Cow parsnip, an American relative to giant hogweed, is similar in appearance but much less virulent. All the other reports proved to be cow parsnip as well.

Typically the cow parsnip rash emerges 24 hours after getting the sap on your dark

spots or permanent scars. It will leave the skin sensitive to sunlight. It usually starts to improve after 3 days, but can leave areas of the skin sensitive to sunlight for up to 2 years (www.healthline.com/health/wild-parsnip-burns#takeaway).

This reaction is mild by comparison to the effect of sap from giant hogweed, which can cause second degree burns with lesions up to an inch in diameter that are followed by patches of dark discoloration and permanent scars on the skin. This too leaves the affected areas with a long-term sensitivity to sunlight.

An easy way to distinguish between these two similar-looking plants is that giant hogweed stalks are covered with purplish-red blotches and spots, while cow parsnip stems are all green.

For more help with distinguishing these two plants log onto the Teton County, Wyoming website "Giant Hogweed and Cow Parsnip: Which is Which and Why You Should Care" (www.tcweed.org/blog/giant-hogweed-and-cow-parsnip-which-is-which-and-why-you-should-care).

TELLING THE DIFFERENCE

Giant hogweed stalks are covered with purplish-red blotches and spots while cow parsnip stems are all green.

Owen's 21st Birthday Party



Saturday August 10

12 - 4 pm

Our home
22 Bosworth Rd
Sandisfield
413-841-1508

Do you know Owen?
Feel free to stop by!



INSIDE

SCHOOL DISTRUST AND DELAYS	4-5
CO-EXISTING WITH BEASTS	6
CEMETERIES: HOW TO GET IN.	8
SELECT BOARD DISPATCH	9
BEN LUXON	10-11
OUTREACH PROGRAM.	16

Times' New and Improved Website Offers More Accessible Information

A MAJOR RE-DESIGN

By Jean Atwater-Williams, Times Webmaster

A more compelling and dynamic version of The Times' website is expected to be available soon at www.sandisfieldtimes.org.




Above: Thumbnail of previous website

Thanks mainly to our new volunteer Web Editor, Larry Dwyer, online readers and visitors will find a newly designed website that offers links to featured articles, accompanying photographs, and links to other Times stories referenced in our reports. While our previous website provided only a pdf version of the print edition, our redesign offers a richer and more encompassing experience.

We will continue to offer the full pdf of each issue (along with our extensive archives and index of past issues), but now featured articles will be available individually.

This will allow users to focus on and share articles of interest and will allow easy mobile web browsing and sharing because it is no longer necessary to download a full pdf to your phone or computer.

Another benefit is that our print advertisers will now be featured on the web, a value-added service we are providing free of charge. 




Sandisfield Fire Department Steak Roast

THE 35TH ANNUAL SATURDAY, AUGUST 10

- Benefit for the Sandisfield Fire Department
- Dinner from 5:00-7:00 p.m.
- Music from 5:00-9:00 p.m.
- Firehouse #2, Sandisfield Road
- Donation: \$30

Tickets at Farmington River General Store, A&M Auto, all members of the Fire Department

Call or text 413-441-2572 for tickets or questions

We will not be visiting individual houses to sell tickets this year. Pick up your tickets early. Limited sales at the event; we need to know how many steaks to buy Take-out available. 


Important State Primary Dates

Last Day to Register to Vote
August 24, 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

In-Person Early Voting
August 24 - August 30

Vote by Mail Application Deadline
August 26, 5:00 p.m.

In-Person Absentee Application Deadline
August 30

State Primary
September 3, 7:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. 



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- Boundary Marking
- GIS Mapping
- Foresters for the Birds
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- Climate Forestry

Letter of Resignation by the Sandisfield RAAC Members

July 17, 2024 (Excerpts)

Dear members of the School Committee:

We hope this letter finds you well. It is with regret but firm resolve that we write to inform you of the unanimous decision of the Sandisfield members of the Regional Agreement Advisory Committee (RAAC) to resign from our positions, effective immediately.

Our decision is rooted in recent developments that have fundamentally compromised our ability to effectively contribute to the RAAC's mission. Since the beginning, with the selection of the Otis members of the RAAC, the deck has been stacked against success. Specifically, remarks made by Ms. Terry Gould, as well as her consistent misrepresentation of our interactions and decisions within the RAAC, have created an untenable situation. Ms. Gould's statements, as excerpted from recording of meetings and emails, inaccurately portrays our meetings and process as contentious and unproductive and casts aspersions on the Sandisfield leadership, all of which contradicts the reality documented in clear video recordings.

For clarity, we would like to address several key points:

The letter then outlines in detail the following topics of contention:

- Misrepresentation of RAAC Meetings
- Allegations of Bullying and Intimidation
- Distrust and Miscommunication
- Refusal to Work in Good Faith
- Stalling and Obstruction

The letter concluded:

The decision to resign is not taken lightly. However, the continual presence of Ms. Gould and other obstructors within the RAAC and her pattern of misrepresentation posed significant obstacles to constructive dialogue and progress. We believe that our resignation is necessary to maintain the integrity of the School Committee's work and to ensure that future discussions are conducted in good faith and with transparency. This decision in no way reflects a lack of support for the School Committee and initiatives to foster cooperation between Sandisfield and Otis; rather it is a reflection of our commitment to each of those ends.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you require clarification or wish to this decision further, please do not hesitate to reach out to jbeardsley@sandisfieldma.gov.

