

THE SANDSFIELD TIMES

Tribunus



Plebis

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume XVI, Number 8

November 2025



Sandisfield turkeys photographed by Cynthia Ragusa





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OUR ANNUAL APPEAL ISSUE

See letter insert for information.
Thank you.

A Magical Night in Sleepy Hollow

SANDISFIELD PLAYERS
BRING RADIO PLAY TO LIFE

By Emily Ruocco

It was one of those crisp October nights in Sandisfield, the kind that practically demands a good ghost story. And that's exactly what we got when the Sandisfield Players performed *The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow*, adapted for radio from Washington Irving's classic tale by Anthony E. Palermo, at the Sandisfield Arts Center.

By the time the doors opened, cars were lined up along Route 57, causing a little traffic jam as theatergoers arrived. Inside, the warm glow of pumpkins and candles set a cozy autumn mood. The room buzzed with excitement. It was a packed house filled with neighbors, friends, and families eager for an evening of local theater magic.

This production was more than just a Halloween treat. It marked a joyful revival for the Sandisfield Players,

Cont'd on p.5



Photos: Richard Migot, Cindy Ragusa

Letter from the Editor

ENOUGH'S ENOUGH

A Special Town Meeting will be held soon, the date to be announced.

The warrant will include several items important to the Town, but major issues will relate to the Sandisfield Fire Department.

Town residents will be asked what kind of emergency services they want for their town and how serious they are about paying for them. They may be asked again whether or how the Town should take ownership of the Town's two firehouses.

In answer to one question in a recent survey by the Planning Board, whether residents would be willing to pay more for increased ambulance and fire coverage, 65 percent of some 120 respondents said "yes." The STM will test that response.

Unfortunately, conflicts over the fire department have ricocheted back and forth in our small town for two straight years.

Most residents may be ready to move on from this anger and get on with what we have to do. We've got a lot to deal with.

OUR NEW CHIEF

It's true that our new Fire Chief, formerly of Connecticut, was arrested in September in Hartford for tax issues related to his former landscaping businesses. He was arraigned in Norwich October 17. A citizen reported the arrest to the Select Board at its regular meeting October 13, before the arraignment. At the same meeting, another citizen produced a list of the Fire Chief's creditors totaling some \$193,000 based on available court information. The Select Board said they had been aware of these issues during the Chief's job interview.

According to The Berkshire Eagle, which detailed the arrest in two consecutive front-page articles, the Chief was charged with several counts of failing to file payroll taxes, personal income taxes, and sales taxes. He was released from

custody on \$25,000 nonsurety bond, promising to return to court November 6th in Norwich Superior Court.

One Sandisfield Select Board member, defending the chief, said, "If I owed the IRS \$150,000, does that make me a bad tree guy or a good tree guy? Still a good tree guy – just got to pay my taxes."

A LITTLE RECAP

Sandisfield's long firehouse story began in the late 1980s with the construction of Firehouse #2 on Rt. 57 and the creation of the Sandisfield Fire Department, Inc. SFDI is a nonprofit formed for financial reasons to aid in the construction and chartered to support the fire department. However, rather than turning the building over to the Town as originally intended, SFDI became the face of the Sandisfield Fire Department and in fact assumed control and "ownership" of the facility.

By some twisted rationale, SFDI has since leased the building to the Town. When the lease terminates next July, SFDI is seeking a rental increase from \$10,000 per year to \$20,000 – and possibly even more following recent "negotiations."

What may be the culminating chapter in that long story began two years ago in October 2023, when Sandisfield's tanker truck was totaled in a crash in Tyringham. That began our two years of resignations, accusations, and hard work by many individuals.

Fast forward to this year's Annual Town Meeting: the Town included a proposal to assume ownership of the fire buildings. Amended to delete all references to payment, the article passed 86-17, that the properties be acquired by gift. It seemed that most residents did not feel obliged to pay anything to SFDI.

AND SINCE THEN?

