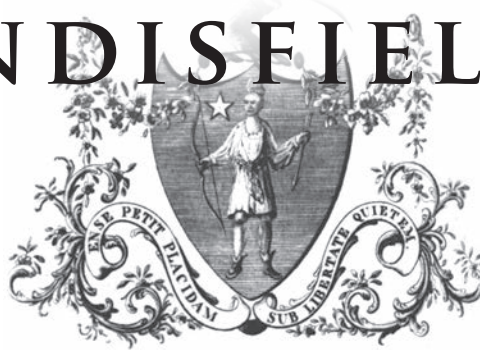


THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



Plebis

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume XVI, Number 2

May 2025



THE SNOWS OF APRIL

By Ron Bernard

The month of April is squarely in meteorological Spring. That's a fact. And April may be "springtime" in, say, Washington D.C.

But never here.

This year we were reminded about that with two inches greeting us on April 12 and four more the next morning. As far as I am concerned this dreary month is an annual 'April Fool's' joke. It is not so funny for beleaguered Sandisfielders yearning for springtime. And never mind about April ice which is another story.

According to the *Farmer's Almanac*, the historical "last frost date" here at the 1,000-foot elevation is May 13. New Boston is 758 feet; Sandisfield Center is 1,577. So, you there in the hills, better keep your ice scrapers handy if not your shovels. In this area measurable snow has fallen in May at least twice in recent times.

I have been keeping track of snowfalls at my place (simple ruler-and-eyeball technique) since late-fall 2014, a just barely adequate period to call it a trend. What does the chart on page 2 tell us?

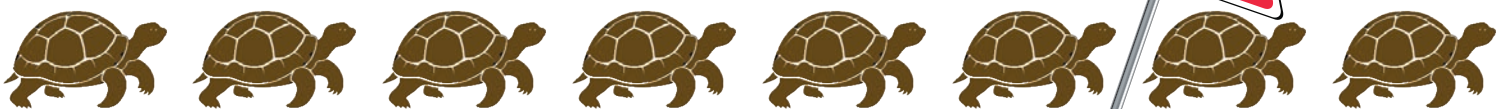
First, averages do not mean much in the short-term because monthly and seasonal amounts vary widely, especially in the case of March which seems snowier than in the past.

However, the pattern suggests that our winter snow amounts are trending lower and arrivals perhaps a little

Cont'd on p.2

Will It Ever End?

Unlike the rest of us, Ruby the dog was delighted to be greeted by about four inches of fresh snow Saturday morning, April 13. Her favorite human, Patricia Hubbard of Sandisfield Center, posted this image on Connect Sandisfield titled, "Ridiculous!"



The Snows of April

Cont'd from p.1

later. The five-year period, 2014-19, saw an average of 74 inches here. The average for six years, 2019-25, was only 58 inches, a twenty-two percent difference. Of course, we cannot count on that because a couple monster storms in the few years ahead could affect the short-term trend. But it feels right.

For comparison, the chart includes possibly more precise snowfall tallies at Pittsfield airport for twenty-nine years, 1991-2020. Some years overlap with Sandisfield.

Think Spring! ❄️

Snowfall in Sandisfield 2014 - 2025

Inches by month in Sandisfield measured in the Beech Plain section of town (elevation 1420 ft)

Years:	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Season Total
2014-15		18	8	22	39	10		97
2015-16		0	1	5	17	1		24
2016-17	5	20	22	18	18	19		102
2017-18		2	12	16	14	44	9	97
2018-19		12	4	15	11	8		50
2019-20		10	25	25	5	4	7	76
2020-21	4	4	15	13	27	0		63
2021-22		2	6	19	9	8		44
2022-23		2	16	7	10	34		69
2023-24		2	1	22	4	23		52
2024-25		4	10	7	14	4	6	45
11-year average	0.8	6.9	10.9	15.4	15.3	14.1	2.0	65.4
Pittsfield airport	n/a	3.5	15.2	18.3	19.3	13.4	3.1	72.8

Historical (1991-2020)



30 years!

MAY 30 - JUNE 1
GRAND OPENING
WEEKEND

Celebrating the
Landscape We Live



Sandisfield Memorial Day Parade and BBQ

Sunday, May 25th



- 9AM Bike Decorating and parade line-up at Old Town Hall
- 10AM Parade begins at Old Town Hall
- 10:15AM Honor Guard & Service at New Boston Cemetery
- Parade will make a stop at Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center
- Parade ends at the American Legion with the wreath ceremony
- BBQ to follow at American Legion

**Sponsored by the
Sandisfield Recreation &
Memorial Day Committees**

For information on how to participate or
volunteer please email:
sandisfieldevents@recreationcommittee.info



NOW HIRING

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY FIRE CHIEF

The Town of Sandisfield is seeking qualified candidates to fill the position of Fire Chief.

The Fire Chief will fill the vacant leadership role and guide the Department through the process of reorganization. Position is responsible for all operations of the Fire Department to include the Fire Rescue response and Emergency Medical Services. Position is responsible for the overall management, preplanning, implementation and administration of the EMS department and the provision of emergency medical services in conformance with applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws, professional standards and Sandisfield's EMS Policy and Procedure Manual. Under supervision of Town Manager.

The complete job description is available for review at www.sandisfieldma.gov. Please apply on the Town of Sandisfield website: www.sandisfieldma.gov and feel free to reach out to Laurie McArthur (lmcarthur@sandisfieldma.gov) with any questions. ❄️

A Special Report: 1

PERSPECTIVES: THE FIRE STATION CONTROVERSIES

THE SELECT BOARD: A VOTER’S GUIDE TO THE WARRANT ARTICLE:
DONATION, PURCHASE, OR EMINENT DOMAIN

AN INTERVIEW WITH FSDI PRESIDENT RALPH MORRISON

On following pages 4 and 5 are reports that are important to understanding the proposal that the Select Board will present at the Annual Town Meeting (May 17) regarding the Town’s fire stations, as well as understanding the ongoing conflict between the Town’s Select Board and the Sandisfield Fire Department, Inc.

A few residents might ask, “Don’t you mean the Sandisfield Fire Department?”

In this case, no. The subject is the Sandisfield Fire Department, Inc. (SFDI), a nonprofit organization that owns the Town’s two fire stations. These facilities are leased to the Town for use by the Sandisfield Fire Department, a separate municipal entity.

One source of conflict is that lease. The Town currently pays SFDI about \$10,000 per year to lease the two fire stations for use by the Sandisfield Fire Department. Since 2006, the earliest date for Town records, the taxpayers have paid over \$130,000 to rent what is in effect their own fire house. And like everywhere else, the rent goes up – in 2015, for example, the charge for both stations was \$8,000; this year the charge is \$10,566.06. Why would a nonprofit set up to benefit a municipality charge that municipality rent to store trucks and equipment necessary to accomplish the stated goals of the nonprofit?