*Select Board Members John Field and Steve Seddon,
Town Clerk Douglas Miner, Committee Member Carl Nett*

Issues of Trust

SANDISFIELD/OTIS SEEKING SCHOOL AGREEMENT

By Bill Price

The apportionment of taxes between Sandisfield and Otis for paying the ongoing costs for the Farmington River School District continues to plague the committees working on an equitable solution.

The result of a failure to find agreement could be Sandisfield's withdrawal from the Farmington River Regional School District and allow its students to opt for schools of their choice.

Since 2022 Sandisfield has sought to change the terms of the district's regional agreement between the two towns. According to a report in *The Berkshire Eagle*, "As the less wealthy town in the two-town district, Sandisfield taxpayers have been shouldering more than what the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education said they can afford. Otis taxpayers, on the other hand, have been shouldering less than they can afford."

Since then, the towns' school committees, which meet jointly the first Monday of each month, have been struggling to find a reapportionment to the funding burden. The solution could lessen the burden on Sandisfield and shift at least a bit more of the cost to Otis. The current apportionment was set up when the two towns formed one school district in 1992.

To say it's been a hard row to hoe is an understatement. With mistrust between the committee members and concern about what voters might do should Otis be called on to slightly raise its own taxes and Sandisfield to slightly lower its own, the committee has kept moving a resolution to the "next meeting," and then again to the "next meeting."

The next meeting of the joint school committee is scheduled for August 5 at 7:00 p.m. It is open to all residents

and available to be participated in via a Zoom connection.

WE FOUR RESIGN

A sign that the conflict is escalating was the July 17 resignation of the four Sandisfield members of the Regional Agreement Advisory Committee (RAAC), an ad hoc committee formed to draft amendments to the regional agreement. One such amendment, not yet drafted, was to include the framework to allow Sandisfield to withdraw from the district if agreement could not be reached regarding cost apportionment.

The *Berkshire Eagle* reported on July 26 that the Sandisfield RAAC members criticized Otis members of the committee for misrepresenting interactions and decisions, with one Otis member in particular creating an "untenable situation." The resignation letter is excerpted on the facing page. The full article can be accessed at Berkshireeagle.com.

The ad-hoc committee was scheduled to disband in August, with their last meeting to have been July 18, the day following the resignation. The committee's unfinished work will evolve to the joint school committee.

Meanwhile, the cost apportionment issue is being and has been thrashed out at the joint school committee. After two "deadline" meetings, the committee is still struggling with the issue, with a deadline of September 1.

An extension of the deadline may be possible. The chair of the committee, Denise Hardie of Otis, was quoted by *The Eagle* as pointing out that when the RAAC was created the target date was December. "While I want to do what we can to complete this by Sept. 1, it's a process," she said. "And it's more important to do it right than

to hurry it. And so we will continue to do everything we can to get this done as soon as possible and then back to the towns."

Hardie continued, "I do understand that it is a charged issue. My goal has been and continues to be continuation of the district as it is. It's an amazing school, it provides an education to the students in our two towns that's unrivaled and it provides a community and a sense of being known for those students that you don't find in many places."

Superintendent Timothy Lee pointed out to *The Eagle* that any amendments to the regional agreement would have to undergo review by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, as well as review by the districts' attorney, and eventual agreement by the voters.

He added, regarding the mistrust among members of the working committees, "It seems to be slowing things down a little bit now, but I'm also optimistic that if we stick with the process and continue to work on the regional agreement, that we can find some consensus."

Excerpts from The Berkshire Eagle articles written by Community Voices Editor Jane Kaufman, are used with permission.


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Each Office is Independently Owned and Operated

Bears in Our Back Yards CO-EXISTING WITH BEASTS

By Tom Christopher

Like most small children of my era, a bear slept in my bed every night – a teddy bear. Today, I have a real one, a large black bear, that strolls through my Sandisfield yard on a regular basis. I find those encounters with such a magnificent wild creature thrilling. But the real thing is not so easy to co-exist with as that long ago toy.

We 21st century people have a complicated relationship with Nature, and with bears in particular. It was simpler, if more brutal, in the past. Land clearance and unregulated hunting had nearly eliminated black bears from Massachusetts by the mid 1800s, with only a small remnant population surviving in the northern Berkshires.

But by the 1950's, the public attitude toward bears had changed.

Maybe it was all of those friendly lectures from Smokey or the Yogi Bear cartoons we watched on Saturday mornings, but the general population of Bay Staters no longer viewed bears as a mortal threat. In 1952, a law was passed that bears, who previously had been allowed to be shot on sight, became a regulated game animal that could only be hunted during a specified season and only by properly licensed hunters. The black bear population in Massachusetts began to rebound, although initially the increase was very slow. As late as the 1970s, the total number of bears resident in the state was something like 100.

Today, state wildlife biologists estimate the bear population at over 4,500 and growing rapidly.