Since then, negotiations between the Select Board and SFDI have either not taken place or resulted in demands but not agreement.

The Select Board chairman, Steve Seddon, wrote in part on ConnectSandisfield:

I am very proud of those who are committing their time to making sure Sandisfield is in good hands. This department went from responding to roughly three out of ten Ambulance calls six months ago to responding to 100 percent of calls. ...

Volunteers are training and gaining confidence and abilities while our hired per diems hold down the fort. This is leading the way for a new group of trained volunteers to take the reins.

Thank you to all the volunteers that stayed and to those who recently joined in your selfless act of unity and protection! ...

Since then, the Town has formally severed relations with SFDI.

Since then, SFDI changed its board of directors from several family members and has appointed new members, including a new president.

Since then, after the Town's new Fire Chief was hired in June, accusations of interference flew, a cellphone recording was played at a Select Board meeting.

Since then, four civil lawsuits were filed between town residents or toward the Select Board. Bundled by the Berkshire Superior Court, the suits will be heard in December.

Since then, nearly all of the Town's fire and EMT volunteers resigned.

Since then, the new fire chief has proceeded to rebuild emergency services in Town, hiring per diem employees, enlisting and training volunteers, and providing service 24/7

Since then, the Select Board has stood firm in support of the new chief, although more aware of his potential for conflicting choices.

And continuing, during the last two weeks in October the Select Board held three executive sessions regarding personnel issues and one on Nov 4th regarding criminal conduct. Results of these sessions have not yet been made public.

What's Next?

The Town and its Fire Department have to get on with rebuilding and maintaining its emergency services, just what the Select Board and our current Fire Chief are attempting to do. For citizens, you and me, let's attend the coming Special Town Meeting – on Zoom if you can't be there in person. And however the votes go, let's get out of the way and let people get on with their jobs.

Bill Price, Editor



A Great October WITH NOVEMBER COMING UP

By Suzanne Oconnell

The crowd was as varied and interesting as the work at the very well received opening on October 18 of the latest show in the Sandisfield Arts Center Gallery, UNVEILING: a show of portraits.

Many of the photographers exhibited were present including Schandra Singh from Vermont, Susanna Howe from Chatham, Alexi Lubomirski from upstate New York, and Jacob Fossum from New Marlborough. The gallery will be open Saturdays and Sundays until the show closes on December 7, check the website for times.

The following weekend, viewers were delighted to experience an "old-fashioned" radio show where the sound effects and voices were key. The Sandisfield Players under the direction of Jean Atwater-Williams with a local cast of all ages put on a fabulous performance of "The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow,"

a radio play by Anthony E. Palermo from Washington Irving's short story – perfect for Halloween. See the review on page 2.

The Halloween theme continued the next day, Sunday October 26, with pumpkin painting led by Nina Carr and Josie Miner on sugar pumpkins, with prospects of a yummy post-Halloween meal.

November events promise to be equally exciting. On Saturday, November 8 at 4:00 p.m., Tom Christopher will give an illustrated talk with lots of samples about the craft of New England Hard Cider making, a craft he has been pursuing for over thirty years. Music for the event will be provided by Sally Terrell (vocals) and Chris Casey (piano).

The annual fund-raising Gala, on November 15 will feature a very likely delicious and "glorious" meal prepared by celebrated local chef, Adam Manacher. It is always a popular event and this year the entertainment will provide a behind-the-scenes peak at how the amazing sounds were created for the radio play, "The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow."



Josh Luxon-Robinson

The day after your Thanksgiving feast, Friday, November 28 at 4:00 p.m., a delightful classical piano concert covering the arc of the Romantic Period (Beethoven, Liszt, and Medtner) will be given by the very talented young pianist, Josh Luxon-Robinson.

The very next day, November 29, a mere eleven days after its official release, join us at 4:00 p.m., when local writer and New York Times best-selling author Simon Winchester discusses his new, fascinating, hot-off-

the-press book, *The Breath of the Gods: The History and Future of the Wind*. This special event is free, but donations are encouraged as we end the 2025 performance season and get busy again with our Arts Center renovations. 🍷



IN THE GALLERY: "UNVEILING: A SHOW OF PORTRAITS"

Until December 7. A mixed media group that delves into the complexities of human experience through portraiture.