Another point of conflict is the memory of many in Town that Station #2, built by donation and much local expertise, was to have been deeded to the Town after completion. Barbara Cormier, whose family has been in Town for decades and has served as chair and a member of many Town boards and committees, wrote on ConnectSandisfield, “I was there when we built the fire station. I was a member of the fire department and an EMT. I love our firemen and women and will always support them. This building was built on the back of many local tradesmen. My husband and sons were part of that group. They were told by Ralph it was a TOWN building. Then he said it would be turned over in one year.”

To help rectify those issues and others, the Select Board is currently proposing that the Town vote at the upcoming Annual Town Meeting to acquire the two firehouses from SFDI by “gift, purchase, or eminent domain.”

This would effectively end the formal relationship between the Town and SFDI, aside from any voluntary collaboration going forward.

Other towns benefit from fire association nonprofits that support their local fire department, particularly Monterey and Great Barrington, and Sandisfield could as well.

Bill Price, Editor

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CANDIDATES, 2025 7

ARTS CENTER REOPENS 9

SEEDS AT RISK. 11





SNOW FARM is having a pop-up sale at our greenhouse. We have beautiful healthy vegetable starts.

**HOURS: May 17 & 18 from 9-4
May 24 & 25 from 9-4**

WHERE: 16 South Beech Plain Road, Sandisfield.

A Special Report: 2 A Voter's Guide to the Fire Station Article

DONATION, PURCHASE, OR EMINENT DOMAIN

By The Sandisfield Select Board

Following the FY26 Budget and Special Article Information Session on April 16, 2025, several important questions were raised regarding the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) Warrant article related to the Town's potential acquisition of the two Sandisfield fire stations.

The Select Board would like to provide further explanation and context.

WHAT DOES THE WARRANT ARTICLE PROPOSE?

The article asks voters to authorize the Select Board to negotiate to acquire the fire stations located at 207 Sandisfield Road (Station #2) and 79 South Main Street (Station #1) by gift, purchase, or eminent domain. It proposes a total appropriation of \$765,000 to cover acquisition and associated costs. Of that total, \$440,000 would come from Free Cash, and \$325,000 from the General Stabilization Account.

WHERE DO NEGOTIATIONS STAND?

Town Counsel is actively engaged in discussions with legal representatives of the Sandisfield Fire Department, Inc. (SFDI). The goal is to reach an agreement no later than May 1, 2025, ahead of the Annual Town Meeting on May 17, 2025.

Three potential outcomes are under consideration:

1. Gift (Preferred Option)

The Select Board is hopeful that SFDI will donate the fire stations, preserving their use for public safety and honoring SFDI's founding mission. This option best aligns with the Town's values and ensures a continued legacy of community service.

2. Purchase

If a donation cannot be reached, a traditional sale of the properties may proceed. This would involve negotiating a fair price with SFDI and transferring title through a standard real estate closing process.

3. Eminent Domain

The Town may pursue eminent domain, either cooperatively (a "friendly taking") or unilaterally. Two independent appraisals determined a total value of \$765,000, with Station #1 valued at \$205,000 and Station #2 at \$560,000.

A friendly taking offers benefits such as:

- Clear, uncontested title
- Faster acquisition for public use
- Potential for reduced compensation if agreed upon by the owner and a formal waiver is signed relinquishing any future claims

Should mutual agreement not be reached, the Town would proceed with a standard taking as a last resort, paying the full appraised value. And while the Select Board remains firm that a donation or reduced sale is in the best interest of the Town, we are optimistic that should eminent domain be required, SFDI would reinvest the proceeds in equipment or apparatus that benefit the department.

WHY IS THIS ACQUISITION NECESSARY?

The Town currently leases both fire stations from SFDI, but is responsible for funding their operation and maintenance costs. However, the Town does not own the buildings, leaving long-term operations vulnerable.

Recent actions by SFDI—including the removal of the Town as the designated recipient of the buildings in its Articles of Incorporation and ongoing concerns around transparency and financial accountability—have underscored the need for change.

In addition, the 2024 Collins Center EMS Study, available online at www.sandisfieldma.gov, recommended Town ownership of emergency service facilities to ensure stability and control. The

Select Board strongly believes that acquiring these firehouses is a critical step toward safeguarding public safety, improving governance, and ensuring fiscal responsibility.

WHAT HAPPENS TO SFDI AFTER THE ACQUISITION?

SFDI may continue to operate as a nonprofit partner following the acquisition. Nonprofits can play an important role in supporting public services by seeking private donations, grants, and fundraising revenue—resources that can complement Town funding and enhance operations.

The Select Board remains hopeful that, regardless of the outcome of the acquisition, SFDI will continue its longstanding role in supporting the Sandisfield Fire Department and the broader community with transparency and mutual collaboration.



Shire Forestry

Adam Brown
Consulting Forester
MA License # 461

P.O. Box 171
Sandisfield, MA 01255

shireforestry@gmail.com
Cell: 413.854.7525

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

A Special Report: 3

Q&A WITH SFDI PRESIDENT RALPH MORRISON

By Larry Dwyer

Last month The Times published “A Proposal for Our Two Firehouses,” with a statement of intention from the Select Board. On April 15, The Times interviewed SFDI Board President Ralph Morrison, who for many years was Sandisfield’s Fire Chief. Morrison, who owns A&M Auto in Sandisfield, has been Board President of SFDI since its inception in 1986.

Editorial comments for clarification are in [brackets] following Ralph’s comments.

Question: What is your take on the issues between the SFD and the SFDI?

Ralph Morrison: One thing I’d like to clear up is that a lot of what is being said about the SFDI are just not true. People are saying that I own the firehouses. This is not true. The firehouses are owned by the Corporation, which is controlled by the Board [of Directors]. The issue isn’t between the Sandisfield Fire Department and SFDI, the issue is between the Select Board and SFDI.

What do you think about the article on the Town Meeting Warrant, to acquire, by gift, purchase, or eminent domain, the properties located at 207 Sandisfield Road and 79 South Main Street?

Our lawyer has tried contacting the Town twice to negotiate, but the Town has not responded to our attorney at this time. Back in January the SFDI attorney mentioned to the Select Board that we would be interested in possibly making a deal. The SFDI wasn’t even aware of [Selectman] Robert Fedell bringing the appraisers into the buildings until after [it was done]. SFDI also hadn’t seen copies of the [amount of the] appraisal until after Article #12 was put on the warrant.