What happened? Certainly, the reforestation of much of the land once cleared for agriculture in Massachusetts set the stage for this population explosion, as did the protection from unrestricted hunting. But according to David Wattles,

the Black Bear and Furbearer Biologist for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, this current bear boom is also due in part to the bears' adaptation to a rich new food source – all the calories we provide in our garbage, bird feeders, compost heaps, and gardens.

Bears do not eat at all after entering their dens to hibernate in mid-November until they re-emerge sometime between February and mid-April (depending on the weather). As a result, according to Wattles, they spend much of the rest of the year packing the fat back on. This can be a laborious process if they are pulling apart rotten logs to harvest grubs. In a matter of minutes, though, they can consume thousands of calories with a visit to your bird feeder. And once a bear has found a nutritional goldmine such as that, they will return on a regular basis, looking for more.

I discovered the truth of this last summer when a dwarf cherry tree I had planted years ago at one end of my vegetable garden finally bore a heavy crop of fruit. I left my Sandisfield home for a few days, planning to pick the cherries when I got back. When I returned, though, they were all gone. It was my wife Suzanne, the environmental scientist, who spotted the pile of bear scat filled with pits near the tree. True to David Wattles' warning, the bear has been coming back every few weeks since its feast, tearing down my garden fence to climb in for an inspection. So far it hasn't begun to eat my lettuces, carrots, or tomatoes, but it surely will unless I finish installing my new electric fence.

Fortunately, I don't keep bee hives or chickens, both of which are also magnets for hungry bears. To protect these, an electric fence is also essential.

Not just any electric fence will do, either – David Wattles recommends looking at the plan and specifications you will find online at the state's "Black Bears in Massachusetts" website (www.mass.gov/black-bears-in-massachusetts). It includes a down-loadable PDF titled "Electric Fence Guide to Prevent Bear Damage."

Cont'd on p.12



Sandisfield Arts Center

August at the Arts Center

By Suzanne OConnell and the Sandisfield Arts Center Website

A must-see sculpture exhibit “Unearthed” continues in the Art Center Gallery until August 11.

“Unearthed” celebrates the diversity of artistic expression and invites contemplation on our relationship with the world through the tangible and enduring medium of sculpture. Artists featured are Milena Cerna, Erika Crofut, Gail Gelburd, Caryn King, Sarah Konstam, Margie Skaggs, Nancy Silkey, and Natalie Tyler.

Central to “Unearthed” are works crafted from clay, exemplifying the earthy essence and malleability of the material. These pieces invite viewers to contemplate the ancient roots of human creativity and the enduring significance of clay in art.

Hand-carved wooden sculptures, each revealing the intricate skill and dedication of the artist, are on display. These works speak to the organic beauty of wood and the craftsmanship involved in transforming raw material into expressive art.

Adding a layer of intrigue are the sculptures made from found objects, where discarded items are repurposed into thought-provoking artworks. This aspect of the exhibition encourages reflection on sustainability, and the potential for art to redefine our perceptions of everyday objects.

Lastly, the inclusion of molten glass artworks introduces a dynamic element of fluidity and transparency to “Unearthed.”

These creations capture light and color in mesmerizing ways, reflecting the interplay between natural elements and human creativity.

A week after the closing of “Unearthed,” the Gallery reopens with its fourth exhibit of the season: “Small Works.” Local artists and artisans have been given creative freedom to showcase work that is intimate in size but holds great weight and impact. Artists will be present at the opening reception on Saturday, August 17 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. Additional viewings are possible from 11:00-3:00 on Saturdays and Sundays (except for 11:00-2:00 on Sunday August 18), until Sunday, September 8.

All events in the gallery are free.

We Be People

Talk/Lecture. On Saturday, August 10 at 10:00 a.m., an accomplished attorney, Kenneth Cohen, will present: “Constitutional Limits and the Role of the Supreme Court: Lessons from Franklin Roosevelt’s Struggle with a Conservative Court.” Tickets are \$10. Attorney Cohen has taught and practiced law in Boston. After law school, he clerked for the Chief Judge of the First Circuit federal appeals court. He taught both Constitutional Law and the course on the federal courts at Boston University School of Law, and was for many years a partner at Goodwin Procter in Boston. There he specialized in appellate and complex litigation. He has briefed and argued cases involving constitutional issues in federal appellate courts and state supreme courts around the country. 🇺🇸



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GALLERY

August 17 – September 8
SMALL WORKS

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SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG

Sandisfield Cemeteries

HOW TO GET IN

WHAT'S THE COMMITTEE BEEN DOING?

By Times Reporters

You know what you have to do to get into Sandisfield Center Cemetery as a resident. It's certainly an important step, and one we'll all take one day. In the meantime, you will need a place to land when you get there.

BUYING A PLOT

What does it take to buy a burial plot in Sandisfield?

The Sandisfield Center Cemetery, located on Rt. 57 across from the Transfer Station, is the only location in Town currently open for new burials.

According Lynn Rubenstein, chair of the Sandisfield Cemetery Committee, the first step is to call Rich Atwood, the current Cemetery Superintendent.

Rich will set up an appointment to meet you at the cemetery to show you available plots. Once you've made a decision, you need to visit the Town Clerk's office to pay a fee and a deed will be filled out. Once the deed has been signed by all town entities necessary, you can pick it up or have it mailed to you.