SAT., NOVEMBER 8 4 - 6 PM \$40

Cider Tasting with Tom Christopher

Savor the delights of local hard cider along with cheese snacks and live music by Sally Terrell and Chris Casey

SAT., NOVEMBER 15 6 PM \$75

Harvest Gala

Enjoy a delicious dinner prepared by chef **Adam Manacher** and celebrate the bounties of Sandisfield

FRI., NOVEMBER 28 4 - 5:30 PM \$25

Special Concert: Josh Luxon-Robinson Returns

SAT., NOVEMBER 29 4 - 5:30 PM
DONATION

Simon Reads

Join us for a reading by **Simon Winchester** and a discussion of his newest book, *"The Breath of the Gods: The History and Future of the Wind,"*

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

A Magical Night in Sleepy Hollow

Cont'd from p.2

the community troupe founded in 2012 by the late and beloved Ben Luxon. After the challenges of the pandemic and Ben's passing in 2024, the Players returned to the stage with renewed energy, creativity, and heart. It was clear that Ben's spirit of storytelling and connection continues to live on in every performance.

At the helm was director Jean Atwater-Williams, whose imagination and leadership brought the story to life in a way that was both spooky and full of warmth. The stage shimmered with pumpkins, candles, a softly lit moon on a moody night sky backdrop that transported the audience right into Sleepy Hollow, New York, 1789.

The storytelling began with the mesmerizing voice of Heather Fisch as Knickerbocker, the narrator, whose captivating delivery pulled the audience in from the very first line. Her expressive storytelling painted vivid pictures of dark forests, moonlit nights, and the mysterious Headless Horseman. You could feel the crowd hanging on every word as she guided them deeper into the legend.



Adding to the fun was "Alonzo Nonymous," an internationally known performer who just happens to live locally. Playing Ichabod Crane, he brought energy, humor, and heart to the stage. His performance was full of wit and wonder, and his timing kept the audience laughing one moment and gasping the next.

Nikolas Michal Friedmutter was terrific as Brom Van Broont, bringing charisma and mischief to every scene. His playful chemistry with Leah Kammeyer as Katrina Van Tassel was lively and fun, and when he reappeared as the Headless Horseman, his chilling laugh sent real shivers through the room.

The live sound effects were another star of the night. Don Cingrani, A. Nonymous, Douglas Miner, and Louis Miner worked together seamlessly to create everything from galloping hooves to creaking doors, thunder and eerie wind. Watching them work their magic onstage was both fascinating and impressive.

Before the show began, Jean offered a touching acknowledgment of Ben Luxon, honoring his legacy of creativity and community.

In a note after the performance, Susie Crofut, Ben's wife and namesake of the Susie Crofut and Ben Luxon Theater and an active contributor to the Sandisfield Arts Center, captured the spirit of the evening perfectly: "From entering the theater until the dramatic conclusion of this engaging play, [everyone who contributed to this production] gave the audience a wonderful experience of how the stage offers such magic in telling stories." 

Our Hilde in The New York Times

A lot of us speak up when we have a viewpoint but usually no one listens. Hilde Weisert, however, just spoke up in a Letter to the Editor of The New York Times and the editors' read it, admired and published it. We're proud of Hilde. She wrote:

New York Times, Oct 23, 2025

To the Editor:

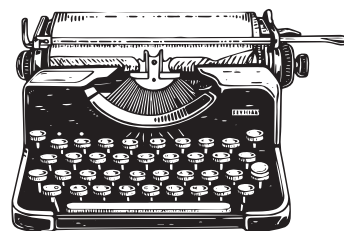
When our building — erected in 1839 as a Baptist church, then in the early 20th century becoming a synagogue, then for the last 30 years serving as an arts center, and since 2006 on the National Register of Historic Places — needed to add a small storage shed this year, it required approval of the Massachusetts Historical Commission. We submitted detailed plans showing no changes affecting the historical elements of the building, and, after a careful review, received the commission's approval.