[Clarification: Town Counsel and SFDI’s attorney have been engaged in ongoing discussions in recent weeks regarding the potential acquisition of the two fire stations. The Town’s objective is to reach a mutually agreeable resolution prior to the ATM. Possible outcomes under consideration include the transfer of ownership through a donation from SFDI, a sale at a reduced price, or a cooperative agreement to proceed with a “friendly taking” under eminent domain. It is the position of the Select Board that they hope SFDI will donate or sell the parcels at a significantly reduced rate.]

The SFDI recently changed Article 4 of its Articles of Incorporation which originally said that if SFDI was dissolved that the assets, after paying debts, would revert to the Town. After revision, Article 4 now says that the assets would go to other non-profit organizations. Why was this changed?

Our attorney has advised us that we can’t legally give the assets of the corporation to the Town [if the corporation is dissolved]. We can only give the assets to a like-minded non-profit charitable organization.

[Clarification: While IRS and state regulations do require nonprofits upon dissolution to transfer their assets to another charitable organization with a similar mission, such transfers can include public entities – such as a municipality – provided the assets will continue to be used for a charitable or public purpose. Since the Town’s intended use of the fire stations directly aligns with SFDI’s original mission of supporting public safety and emergency services, transferring ownership of the fire stations to the Town seems to be a valid and mission-consistent outcome.]

What would happen if the Town were to purchase the firehouses? Where would the money go from the SFDI?

The corporation was set up to support the Fire Department. It would still continue to support the SFD.

Why was SFDI created in the first place?

The corporation was created to build Firehouse #2 and receive donations to support the purchase of equipment to better serve the residents of the Town. The Town can’t accept [cash] donations, and any donations made to the corporation are tax deductible.

Also, when we built Firehouse #2, it cost \$200,000 and we had to take out a mortgage. Bob Green, who was a financial advisor for Camp Crestwood in Sandisfield, was given \$100,000 from the corporation to invest. After one year, he turned that \$100,000 into \$200,000, and we paid off the mortgage.

The corporation also purchased equipment for SFD and purchased a Rescue Truck, two of the four ATVs, and a brush truck to fight forest fires, and multiple tankers throughout the years. The SFDI also pays for the insurance of the buildings, but the town pays for the insurance of the vehicles. [Verification of SFDI-purchased vehicles has not been made.]

The Town no longer has a tanker truck, and the corporation was going to purchase a tanker truck. This is a big problem, because if there is a house fire, the fire department will have trouble supplying water to the pumper. The Town only owns two firetrucks, the ambulance, and two ATVs.

[Clarification: The tanker truck was lost in an accident in 2023, prompting a dispute between the Select Board and SFDI regarding the resulting insurance proceeds. SFDI asserts that, as the organization that originally purchased the vehicle and leased it to the Town, it is entitled to the proceeds. However, because the vehicle was titled in the Town’s name, the insurance company issued the payment directly to the Town.

[Additionally, the Select Board maintains that the Town insured the vehicle and funded its maintenance throughout its operational life, further supporting the Board’s position that the insurance proceeds rightfully belong to the Town. As of this writing, the matter remains unresolved, and the tanker has not yet been replaced.]

Cont’d on p.6

A Special Report

Q&A with SFDI President Ralph Morrison

Cont'd from p.5

Why did the SFDI purchase Firehouse #1 [79 S. Main St] from the American Legion?

The American Legion asked us if we wanted to buy the building, because they could no longer afford to maintain it. [The building was Sandisfield's earliest fire station.] It needed repairs and only a small portion of the building was heated, which housed the vehicles. The Board [of SFDI] voted to buy the building and then the corporation upgraded and paid for the expenses to upgrade the building. [Clarification: Cash donations to SFDI were solicited through public service ads in The Sandisfield Times and local tradesmen volunteered time and expertise to conduct some of the renovations.]

The Fire Department has always furnished a vehicle for the Fire Chief. What is the status of the vehicle now?

Well, since I was always available for calls, the Fire Chief's vehicle was kept on my property [here at A&M]. Since I am no longer the Fire Chief, I cannot speak on what the status of the vehicle is.

[Clarification: The Ford Explorer Responder vehicle is currently stationed at Fire Station #2, 79 S. Main Street, for emergency use.]

The Fire Chief who replaced you recently resigned. One complaint was that he wasn't furnished with office space. What was the reason for this?

The lease for the corporation said that we only had to provide space to house the emergency vehicles. There was never any requirement to provide office space. I used my office in the back of my garage as the office of the Fire Chief. Currently at Fire Station #1, the office there is used for all of the EMS administrative work. SFDI and the Select Board had a meeting to discuss office space, in which the Chief was supposed to reach out so we could work with him on getting office space figured out. SFDI hadn't received any form [of] inquiry from the Chief since that meeting.

[Clarification: At the October 30, 2024, Select Board meeting with SFDI, the topic of office space for the Fire Chief was discussed. There was miscommunication as to which party was responsible for initiating follow-up communication, as the Select Board understood that SFDI would contact the Chief directly. Additionally, it is important to note that both independent appraisals of Fire Station #2, 207 Sandisfield Road, identify designated office space on the upper level of the facility.]

Another complaint was that the new Fire Chief wasn't given access to the fire department records. Is this true?

No, the Chief was never denied access to any department records. The records were previously kept in the Chief's office at my garage. All of the records were stored here [at A&M Auto] in a locked office in which

the Fire and EMS administrative work was all done. Then once adequate storage was available it was all transferred to the firehouse.

Your business, A&M Auto, used to service the Town's emergency vehicles. After the tanker truck accident in 2023, the Town said your business could no longer service any Town vehicles. Has this inversely affected your business?

No, it hasn't inversely affected my business. The convenience for the Town might have been affected but there is no change here.

[Clarification: This prohibition was made formal at a Select Board work session in October 2023, as a result of learning that safety inspections for multiple emergency service vehicles had lapsed and service records had not been maintained by Chief Morrison despite owning A&M Auto which regularly conducted maintenance on the vehicles.]

Will the Firehouse still be available for the Town's Annual Meeting?

Yes. The Annual Town Meeting has been held at Firehouse #2 previously and will continue to be available to the Town for events. The firehouses are used by Town committees, including the Recreation Committee, the Historical Society, and funeral services for Town employees. The firehouses can also be set up as emergency shelters in the event of a natural disaster for the Town of Sandisfield, which has been utilized numerous times throughout the years.

[The ATM will be held at Fire Station #2, 207 Sandisfield Rd, on Saturday, May 17, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.]



Mill River Folk School

A non-profit school that provides a variety of hands-on, skill-based learning of traditional crafts.

Register now for our 2025 spring/summer workshops!

www.millriverfolkschool.org
steve@millriverfolkschool.org



Mill River, MA
Steve Butler, Founder/Director




The New Boston Congregational Church is seeking donation of a serviceable vacuum cleaner.