The process can take a few weeks. Once you receive the deed, inform your family and file the deed with your other important documents. When the time comes that you need the plot, you will need to produce the deed. The Town keeps copies of the deed.

Contact Rich Atwood at 413-329-3672 or at aacemeteryservices@gmail.com.

The cost of a single plot for taxpayer/residents is \$300. For non-residents, the cost is \$750. There is no charge for a single plot for a Veteran/taxpayer/resident.

It's possible to purchase up to two lots, which contain four plots each, for a total of eight grave sites. The cost of one lot is \$1,200.

OTHER CEMETERY NEWS

The Committee has accomplished a lot of work in the last few years.

- Sandisfield Center: work will begin in FY25
- New Boston: fence repaired and painted, brush and trees removed.
- Beech Plain: trees and brush removed.
- South Sandisfield: fence painted, trees and brush removed.
- Robert's Road: trees and brush removed.



Tree work is expensive and moving forward will be spaced into a five-year plan working with a certified arborist.

A complete listing of Cemetery Rules, Regulations and Fees has been updated and posted on the Town website (click on Cemetery Committee under Boards and Committees).

One rule that will be strictly enforced is that snowmobiles and ATV's as well as other motorized vehicles (unless authorized by the Town) are ONLY permitted on the roadways. Signage will be put up shortly.

The Cemetery Committee has a contract with a Cemetery Information Management Software System (CIMS). The Committee enters all necessary information

(names, addresses, lot numbers, deed info, etc.). This system has information for the Sandisfield Center Cemetery ONLY, located on Rt. 57, across from the Transfer Station.

Lynn said that the Committee gets "plenty of inquires beyond who to contact for purchasing a plot." She listed, for example, where is a family member buried, what are the rules and regulations, is there a water source (yes, which our Fire Department replenishes when needed. A sign will indicate its location.)

SANDISFIELD CEMETERIES

The five Town cemeteries are worth a visit. The Sandisfield Historical Commission installed attractive signs at each cemetery listing the Revolutionary and Civil War veterans who are buried there.

- Sandisfield Center - Est. c.1758 - Located on Route 57 (Sandisfield Road)
- New Boston - Est. c.1831 - Located on Route 57 (Sandisfield Road)
- Beech Plain - Est. c.1775 - Located on North Beech Plain Road
- South Sandisfield - Est. c.1800 - Located on Route 183 (Sandy Brook Turnpike)
- Roberts Road - Est. c.1790 - Located on Roberts Road

Dubois or Rose Road Cemetery was moved and incorporated into Sandisfield Center Cemetery in 1967 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Colebrook River Reservoir project. ♡

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Select Board Dispatch

The Route 57 paving has been completed. Installation of driveway aprons, rumble strips, and line painting will begin within the month of August.

The process for hiring a new Fire Chief is almost complete. Second interviews of two candidates are scheduled, and a decision will be made shortly afterwards.

The Town Manager Search Committee has posted advertisements for the position and will be accepting applications until August 16. Job posting and job description are available on the Sandisfield website.

CodeRED, an emergency notification system, will go live by the end of August. The system will allow taxpayers to sign up for voicemail, text message, or email notification of important town happenings, including road closures and inclement weather warnings.

A complete audit for fiscal year 2023 has begun. The auditors of Scanlon & Associates spent the week of July 22 at Town Hall reviewing documents and gathering information.

The Select Board meets at Town Hall bi-weekly for the months of July and August. Visit the website to confirm the date of the next meeting. To request an agenda item, please contact Janey Beardsley Snyder at jbeardsley@sandisfieldma.gov no later than the Wednesday before the upcoming Select Board meeting.

Don't forget to subscribe to E-Alerts on the Town website, www.sandisfieldma.gov for important updates and announcements. 📧



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Ben takes a bow after "Under Milkwood" August, 2014

Photo by Bill Price

Tributes to Ben

The Times will publish special tributes to Ben Luxon in our September issue. Please send your recollections and remembrances of this extraordinary individual to us at editor@sandisfieldtimes.org.

Limit your comments to 150 words or so, and email photos you would like to include. We will publish as many as we can.

IN MEMORIUM

BENJAMIN LUXON, CBE

1937 – 2024

Ben Luxon was born and raised in Cornwall, England, in 1937. He died July 26 after a long illness at his Sandisfield home.

Luxon was a world-renowned opera singer. A baritone, he graced almost all of the world's major Operatic stages and concert halls with an astonishing array of roles. He worked with most of the world's leading conductors and orchestras alongside many of the other great singers of the 20th Century. He made more than one-hundred recordings ranging from Monteverdi to an album of Don Maclean covers, exhibiting an astounding ability to bring his own unique brand of musical honesty and intelligence to anything he turned his hand to – be that Early Music, Oratorio, Victorian ballads, Grand Opera, or folk song.

He was a regular soloist with Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony, at Tanglewood and in Boston.

Ben was presented with the order of CBE (Commander of the British Empire), a high honor, by the Queen of England in 1986.

Luxon came to fame as a member of Benjamin Britten's English Opera Group. On tour of the Soviet Union in 1963, he sang the roles, Sid and Tarquinius in Britten's operas "Albert Herring" and "The Rape of Lucretia." Britten composed the title role in "Owen Wyngrave" specifically for him.