How is it possible that one of the most beloved, historic buildings in our country can have a demolition crew tearing down walls in preparation for a 90,000-square-foot ballroom that will greatly change the shape and size of the White House, without any formal review by a historical or architectural body?

That the addition is the vision of someone whose taste for grandiosity has already sullied the dignity of the Oval Office is even more alarming.

*Hilde Weisert
Sandisfield, Mass.*

The writer is a co-president of the Sandisfield Arts Center. 



recreation COMMITTEE

Oktoberfest at Looking Glass Gardens

By Laurie Seddon

What a beautiful, warm, sunny day we had at Oktoberfest this year! Chuck Nelson, owner and operator of Looking Glass Gardens, made an excellent decision to move the date up a weekend, which resulted in fantastic weather. The community truly came out in droves. While it's always hard to get an exact count due to the spread-out location, the food truck sold out of hot dogs and bratwurst, a great sign of the turnout.

Photos: Officer Mary Bredenfoerder



People filled the lawn as they enjoyed the live band playing traditional German music. The pavilion bustled with families engaged in craft activities all afternoon. Rose was kept very busy at the barn giving pony rides. Additionally, Jake Blass provided scenic hourly hayrides throughout the gardens and along Dodd Road, and Fire Chief Grillo brought a fire truck down for the kids to explore.

The Sandisfield Recreation Committee and Looking Glass Gardens extend a huge thank you to everyone who joined us for

this wonderful day. We are already looking forward to next year's event!

WHAT'S NEXT?

Santa Claus is coming to town. Join the Sandisfield Historical Society and the Recreation Committee for the Annual Holiday Fair on Saturday, December 6, 2025, from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at Fire Station #2 on Route 57. Santa will arrive at 11:00 a.m. Due to his very busy schedule this time of year, he can only stay for about 45 minutes, so please be prompt.

See everyone there. 🇺🇸

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Down One Bridge

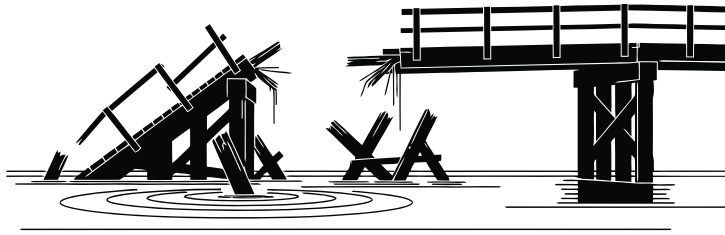
AN INCONVENIENCE OR A ROYAL PAIN

By Ron Bernard and Bill Price

Are you a user of the little River Road Bridge over the Clam River in New Boston?

This is not the bridge on 57 over the Silver Brook. That bridge is the one beside the former Silverbrook Café.

Rather, this bridge is the rickety, wood-rail, pot-holed bridge at the foot of South Beech Plain Road, where that road joins River Road, and crosses the river to intersect with Rt. 57. The bridge is mostly out of sight, but it's a major convenience for anyone coming down or going up Beech Plain Road or driving along River Road.



But now MassDOT has declared the bridge as being in “imminent danger of failure.”

Suddenly, October 10, the bridge was closed, concrete barriers went up, taking Town Hall, our DPW, and drivers by surprise.

The bridge may be closed “indefinitely.”

There's a short, tricky detour. Drive east (or west, depending on whether you are coming or going) for about ¾ of a mile along narrow

River Road to where it joins 57. It takes a little longer to get to 57 and the road is narrow and turns one-way in one spot, so be careful. The road is popular for hikers and dogwalkers alike, so stay alert.

Town Manager Janey Snyder said, “We recognize that River Road is narrow, so the Town will continue to monitor conditions to ensure safety if traffic volumes increase.” The project will be overseen by the DPW Superintendent with support from the Town Manager.