**Contact
Scott Stone at
413 258-4505.**

Thank You!



Candidates Walking This Year

By Times Reporters

With only one candidate for each office this year, it's a stretch to say anyone is running for election. All the candidates were nominated at the Town Caucus in March.

John Field: *For a second 3-year term on the Select Board.*

A life-long resident of Sandisfield, John is owner/operator of John Field Tree Service. Having served on the Planning Board, he was first elected to the Select Board in 2022. He lives with his family on Rood Hill Road.



Dominic Konstam: *For a fifth 1-year term as Town Moderator.*

Dominic, a member of the Planning Board, has been reelected Moderator each year since 2021. He told The Times: "One thing I try to do as moderator is make sure everyone gets a chance to have their voice heard, and even more that they feel comfortable speaking up. Everyone knows the feelings of wanting to share but being too nervous or feeling like people don't want to hear what they have to say – so I try my best to help them overcome that."

Jeff Bye: *For a 3-year term on the Board of Assessors.*

A resident of New Hartford Road, Jeff is finishing a 1-year term as an Assessor, having filled in for a person who resigned. He was chairman of the Town's Broadband Committee from 2016 to 2022 and has been a member of the Planning Board since 2023.



Stephen Rubenstein: *For a second 3-year term on the Board of Health.*

Steve, a retired pediatric dentist, wrote for his first-term election in 2022 that his background and interests keep him up-to-date in health matters and help him "with assisting our town in what impacts us and what can be done."



Ralph Leavenworth: *For a 2-year term on the Board of Health.*

A resident of West New Boston for nearly 50 years, Ralph is a retired union pipefitter

While there may be no need for election signs on your or your neighbors' lawns or fields this year, the fact that these seven individuals are willing to step up to help run our Town and serve its committees and boards is a good thing. Without such volunteer residents, Sandisfield would grind to a halt. And a few of them are standing for reelection for a second term. Our Moderator is coming back for a fifth term.

Our congratulations to each of them, and a big thank you from everyone in Town.

with an environmental safety background. His election would finish Keith Larson's term.



Douglas Miner: *For a second 3-year term on the School Committee.*

Doug and his family moved to Cronk Road in Sandisfield in 2016. He has served as Town Clerk since 2022. Of his first term on the School Committee, he said: "We did hard and good work on the RDA revision. The Farmington River School and I would like to stay on the team that helps keep that success going."



Calvin Rodman: *For a 5-year term on the Planning Board.*

Calvin and his wife Emily Melchior have owned and operated Riiska Brook Orchard for three years. They have lived on Fox Road since 2015.

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- Residential and commercial solar
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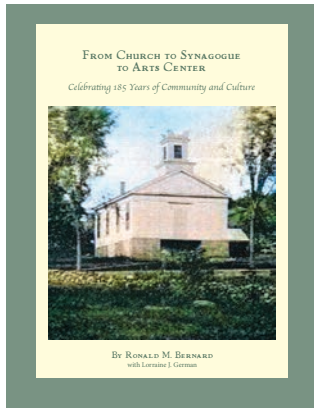
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Arts Center Commemorative History Announced

BOOK SALES TO BENEFIT THE SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER

By Times Reporters

Many of our readers know that this year is the 30th anniversary of the Sandisfield Arts Center.

Tradesmen have been working since last fall to renovate parts of the iconic building, originally an 1840s Baptist church, followed for many decades as a Jewish synagogue. The renovations, the first in more than ten years, are aimed at providing a more comfortable experience for patrons. This summer, long suffering theater goers will finally rejoice about central air conditioning. Meanwhile, art enthusiasts will find a bright new upgraded gallery downstairs.

The anniversary and improvements inspired local history expert, Ron Bernard to author his latest book about Sandisfield history, *From Church to Synagogue to Arts Center: Celebrating 185 Years of Community and Culture*.

Ron told The Times: "This building, almost two hundred years old, has a unique history. Badly deteriorated, it was saved twice, each at crucial points, by resident groups who understood its importance to community life. The first time was in 1921 by the Sons of Abraham congregation who converted it to a synagogue. It happened again in 1995 when remaining members of the congregation teamed with others to save the beloved building as an arts center for everyone."

Bernard explained that although there were three quite different caretakers over all that time and at least six renovations, each custodial group understood their responsibility – in fact, duty – to preserve the building. "It's a Sandisfield landmark," he said, "and important to the heritage of the Town."

He added, "Repairs and improvements were made during the building's lifetime without destroying the architecture, character, or its original purpose as a cultural center. In 2006 the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as 'The Montville Baptist Church.'"

"I wrote this book as a tribute and thanks to those many preservation-minded people who ensured that future generations would also enjoy and appreciate this marvelous place," Ron said. "It is a gem."

The book, in hard cover only, is 400-plus pages. It is laid out in sections: The Baptists, The Synagogue, The Arts Center, and a concluding section about the history of the building, its renovations, and everything known about the property in general. The Appendix includes the complete nomination or application for listing the building on the National Register of Historic Places.

"There is something for everyone in here, early American and local history enthusiasts, anyone connected to the history of the Jewish 'colony' in Sandisfield, and anyone who has participated at or supported the Arts Center in the last thirty years. Each section could stand alone, but I decided to take a comprehensive approach because the building itself connects three disparate groups and eras of Sandisfield history. It is both a keepsake for the living as well as our gift to the coming generations."

"I'm grateful to Lorraine German who contributed Part II (The Synagogue) which expands on her 2018 book, *Soil and Shul: The Untold Story of Sandisfield's Jewish Colony*. Lorraine, together with preservationist, Jeff Gonyeau, also settled the controversies surrounding when and why the building was raised several feet in the 19th century which involved original research and discovery. The findings will be sent to the Massachusetts Historical Commission to correct and amplify what earlier consultants submitted to support the NRHP nomination.

The book will be out in time for the 'grand re-opening' of the Arts Center May 30-June 1. Weekend events and festivities will kick off Friday, May 30, 5-7 p.m. with grand reopening, ribbon cutting, gallery show, and reception. On Saturday at 10 a.m. Ron will give a talk about the fascinating unique history of the building. Don't miss it!

All proceeds from the talk and book sales will benefit the Sandisfield Arts Center. 🍷

PRE-PUBLICATION ORDER FORM

Commemorative History Book To Benefit the Sandisfield Arts Center

From Church to Synagogue to Arts Center Celebrating 185 Years of Community and Culture

☐ Please reserve ____ copy(s) at \$45 each (sales tax included) plus \$6 each for shipping if necessary.*

☐ I'll save the shipping charge and pick up my book(s) in Sandisfield.*

Make check payable and mail to:

Sandisfield Arts Center, PO Box 31, Sandisfield, MA 01255

Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

*Email: _____

*Phone: _____

Enclosed is my check No. _____ for \$ _____

*Required for all orders.