Luxon remains prized for the intelligence of his unfettered directness of expression. Dame Janet Baker who starred with him as Ulysses, in Monteverdi's Opera "Il Ritorno d'Ulysses in Partria," recently wrote to Ben, telling him, "I never had anyone work with me dramatically who could match you sound-wise and in the passion you gave to every character, particularly Ulysses and of the huge admiration you deserve for your work in the field of Lieder, which I believe tests us artists to the utmost."

On the lighter side, Ben enjoyed singing folk music, collaborating with his good friend, banjo player and well-known singer Bill Crofut, with an ensemble of recorders, guitars, lutes, fiddle, and bass.

In 1990, he suffered the onset of hearing loss which signaled the end of his singing career. With renewed vigor he moved into performance of the spoken word.

He took on such roles as Shakespeare's "King Lear," performed "The Soldier's Tale" by Stravinsky as a one-man show with a dancer, accompanied by a chamber group (presented by Close Encounters with music). He performed Tennyson's "Enoch Arden," piano music by Richard Strauss, many times, including special occasions when he had the joy of being accompanied by his grandson, pianist Josh Luxon-Robinson.

Ben Luxon's unstoppable and indefatigable urge to get things done and his extraordinary drive and determination drove him no matter what the task or project.

Whether it was countless hours of weeding his infamous vegetable patch, chain sawing and splitting at least five cords of wood per year, performing, or narrating great works with the Boston Symphony, he was committed and relentless.

In 2012 he formed a local troupe, "The Sandisfield Players" in the Sandisfield Arts Center in his home town, assembling a group of amateur actors of all levels who performed numerous plays until recently. Their first production, "Rascals and Others," cowritten and directed by Ben, was an historical amalgam for Sandisfield's sescentennial (250th) anniversary celebration. This was followed by a superb rendition of Thornton Wilder's iconic American play, "Our Town," and later productions that included the challenging "Under Milkwood" to a delightful rendition of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory."

The high point for the Sandisfield Players was when Ben brought the production of "Our Town" in 2016 to his native Cornwall for a full weeks' performances at the famous cliff-side Minack Theater. The Players was the first American company to perform "Our Town" at the Minack.

Ben is survived by his wife, Susie Crofut, his children: Rachel, Dan, Jonathan, and Emily and many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Ben Luxon's extraordinary talent, work ethic, vital energy, musical virtuosity, and versatility has left an indelible mark on all who knew him and millions who knew and admired his voice.

A local memorial service will be announced later.

Bears in Our Back Yards

Cont'd from p.6

Wattles also shared a tip for enhancing the fence's effectiveness: wrap aluminum foil strips daubed with peanut butter or bacon grease around the electrified wires (while the electric current is shut off) to teach any exploring bear just how bad your garden or chicken coop tastes.

Other obvious precautions for avoiding bear visits are to eliminate obvious attractants such as bird feeders, unsecured outdoor garbage containers, and outdoor pet feeding. Suzanne and I are enthusiastic composters, but we don't add fruit peelings or other bear-attracting wastes to our heap.

We want to co-exist peacefully with our wild ursine neighbors, and that means keeping them at a distance. 🐻

Going, Going, Not Gone Yet

Another winter might do the trick. Across Rt. 8 from the New Boston Crane Service & Sleds. Welcome to Sandisfield.

Photos: Bill Price



September 2021.



July 2024.

Cannabis Next Month

In July's Times we announced that we would report in August on what's going on with Daydreamz, SAMA, and the Villa Mia. Those are the three cannabis locations in Sandisfield presently either in operation, getting there, or maybe not in the works at all. Because of late and unexpected priority news, we didn't get the story done. Our apologies. Next month, we'll try again.

Join the Sandisfield Recreation Committee

FOR A PIG ROAST

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Saturday, September 14th, 5pm

Free Event • All Ages Welcome

RSVP by 9.4.24

sandisfieldevents@recreationcommittee.info

NEW BOSTON CHURCH SERVICE
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CrowdStrike Hits Sandisfielder

By Larry Dwyer

My pickup truck was due for its yearly inspection, so I drove to my mechanic's place in Mill River on Monday July 22. No dice. The "system" was down from a global system outage that had occurred three days earlier.

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles reported that the outage that had knocked out systems affecting airlines, hospitals, and businesses across the world was still affecting its computers. So a mechanic in isolated Mill River could not conduct an annual inspection.

The massive disruption originated with CrowdStrike, a cybersecurity firm that provides software to scores of companies worldwide. The company said the problem occurred when it deployed a faulty update to computers running Microsoft Windows, and that the outage was not caused by a security incident or cyberattack. Microsoft estimated that the outage affected 8.5 million Windows devices, which is less than 1 percent of all Windows machines, but "the broad economic and societal impacts reflect the use of CrowdStrike by enterprises that run many critical services."

So I had to make a second trip to Mill River. My pickup passed its tests. All systems were go. 🙏



Artist Jaye Alison Moscariello with a few of her "Territories Blue" paintings.

Photo: Josie Miner

Local Artist Selected for Latvian Symposium

By Bill Price

Sandisfield artist Jaye Alison Moscariello was one of eleven artists – and the only American – accepted to the 2024 Mark Rothko Painting Symposium at the Mark Rothko Museum in Daugavpils, Latvia.