Flashback to May 2024. The Town had planned to renovate the Route 57 bridge first. A MassDOT inspection of the two bridges put the Silver Brook crossing on a watch list, while the River Road Bridge passed inspection. Engineering for the first project was completed, but a grant application to fund construction was not awarded. And now MassDOT has reversed itself.

“In hindsight,” Janey said, “that may have been a blessing since River Road would have served as the detour during that work. However, the unexpected closure of the River Road Bridge underscores how quickly conditions can change. Before moving forward, we intend to obtain written documentation from MassDOT regarding the expected lifespan of the Route 57 bridge. This will help us determine how to prioritize both bridge projects and avoid extended and/or simultaneous closures.”

A temporary bridge is a possibility, however, Janey said, “Engineering and permitting alone can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, with construction expenses in the millions. Until we secure funding and complete design work, we cannot provide a firm start date.”

Photo: Sandisfield Times



historia (Greek) - "inquiry, knowledge acquired by investigation" the discovery, collection, organization, and presentation of information about past events.

SANDISFIELD TAVERNS WELCOMED KNOX TEAMSTERS

HENRY SPRING'S INN WAS RENOWNED

By Ron Bernard

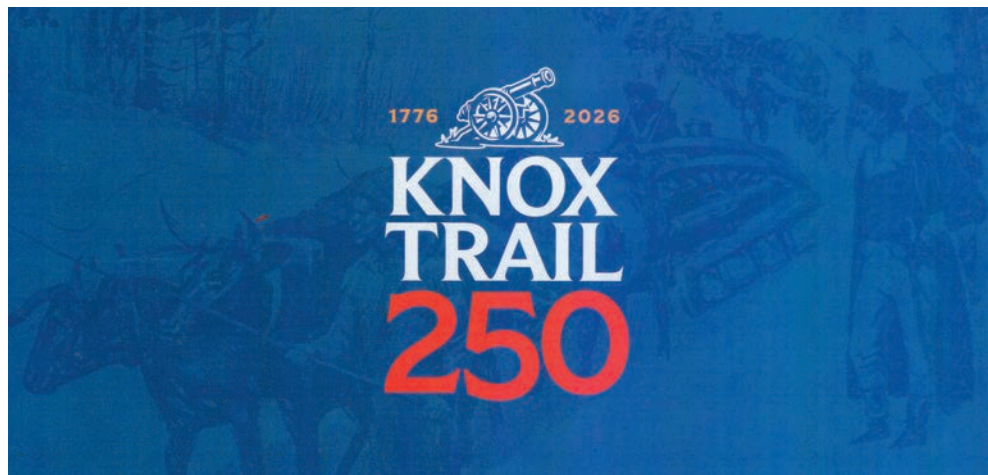
At the outset of the Revolutionary War, during the winter of 1775-76, a quiet but dramatic event took place across the northern section of Sandisfield.

THE HENRY SPRING TAVERN WAS RENOWNED

One of those taverns, thought to date from about 1760, was at Upper Spectacle Pond at the "nose" between the two ponds. In 1769, the tavern came under the management of Henry Spring of Brookfield, Mass., when he was awarded a tavern license from the colonial administration. Spring turned this remote spot in the wilderness on a former ancient Indian trail into a thriving business, providing hospitality to military and public figures traveling from Boston or other points in New England to access points all along the trailway as far as Albany.

Most family-run inns at the time were modest affairs, safe places to stay with probably a room or two. Spring's operation was more substantial. Writing in 1885, Sandisfield historian George Shepard said of Spring, "... he was crowded with customers much of the time, frequently having to stable twenty horses."

Although Spring's Tavern was already well-known in the colony, those few hectic days in January 1776 when it hosted the enormous Knox contingent cemented the tavern's place in local lore and nationally within the larger story of the Knox episode.



It is the most significant historical event to have taken place here.