For more information, contact Ronbernard@aol.com

SAC 5/25



We're Open Again!

MONTHS OF RENOVATION TO HONOR 30TH ANNIVERSARY

By Suzanne OConnell

It has been a busy winter at the Sandisfield Arts Center as we prepare for our thirtieth anniversary of our organization (1995-2025) and our upcoming performance season.

Thanks to the generosity of foundations, the Garfield family, and numerous generous donors (see our webpage), the building has undergone extensive renovation.

Probably the most significant change is the removal of the old oil burner and installation of heat pumps for both air conditioning and heating. No longer will we have to distribute hand fans to help patrons stay cooler during sweltering summer performances. And substantial insulation now fills the attic and other areas, which will help to maintain comfortable temperatures.

Shows on stage will look even better thanks to a new stage lighting bar, designed by Thomas Rindge and installed by Berkshire Production Resources run by

Maia Robbins-Zust, who along with Peter Baiamonte donated their time and expertise. To top it off, sound will be improved thanks to new audio cables and newer speakers which were also installed.

In the downstairs gallery, new sheetrock, lighting, and paint will improve our ability to display art shows and allow them to be hung and removed more easily.

The amazing transformation was also made possible by the donation of talent, time, and energy by Sandisfield architects Nick Elton and Jerry Herman, the project management of Jean Atwater-Williams, and the careful carpentry of Steve Crump.

TO KICK OFF OUR NEXT 30 SEASONS

Come see for yourself at our grand opening for the renovated building, Friday, May 30, from 5:00-7:00 p.m.

The theme for this season is "Celebrate Sandisfield." The opening exhibit, arranged by Josie Miner, is the "Landscape We Live" which pays tribute to Sandisfield – the topography, trees, totems, rocks, rivers, animals, and artists who call it home. There will be joy to share and we hope everyone in Sandisfield can indulge in the joy with us. If you miss the opening reception the gallery will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 11:00-3:00 p.m. and during other performances until July 6.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Saturday, May 31 will be busy. At 10:00 a.m., local historian and author Ron Bernard will introduce his latest book – almost two years in the making, *From Church to Synagogue to Arts Center: Celebrating 185 years of Community and Culture*.

His talk with slides will be all about the history of the building and the three very different communities that cherished this place. If you've read his earlier Sandisfield history books, you know you are in store for a treat. Proceeds from book sales and the talk to benefit the Arts Center.

Sandisfield talent doesn't stop there, also on Saturday, May 31 at 2:00 p.m., local poets Hannah Fries and Hilde Weisert will read poems inspired by our landscape. At 4:00 p.m., a reception will honor Sandisfield's Unsung Heroes,

Cont'd on p.10



MAY 30 - JUNE 1

GRAND OPENING WEEKEND

Celebrating our 30th anniversary and long-anticipated renovations of the Arts Center. We're cool, with climate-friendly AC and a spiffed-up gallery!



FRI., MAY 30: **The Landscape We Live**

Group show celebrating the beauty of the land around us.
Opening reception 5-7 pm. Free

SAT., MAY 31, 10 AM: **From Church to Synagogue to Arts Center: Celebrating 185 Years of Community and Culture**

Slide show and talk by **Ron Bernard**. \$15 (includes \$5 toward purchase of one book)

SAT., MAY 31, 2 PM: **Sandisfield in Poetry**

Local poets **Hannah Fries** and **Hilde Weisert** read poems inspired by our landscape. Free

SAT., MAY 31, 4 PM: **Singing Sandisfield's Unsung Heroes**

A tribute to some local community stalwarts. Free

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

Arts Center: We're Open Again!*Cont'd from p.9*

the people who contribute so much to our community but often go unnoticed.

It will be hard to top such a fabulous weekend, but we plan to do it again the first weekend in June which will be dedicated to horses.

On Saturday, June 7 at 10:00 a.m., Kari Weil of Monterey will talk about Horse Sense. She specializes in human-animal interactions and rides at Sandisfield's Sunny Rose Farm. And who better to celebrate than Rose Nelson who runs Sunny Rose Farm. That will happen between 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Three popular writers who have written books about horses will hold a panel discussion about writing and horses: Courtney Maum (memoir), Donnaldson Brown (novel) and Barbara Newman, (YA book). The event will culminate with Rose Nelson talking about her journey and her stable.

The next day, Sunday, June 8 at 2:00 p.m., will feature the "Poetry of Horses." Local poets and citizens (you) will have the opportunity to read favorite horse poems including Maxine Kumin, whose poems reflect her connection to the horses she loved and bred on her farm. 🐾

Sandisfield Ladies Book Club

Thursday, May 22 at 6:00 p.m., the Sandisfield Women's Book Group will meet to discuss *A Council of Dolls* by Mona Susan Power at the Sandisfield Library.

This historical fiction spans three generations of Dakota women from the late 19th century to the present day. It is a tale of strong women who tell their story in part through their treasured dolls.

Master Plan Survey**What Do You Want for Sandisfield?****SEND IDEAS AND OPINIONS AND CONCERNS***By Jeff Bye, Planning Board member*

The survey for a revised Master Plan for Sandisfield is underway. Gathering information is proceeding slowly but steadily. We've received many surveys already and would like to have yours.

We're collecting information about what you would like to see in your hometown and how we can plan for our own future. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) is working with the Planning Board and will publish the revised Plan in 2026.



The survey is available either online or by printed copies that are available for pick up and drop off.

If possible, please use the QR code and the URL (www.Survey-monkey.cmk/r/sandisfieldMP) to respond to the survey via the website BRPC has made available to make data collection easier.

If you'd prefer, paper copies of the survey are available at Town buildings, the post office, and the transfer station. 🐾

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Seed Collection/Research at Risk

SHORT-SIGHTED COST CUTTING

By Tom Christopher

If you are a gardener like me, you are probably starting vegetables and fruits from seed right now. We gardeners take for granted the appearance of new and improved varieties that make our food growing easier every year, like the new tomatoes I'll be starting soon which have a resistance to the blight which attacked my patch last year.

We take such advances for granted, just as we take for granted full bins in the produce section of our supermarkets. If you are one of our local farmers, such support often makes the difference between a bumper harvest versus crop failure.



All these things, though, are under threat, thanks to the budget cutters in Washington who recently zeroed-out the staff of the National Plant Germplasm System.

The financial savings from this cut will be negligible: **the total annual budget of this program was \$40 million, less than half the cost of a single new jet fighter.**

The consequences, however, are going to be immeasurable.