She will attend the symposium from September 12-30. She said, "I'll have a studio and will be able to paint without interruption 24/7. Yay!!"

Two of the works she creates during the symposium will become part of the Mark Rothko Museum permanent collection.

She said that Latvia is of particular interest to her. "It ties in with my 'Territories Blue' work. Recently I discovered I have some roots in Latvia, part of my Eastern European Jewry heritage (I also have roots in the Middle East in addition to the Italian background). I've been keen to visit the area, and I'll be very close – only 75 miles from the Latvian-Russian border. It will be an exciting time."

Of the other artists, two are from Poland, three from India, one from Latvia, one from Italy, one from Germany, one from Macedonia, and one from Lithuania. Jaye said, "Thankfully, all of the other artists speak some English." 🙏

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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

The Sandisfield Ladies Book Club will meet August 22, Thursday at 6:30 p.m., to discuss *The Little Mo Effect* by Pier Bouton, M. D. A surgeon's compassion for a charismatic Moroccan boy with clubbed feet transforms many lives – including her own. This month's meeting will take place at the home of one of the members, so please contact the library for details and directions.

Games Night at the Library on August 14, Wednesday, starting at 6:00 p.m. 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 to see them both. Light refreshments provided.

All month – It is never too late to participate in the **Massachusetts Center for the Book 2024 Reading Challenge**. August's book is a book whose title starts with the same letter as your birth month.

Latest additions to the library shelves (adult fiction and non-fiction)

- *The Lucky Ones* by Zara Chowdhary
- *The Horse* by Willy Vlautin
- *A Refiner's Fire* by Donna Leon
- *Hard to Kill* by James Patterson
- *Confessions of the Dead* by James Patterson
- *Becoming Earth* by Ferris Jabir
- *A Death in Cornwall* by Daniel Silva
- *The Black Bird Oracle* by Debra Harkness

- *The Lion Women of Tehran* by Marjan Kamali
- *Forgotten on Sunday* by Valerie Perrin
- *Sandwich* by Catherine Newman
- *A Council of Dolls* by Mona Susan Power
- *Middle of the Night* by Riley Sager
- *All the Colors of the Dark* by Chris Whitaker
- *Red Sky Mourning* by Jack Carr



A Poem for August

THE SWING

By Robert Louis Stevenson

How do you like to go up in a swing,
Up in the air so blue?
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing
Ever a child can do!
Up in the air and over the wall,
Till I can see so wide,
River and trees and cattle and all
Over the countryside –
Till I look down on the garden green,
Down on the roof so brown –
Up in the air I go flying again,
Up in the air and down!



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False Fire and Police Alarm Bylaw and Related Regulations to be Enforced

Town Hall issued a notice that the Town's Fire and Police Alarm Bylaw will be enforced. For the complete bylaw, see the Town website at sandisfieldma.gov.

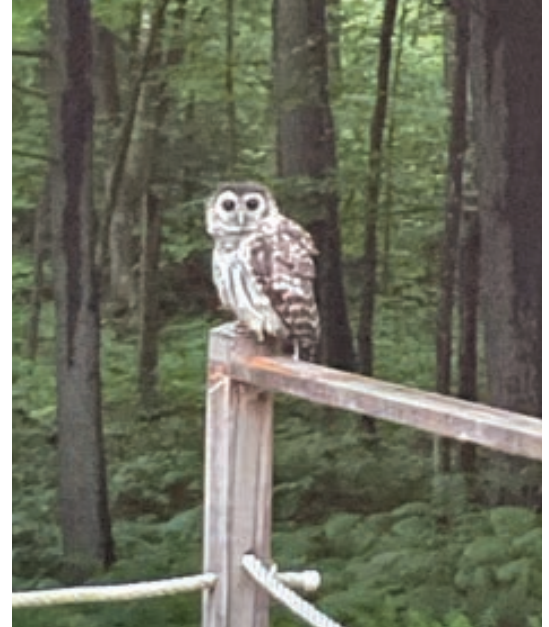
The Bylaw states that for any false alarm that occurs, the enforcing official shall be the Police Chief or Fire Chief, as appropriate, or their designees, or the Board of Selectmen, and the following fine schedule shall apply:

- First violation in a calendar year Warning
- Second violation in a calendar year \$150.00
- Third violation in a calendar year \$300.00

All emergency alarm systems shall be registered and approved by the Police or Fire Department, as appropriate, upon installation. No later than 30 days following the effective date of this bylaw, all owners/operators of property with emergency alarm systems already installed, if they have not already done so, shall register their systems with the Sandisfield Police or Fire Department, as appropriate.

The owner/operator of the property at which an alarm is installed shall ensure that Berkshire County Dispatch is provided with the 24/7 contact information for the owner/operator and at least one other contact that has full access to the property during emergency situations, and to ensure that this contact information is kept current. 

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A Different Sound

Mid-July, near dusk and near the end of "Jeopardy," my wife Jane noticed a hissing sound outside our back screen door. To me it sounded like a canned hawk cry you might hear on a wilderness documentary. We turned down the TV and heard it again.