Cannons captured from the British at Fort Ticonderoga, New York, were hauled by Col. Henry Knox 300 miles across the wilderness roads of the Massachusetts colony to be delivered to General Washington at Boston who had the British under siege. This super-human feat of resolve and endurance resulted in Washington's victory without a battle, an early turning point in favor of the Patriots which influenced the course of the War.

This still unheralded "noble train of artillery," it is hoped, will finally join the roster of crucial events and important dates as the nation celebrates the 250th anniversary of Independence next year.

Another hope is that the vital role played by a group of five Sandisfield taverns (inns) situated along or near the "Great Road" (today known as the Knox Trail) will be recognized.

For several days in mid-January 1776, these establishments accommodated the eighty men hauling some sixty tons of artillery and their oxen and other animals.

THE SITE TODAY

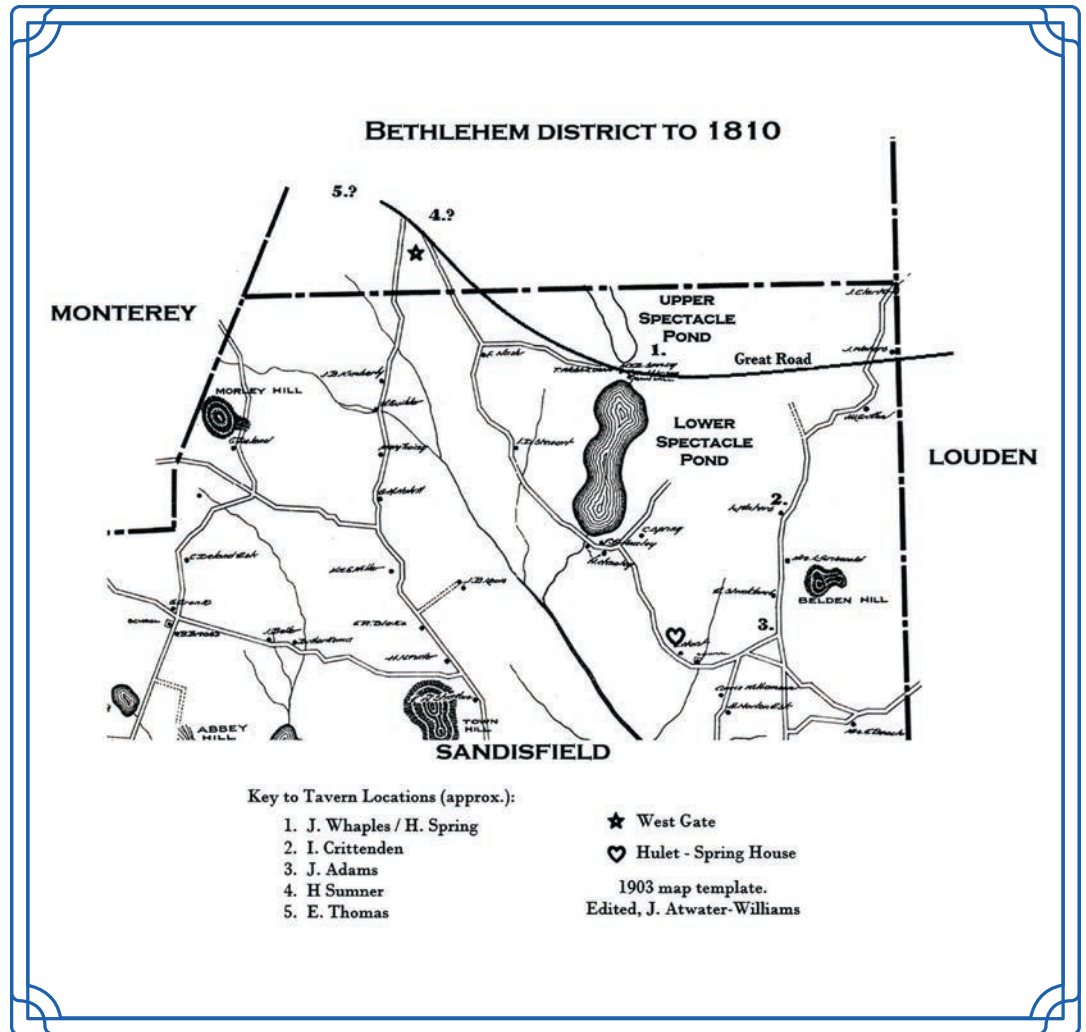
In 1979, after a survey, the Massachusetts Historical Commission described evidence of "a large farm site" including a 50-by-42-foot foundation with a 33-by-12-foot central cellar hole. There was a barn, a 12-by-12-foot chimney base and stone walls. Fortunately, the site is now under the protection of Otis State Forest. Ancient maple trees continue to stand – silent witnesses to what happened here long ago. But time and nature have obscured all but portions of a foundation.