Founded in 1898, the National Plant Germplasm System (NPGS) as of January of this year included 600,000 strains of 200 different species of crop plants. That may seem excessive to a DOGE budget cutter, but as Dr. Iago Hale, a crop plant breeder at the University of New Hampshire explained to me in a conversation I recorded for my podcast, "Growing Greener," the expansiveness of the collection is precisely its strength.

Consider the NPGS, he said, as a library of solutions. The genetics of our foundational food crops are intentionally narrow. Farmers want to grow only the most productive strains and they want them to flourish under current conditions and ripen on a prescribed schedule.

The farmers' enemies, crop diseases, follow the opposite strategy. They are genetically fluid, constantly evolving to overcome the plants' natural defenses and develop immunity to the farmers' protective sprays. When that happens, plant breeders have gone to the NPGS collections to find strains of the endangered crop that have a natural resistance to the new disease variant and bred those genetics into the commercial seed strains.

This is exactly what saved the global wheat crop, Dr. Hale added, in 1999 when a new variant of stem rust, a devastating fungal disease of that grain, appeared in Uganda. That may seem a long way from America's breadbaskets in the Great Plains and the Pacific Northwest, but fungal spores, once swept up into the upper atmosphere, can float for thousands of miles. By identifying resistant wheat strains in the NPGS collection and interbreeding them with existing favorites, however, plant breeders were able not only to save the harvest of Ugandan farmers but also those of farmers around the world.

In one essential respect, Dr. Hale pointed out, the NPGS collection is unlike a library. What the NPGS has collected are living materials, and as such, they will die unless carefully tended. Skilled management is needed to periodically renew the stored plant materials. Seeds may last for years if kept at the proper temperatures and humidities, and some plant materials will survive a long time when frozen in liquid nitrogen. Other crops are more perishable. Potato strains can only be maintained by planting out and harvesting every year. Even the genetic integrity of those durable seeds may be lost if planted out improperly so that they cross-pollinate with relatives.

SHAKE YOUR FIST!

WRITE TO SOMEBODY

If you agree with Tom that eliminating the NPGS could have a serious impact on U.S. and world agriculture, write or email our national representatives, Senators Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey and Representative Richard Neal. Their addresses are easily found online or simply addressed to the U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., 20510 or the House of Representatives, Washington D.C., 20515. All accept email, if you prefer, and phone calls. 🇺🇸

When the NPGS scientists were fired, the ability to curate the collection in this manner stopped, and unless this is restored soon, strains we will need to combat future challenges, including those caused by climate change, will begin to die. Many of the strains that will be lost are virtually unavailable from any other source and may be otherwise extinct.

A very pertinent example of the consequences of neglecting genetic diversity of crop plants is presented by Ireland. In 1845, the Irish relied for their sustenance on a handful of potato varieties, with the "Lumper," one highly productive clone dominating production throughout the country. Unfortunately, none of these had any resistance to a fungal blight (the same disease now afflicting my tomatoes) whose spores blew into the country that year. The crop failure was nearly complete for the next seven years. A million people died of famine and associated diseases, and two million more emigrated. It took a couple of decades for resistant potato cultivars to be identified and integrated into breeding blight-resistant alternatives to the "Lumper," and Ireland's population has never recovered to pre-Famine levels.

A judge has ordered the re-hiring of the NPGS scientists who were laid off by DOGE, but so far, this has not occurred. That collection of crop germplasm was, according to Dr. Hale, the envy of the world.

Will we have to wait for an Irish-style catastrophe before we recognize what we are willfully throwing away? 🇺🇸



Too many cooks in the kitchen

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might get salty

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*Council on
Aging*



COA: Elder-Law, Meetings, Coffee Hour, More

By Linda Riiska and Nina Carr

A Massachusetts Elder-Law Attorney will be at the Council on Aging rooms in the Town Hall basement on Friday evening, May 9, at 6:00 p.m. to answer your questions regarding seniors (over 60), estate planning, finances, end-of-life plans, or anything that may be of interest to family members or anyone who expects to be in their 60s+ in the future. Refreshments will be available.

All the members of the COA are very happy to welcome the month of May and some warm Spring sunshine. We meet every Wednesday morning for Coffee Hour at 10:00 a.m. Feel free to join us.

On the third Wednesday of the month the Visiting Nurse will be at the 10:00 a.m. Coffee Hour for blood pressure checks, as usual. Also, our Chair Yoga classes with Wendy will continue to meet at 2:00 p.m. in Old Town Hall on Wednesdays.

At the end of the month, at our Wednesday, May 28 meeting, the New Boston Congregational Church will provide lunch.

We are always open to suggestions for new activities. Please join us!

*Happy
Mother's
Day*

Town Warrant Information Meeting

By Larry Dwyer

The Select Board and Finance Committee held a joint budget information meeting in mid-April to review with residents the proposed FY26 Town budget and special articles that will be voted on at the Annual Town Meeting in May. About twenty residents attended.

- A significant change in the School Budget helped lower overall Town operating costs. Due to the change in the Regional District Agreement at the Farmington River School District between Otis and Sandisfield, the Town will see a 17 percent decrease for the FY26 school year, or about \$318,000. Carl Nett received a round of applause for his work on this issue on the School Committee.

This decrease contributed to the Town's total operating budget being reduced by 4.45 percent.



- There was an increase in the FD/EMT Administration of \$27,000 and EMT compensation was increased by \$25,000. Select Board Chairman Steven Seddon commented that it's very difficult to hire for part-time positions, so the Town is considering full-time for these positions.

- Employee insurance costs increased by 19.92%, so insurance was budgeted for only the current employees and not future hires. This lowered the line item for insurance by \$54,000.
- There is an item on the warrant to replace the ambulance for \$300,000—\$260,275 from the Ambulance Stabilization fund and \$39,724 from the Capital Stabilization fund. The ambulance is 13 years old and has ongoing problems with its electrical system.
- Another item is to be voted on is to purchase a COA shuttle van for \$64,000. A separate item will require a vote to approve \$15,600 for a driver for 15 hours/week at a rate of \$25 per hour.
- There will be a vote to approve \$75,000 to replace the Old Town Hall boiler and drop ceiling. Funding would come from the Capitalization Fund.
- The biggest item on the warrant is for the town to buy the firehouses from the SFDI for \$765,000. \$440,000 would come from Free Cash and \$325,000 would come from the General Stabilization fund. If approved, this would be the biggest purchase for the town since the purchase of firetruck that was approved in the FY2023 budget. 🚒

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TRIVIA NIGHT!