Since it was just getting dark, I thought it could be an owl, but I've only heard barred owls here. Barred owls are fairly common in Sandisfield, but this was not their usual "Who, Who, Who cooks for you" call.

We looked outside and right there on the porch railing was a barred owl.

I just had time to aim my phone and zoom in. I tried for a second shot but the owl took off into the woods. He didn't go far. We could still hear it calling.

We heard it over the next few days, usually in the evening but sometimes in the morning. The owl looked small and may have been a youngster looking for company.

*Larry Dwyer
West Street*

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Outreach Program Announced

CHURCH GROUP READY TO ASSIST NEIGHBORS

By Ron Bernard

An Outreach Committee of New Boston Congregational Church members has been formed to assist Sandisfield residents in need of social support due to unexpected or extenuating personal circumstances.

Outreach Committee co-chair, Karlene Blass, a 29-year member of the congregation, said, "Our Town's population is older and includes some who are socially isolated, some who perhaps have meager resources or who may be recuperating without family support. We hope to bring some cheer and neighborly contact, especially around holiday time."

Examples of what the committee has in mind – to start – include sponsorship of quarterly Council on Aging (COA) luncheons. Portions will be delivered to seniors who cannot attend the luncheons.



The committee expects to be busiest around the holidays. For Valentine's Day the plan is to bake and deliver cookies to those who have lost loved ones. "During the holiday seasons of Thanksgiving and Christmas we will provide and deliver the *fixings* for a holiday meal for a family in need," said Christine Nadelman.

If you have suggestions for the committee please contact Karlene, Christine or

any member of the New Boston Church Council. (Website: newbostoncongregationalchurch.org). The committee would especially appreciate suggestions as to who might benefit from outreach (confidentiality assured). Contact: karlern55@verizon.net

The congregation has a long history of social outreach. Established in 1874, the New Boston congregation is celebrating its 150th anniversary. From the Church's first days social outreach to people in need has been a core element of the Church's mission. An auxiliary association, the New Boston Ladies Aid Society, ran community social events and welfare in Sandisfield for a century. About twenty years ago due to declining membership, aging, and other factors the Society closed. Over the past seven years the New Boston Church has seen a significant revival in its membership and interest. 🇺🇸

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: www.sandisfieldtimes.org. 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, the library, and Paige's Place; in East Otis at Katie's, Pappas, and the Knox Trail Inn. Also at the Monterey Library (outside box) and the Roadside Cafe, in Colebrook at the post office and the general store, and at the Southfield 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 at left) 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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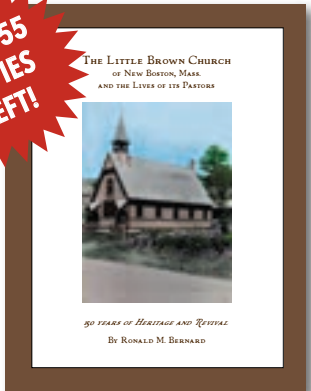
The Sandisfield Times, PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

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

SANDISFIELD HISTORY BOOK

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The Little Brown Church of New Boston, Mass is a history of Sandisfield from the perspective of the Congregational churches in Sandisfield from 1754 through today and particularly the definitive history of the venerable New Boston church and its congregation since inception in 1874. Much more than a history of a church, the book includes original and expanded research about events and local families and organizations that shaped social life in Sandisfield and in neighboring towns. All net proceeds benefit New Boston Congregational Church. Inventory is very limited so act now to be assured of a copy.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- August 3rd Cobblestone Road 8pm
- KTI Car & Bike Meet & Greet
Every Monday 6pm
- August 10th Mr. Doubtfire 8pm
- August 16th Nate Martel 6pm ★
- August 17th Generation X Rock 8pm
- August 18th Hilltown Blues Jam 2pm
- August 23rd The 413's 8pm
- August 31st Rock 201 8pm

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 summer schedule of alternate 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 of dates, 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.

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

Constitutional Limits and the Role of the Supreme Court: Lessons from Franklin Roosevelt's Struggle with a Conservative Court on Saturday, August 10 from 10:00-11:30 a.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center at 5 Hammertown Road. Part of the Bill Cohn/Val Coleman Series on American Society and Culture. Presented by Kenneth Cohen. Mr. Cohen has taught and practiced law in Boston. For more information, visit sandisfieldartscenter.org. \$10.

Annual Steak Roast on Saturday, August 10, 5:00-7:00 p.m. at Firehouse #2, Sandisfield Road. Benefit for Sandisfield Fire Department. Music from 5:00-9:00 p.m. Tickets at Farmington River General Store, A&M Auto, or from all members of the Fire Department. Call or text 413-441-2572 for tickets or questions. Limited sales at the door. Take-out available.

Gallery Opening and Reception – Small-Works Group Show on Saturday, August

17 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road. The show runs until September 8. Free.

New Boston Church Sunday Worship Service on Sunday, August 18 at 10:00 a.m. For more information and to view the calendar, visit newbostoncongregationalchurch.org. All are welcome. The New Boston Church is located on Route 57 near the New Boston Inn.

New Boston Inn's Acoustic Music with Blue Yonder on Sunday, August 25 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the New Boston Inn at the intersection of Routes 8 and 57 in Sandisfield.

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.

SAVE THE DATE

Recreation Committee's Pig Roast on Saturday, September 14, at 5:00 p.m. at American Legion, Post #456 on Rt. 8 in New Boston. Food, live music, bouncy house. All ages welcome. Free, but please reserve a spot by September 4 at sandisfieldevents@recreationcommittee.info.

EVENTS IN SURROUNDING TOWNS

Berkshire Mobile Farmer's Market on Tuesdays from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. at the Monterey Community Center. Pay what you can afford. Accepts state and federal food benefits. Meats, maple syrup, cheese, eggs, and vegetables.

Monterey Outdoor Yoga at Lake Garfield beach on Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m. Donation based.

Sheffield Farmers Market on Fridays from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. at 124 Main Street in Sheffield. Local food and crafts.

Great Barrington Farmers Market on Saturdays 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.

New Marlborough Farmers Market on Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on the Village Green located in front of the Old Inn on the Green on Route 57.

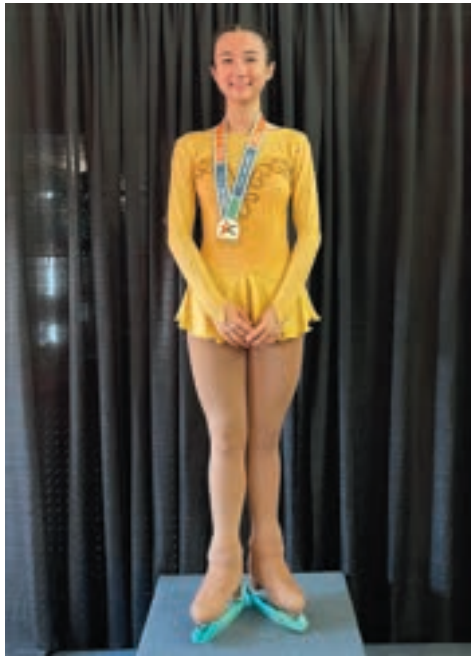
Art Lab: Mold a Memory on weekends from 10:00-12:00 at Chesterwood at 4 Williamsville Road in the Glendale section of Stockbridge. This is a free program for all children and their caregivers. Make your own monument or work with others to design something unique. Free admission also includes self-guided grounds tour passes. For more information, visit chesterwood.org. Free, but please register.

Redware on Display-A Tour with Lorraine German on Thursday, August 8 from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Bidwell House Museum at 100 Art School Road in Monterey. For more information, visit bidwellhousemuseum.org. Free-\$20.

Banjo Pickin' Gals on Saturday, August 10 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at the Bidwell House Museum on 100 Art School Road in Monterey. For more information, visit bidwellhousemuseum.org. Free-\$20.

Music Brings Communities Together -- Simon Guthrie and Amy Attias on Saturday, August 10 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Becket Arts Center. Bring a lawn chair and a picnic. Free. Donations welcome.

Music Brings Communities Together-Bobbie Sweet and BSweet Band on Saturday, August 24 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Becket Arts Center. Bobbie Sweet is a singer-songwriter, engaging storyteller, and dynamic performer. Free and open to the public. Donations welcome.



Sandisfield Skater Wins Gold

Ashley Kopiec won the figure skating competition at the 2024 California State Games of America. She competed

against 16 other skaters in the Excel Juvenile Plus category.

The biennial Olympic-style games, held July 17-21 this year in San Diego, drew contestants in a wide variety of sports. The competitors were California athletes and State Games medal winners from thirty other states. Ashley qualified for the games by medaling (1st-3rd) in a registered state-game competition.

A daughter of Steve and Mieko Kopiec, Ashley is spending her summer break at the International Skating Center of Connecticut rink in Simsbury where she practices a total of 8 hours over a 4-5 day week.

A June graduate of Monument Mountain High School, this fall Ashley will begin a double major in the highly competitive fields of Mechanical Engineering and Software Engineering at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York. 🎓

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A spotlight on the amazing talents of our neighbors

August 3 TAYLOR MAC and HEATHER CHRISTIAN On Creativity

4:30 pm Taylor Mac is joined by Heather Christian, as they discuss creativity and offer selections from their consideration of Clarence Thomas entitled, "Clarence, in a Pause."

August 24 THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY Eric Foner and Kerri Greenidge

4:30 pm Historian Eric Foner is joined by acclaimed author Kerri Greenidge, to discuss her latest book and the legacy of slavery in the U.S. today.

Sept 14 MOZART TO PIAZZOLLA: A Panorama of Musical Expression

4:30 pm Violinist Eugene Drucker, cellist Roberta Cooper, pianist Gili Melamed-Lev thrill the audience with the music of Brahms, Beethoven, Piazzolla, Schumann, and Mozart in a fast-moving and fun-filled afternoon.

Sept 21 ARKAI: Crossroads

4:30 pm Genre-defying string music, blending everything from classic ballads to fascinating and exciting new music. Prepare to be amazed!

Oct 5 SIMON WINCHESTER with LINDA GREENHOUSE

4:30 pm "Election 2024" The widely acclaimed author of more than 30 books, in conversation with Linda Greenhouse, longtime reporter on the Supreme Court for *The New York Times*, discussing the upcoming elections.

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