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MAY 2ND JON TAYLOR 6-9PM
MAY 3RD LIQUID COURAGE 8PM
MAY 4TH STAR WARS TRIVIA 4PM
MAY 7TH KELLIOKE KARAOKE 7PM
MAY 9TH LITA WILLIAMS 7PM
MAY 10TH RUMOURS BAND 8PM
MAY 16TH JON BERMAN 6:30PM
MAY 17TH ROCK 201 8PM
MAY 18TH HILLTOWN BLUES JAM 2PM
MAY 23RD BRETT POTTER DUO 7PM
MAY 24TH GENERATION X ROCK 8PM
MAY 30TH DAVE & RENÉE 7PM
MAY 31ST THE GENERAL GIST 8PM



SCHOOL NEWS

Laurie Flowers, Principal of the Farmington River Elementary School, wrote to parents and students in the school's mid-April newsletter:

We are excited to share that our school has been working closely with Gateway Regional School District through our PRISM grant, with the goal of strengthening literacy instruction for our youngest learners. Last week, representatives from TNTP, assigned to us by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, visited our school to review our current PreK–3 literacy program.

They will be providing valuable guidance and support as we work to enhance our systems of support and ensure we are using high-quality instructional materials to improve student learning. We are grateful for this opportunity and look forward to the benefits this collaboration will bring to our school community.



LONG BUS RIDES REQUIRE PATIENCE

I understand that many of our students have a long bus ride, and I want to remind everyone of the importance of maintaining safe and respectful behavior during these trips. The bus is an extension of our school, and it's essential that students follow the rules by staying seated and refraining from yelling, as loud noises can be distracting and unsafe. Treating each other, as well as the bus driver, with kindness and respect ensures a safe and pleasant experience for all riders, no matter the length of their commute.



RUSSELL W. LORING 1941-2025

Russell W. Loring, 83, of Otis, died Saturday April 5, 2025, at Fairview Hospital, Great Barrington.

Russ was born at the family home in Tyringham on July 18, 1941, the son of Charles and Beatrice Rowley Loring. He was the fourth of seven children.

Russ graduated from Lee High School and worked several local jobs before enlisting in the U.S. Army where he served two years in Germany. Upon returning from the service, he worked for the Massachusetts Turnpike where he stayed for 33 years. On July 4, 1980, he married his soulmate, the former Margaret Bond. Together they loved life, traveling, stock car racing, country music, entertaining, their animals and most of all, each other.

Russ was also well known in Sandisfield circles where he had family members and life-long associations including as a congregant of the New Boston Congregational Church for many years.

Besides his wife, Margaret, Russ is survived by a brother, Joe Loring and his wife, Evelyn and a sister, Rosa Alward. He is predeceased by his siblings: "Baby sister," Jim, Tunk and Ben, and a brother-in-law, Walt.

Friends wishing to do so may make donations to the Otis Rescue Squad in c/o the Kelly Funeral Home, 3 Main Street, Lee, MA 01238.

Comings and Goings



Don and Charlene Peet

Photo: Ellen Croibier

REV. DONALD H. PEET 1932-2025

The Reverend Donald Howard Peet, 93, of Westerly, R.I., formerly of Sandisfield, passed away peacefully on Saturday, April 12, 2025. Born in Waterbury, Conn., on January 12, 1932, he was the son of the late Howard and Hazel Peet. Dad met Charlene, the love of his life, at the University of Connecticut in 1951, during a lively off-campus beer bash, an ironic setting for two devoted teetotalers. That chance encounter sparked a remarkable 75-year love story, and a partnership rooted in service, quietly touching the lives of countless individuals over three-quarters of a century.

Raised in Naugatuck, Conn., he pursued his passion for wildlife conservation at UConn, earning a bachelor's degree in 1953. After serving two years in the Army during the Korean War as a lieutenant ordnance officer, he followed his calling to the Virginia Theological Seminary, graduating in 1958. He was ordained a Deacon that year and as an Episcopal priest in 1959.

Dad dedicated his life to ministry in Connecticut, serving as Vicar at St. Paul's in Plainfield for six years, then as Rector at St. Andrew's Church in Milford for 15 years. He concluded his decades of devoted service as Rector of St. John's Church in East Windsor, where he led the congregation for 17 years before retiring in 1997.

He leaves his wife of seventy-one years, Charlene, and sons, Chris, Stephen, and John, and their wives, Susan, Roberta, and Erika, respectively, as well as cherished eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. His legacy lives on in the love and memories shared by all who were fortunate to call him family.

The Peets in Sandisfield

The Peets loved camping here. They bought property in 1966 and lived in their house on South Beech Plain Road from 1997 until recently. Don enjoyed fishing. He often spoke of the joys of fishing especially with his "Peet Boys" along the Clam River. Rev. Peet was associated with the St. James Church in Great Barrington for many years. In Sandisfield, Don and Charlene were inseparable, had many friends, and were highly esteemed. Don, who was interested in town history and supported historical events and organizations, was a member of the Sandisfield Historical Commission in the early-2010s.



The Librarian's Corner

Monday, 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, 1:00 p.m.–7:00 p.m.

Thursday, 2:00 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Closed Tuesday, Friday and Sunday

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Events at the Library this month

Thursday, May 22 at 6:00 p.m., the Sandisfield Women's Book Group will meet to discuss *A Council of Dolls* by Mona Susan Power. This historical fiction spans three generations of Dakota women from the late 19th century to the present day. It is a tale of strong women who tell their story in part through their treasured dolls.

On Saturday, May 3 from 1:00-3:00 p.m., we will host a spring crafting day. Turn a plain terra cotta pot into YOUR art design and or make butterflies, flowers and bunnies. Celebrate spring and Mothers as well. We provide the paints, the pots and even smocks for the little ones to borrow while painting. Cookies, juice and beverages available.

All month – It is never too late to participate in the Massachusetts Center for the Book 2025 Reading Challenge. May's book is one with an opening sentence of less than eight words. Think *Moby Dick* "Call me Ishmael." Or perhaps "It was the day my mother exploded" in *The Crow Road* by Iain M. Banks. Stop by the Library for a postcard of each month's reading challenge and, of course, to search for the right book.

LATEST ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY SHELVES

Ward D by Freida McFadden. (Fiction) "She doesn't just write a clever, insanely gripping thriller, she'll make you laugh

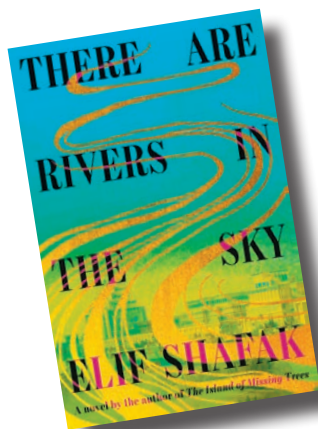
along the way. . . . Every time you think you know what's coming, another twist will knock you sideways." Natalie Barelli, author of *Unforgivable*.

As for myself, I have been advised to not start her books at night. You won't be able to put it down, and therefore not get a lot of sleep.

The Burning Earth: A History by Sunil Amrith. (Non-fiction). "The most readable global environmental history yet... With such major world historical themes as empire, freedom and energy. A towering achievement and a joy to read." J. R. McNeill, author.

Moon of the Turning Leaves by Waubgheshig Rice. (Fiction) A gripping thriller of a post-apocalyptic world. A scouting party ventures into unknown and dangerous territory to find a new home for their close-knit Indigenous community..

There is No Place For Us: Working and Homeless in America by Brian Goldstone. (Non-fiction) In intimate portraits, Goldstone reveals the human cost of the rapid growth of cities and the inability of working families to keep a home. Following parents and their kids as they go to sleep in cars, or in squalid extended-stay hotel rooms, and head out to their jobs and schools the next morning. These are the nation's hidden homeless – omitted from official statistics and proof that overflowing shelters and street encampments are only the most visible manifestation of a far more pervasive problem.



There are Rivers in the Sky by Elif Shafak (Fiction). A marvelous tale of two rivers, two lands, and how an Epic poem

–*Gilgamesh*– ties all together. A deep dive into a fascinating culture in present day Iraq and Turkey and life in 1850s England. (Shades of Dickens!)

CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT SECTION

Little Blue Truck and Race Red by Alice Schertle

That's Not Funny, David! By David Shannon

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NEW BOSTON CHURCH SERVICES

Mother's Day Worship Service
Sunday, May 11 - 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Sunday Worship Service
Sunday, May 25 - 9:00 a.m.
(note time change)
10:00 to 10:30: A time of fellowship
light refreshments will be available

★ **The Memorial Day parade will**
pass by the lawn of the church at ★
approximately 10:45 a.m.

All welcome.

4 Sandisfield Rd., Sandisfield, MA 01255
newbostoncongregationalchurch.org

Turkey Season

Turkey hunting in western Massachusetts began April 28 and runs until May 24.

The population is estimated at 35,000 birds but is likely more as a result of a good hatch last spring. Hunters are allowed two Toms (males) in the spring season and one of either sex in the fall.

Do not shoot any of the Toms we've shown in the pages of The Times the last couple, especially the three on page 19. We like our birds.

Yanner Pavilion Planning Postponed

By Adam Brown, Chair, Yanner Park Committee

The information session for the proposed construction of a public pavilion at Yanner Park, scheduled for May 2 at Old Town Hall, has been cancelled. We expect to hold the information meeting later this fall before a likely Special Town Meeting.



While the capital project request will not appear on the warrant for this spring's Annual Town Meeting as previously announced, we do anticipate the request will be included in a warrant later this year.

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 in New Marlborough at 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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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

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 through Zoom and in-person at 6:30 p.m. on Mondays unless otherwise posted. Please visit sandisfieldma.gov or call 258-4711 for information.

Playgroup on Tuesdays from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at the Otis Town Hall. Sponsored by South Berkshire Kids. No pre-registration 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 date confirmation, call Nina Carr (258-3314). Free!

Coffee Hour on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. at the Council on Aging, Town Hall basement. 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.

An Elder-Law Attorney on Friday, May 9 from 6:00 p.m., will be at COA, Town Hall basement, to answer questions. Estate planning, elder finances, anything of interest to family members. Refreshments.

New Boston Church Mother's Day Worship Service on Sunday, May 11 at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome. The New Boston Congregational Church is located on Route 57. For more information and to view the calendar, visit newbostoncongregationalchurch.org.

Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, May 17 at 10:00 a.m., Fire Station #2 on Rt. 57.

Annual Town Election on Monday, May 19 from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Old Town Hall.

Memorial Day Parade and BBQ on Sunday, May 25, beginning at 9:00 a.m. with bike decorating and parade lineup at Old Town Hall. At 10:00 a.m., the parade will begin at Old Town Hall. An Honor Guard and Service will be held at the New Boston Cemetery, followed by a stop at the Berkshire Rehab and Skilled Nursing Center. The parade will end at the American Legion on South Main Street (Rt. 8) with a wreath ceremony and BBQ. All are welcome.

New Boston Church Worship Service on Sunday, May 25 at 9:00 a.m. (Please note time change. (Service begins one hour earlier.) 10:00 to 10:30 and will feature a time of fellowship; light refreshments will be available. **The Memorial Day parade will pass by the lawn of the church at approximately 10:45 a.m.** All are welcome. The New Boston Congregational Church is located on Route 57. For more information and to view the calendar, visit newbostoncongregationalchurch.org.

COA Lunch on Wednesday, May 28, at noon, provided by the New Boston Congregational Church.

The Landscape We Live: Opening Reception and Ribbon-Cutting at the Sandisfield Arts Center on Friday, May 30 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Celebrating the 30th anniversary and long-anticipated renovations

of the Arts Center, this exhibition pays tribute to Sandisfield – the topography, trees, totems, rocks, rivers, animals, and artists who call Sandisfield home. Free. Subsequent gallery hours are 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on weekends. The show will close July 6. For more information, visit sandisfieldartscenter.org.

From Church to Synagogue to Arts Center on Saturday, May 31, at 10:00 a.m., local author/historian Ron Bernard will show slides and discuss his comprehensive new book all about the former Baptist Church, now Sandisfield Arts Center.

Local poets Hannah Fries and Hilde Weisert on Saturday, May 31, at 2:00 p.m., will read poems inspired by our local landscape.

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

Spring Bird Walk every Thursday in May at 5:30 p.m. along the Riverfront Trail in Great Barrington. The walks are led by Ben Nickley (ben@berkshirebirds.org) of the Berkshire Bird Observatory. Free and beginners are welcome! Meet at the Great Barrington Co-Op.

Spring Book Sale & More on Saturday, May 3 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Otis Ridge Ski Area Lodge on Route 23 in Otis. Books, movies, music, toys, puzzles. Early bird from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. for \$10 entry fee. Cash and PayPal only.

Musician and Composer Sherry Steiner on Thursday, May 8 at 7:00 p.m. at the Otis Town Hall. Sponsored by Notice Otis. Free to all.

Fishing Derby on Saturday, May 10 from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. at the fishing pond of the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery on Hatchery Road in Monterey. Open to children ages 13 and under. Free.



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Boys Will be Boys

Steve Kopiec captured this trio of Tom Turkeys on his phone and posted it on ConnectSandisfield April 19. Dave McCuin wrote that he'd seen eight Toms with three hens a few days before, in the same orchard. Be careful driving, turkeys are on the move and there are plenty of them this spring. Watch out also for cars ahead of you slowing down or stopping to avoid a row of birds crossing the road.



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