The tavern was probably closed by the 1820s when an improved highway, today's State Rt. 23, by-passed the rugged Sandisfield segment of the trail. Better roads obviated the need for inns at 15-mile intervals. In 1829, only three taverns were extant in town. None from the Great Road including the Spring place was among them. The family continued to farm their property into the 20th century. Many direct descendants of Henry Spring and his wives, Orpha and Phoebe still live in Sandisfield, the last intact line of an original settler.

More about the history of the Knox Trail, the local taverns, and an examination of the longest unspoiled section of the trail – which lies across Sandisfield and Otis – will be included in a 250th commemorative publication underwritten by the Berkshire Historical Society.

In it, Berkshire historian Bernard Drew, Gary Leveille of Great Barrington with Tom Ragusa of Otis and myself will review the history of the trail as a military road and specifically that section in Sandisfield and Otis including a documented true survey of the original trail through our towns by Tom. The book will be available in time for the Knox Trail 250 ceremonies that will be held in Great Barrington on January 10.

See next month's Sandisfield Times for details about the exciting program. 



KNOX TRAIL INN

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New Fall/Winter Menu!

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CORNHOLE**
Every Wednesday 6PM

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★
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Christmas
Birthdays
Showers
Weddings
Bereavement
Meetings

KNOX HAPPENINGS

NOV 1ST ALL HALLOWS PARTY
with **ROCK 201**
NOV 2ND POT PAINTING PARTY 2PM
NOV 4TH MOVIE NIGHT 4:30-8:30PM
NOV 8TH D-ROD BAND 8PM
NOV 10TH HALF-PRICE FOR VETERANS
NOV 14TH KELLIOKE KARAOKE 8PM
NOV 15TH ALEX ROHAN 6:30PM
NOV 16TH HILLTOWN BLUES JAM 2PM
NOV 22ND THE HELLCATS 8PM
NOV 27TH CLOSED-HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
NOV 28TH LINE DANCING W/ TINA 8PM
NOV 29TH FOOLISH U BAND 8PM



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Saturday, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

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www.sandisfieldlibrary.org

EVENTS AT THE LIBRARY THIS MONTH

Thursday, November 20 at 6:00 p.m., the **Sandisfield Women's Book Group** will meet to discuss *Leaving Time* by Jodie Picoult. A mystery about a young girl, Jenna, who hires a psychic and a jaded detective to find her mother, Alice, an elephant researcher who disappeared ten years earlier after a tragic accident at the elephant sanctuary they ran. The novel explores themes of grief, loss, and the complex bonds between mothers and daughters, both human and elephant. Join us for discussion and camaraderie.

All month long – It is never too late to participate in the **Massachusetts Center for the Book 2025 Reading Challenge**. November's book is a cookbook or book about food. Just in time for the holiday meals and goodies preparations. And yes, the library has quite a few cookbooks to titillate your taste buds.

FOOD PANTRY AT THE LIBRARY

Hi neighbors, I would like to remind everyone that there is a food bank at our library and hopefully if we can give or need assistance that we all help one another out. If anyone needs anything and can't or don't want to go in I am here and will pick up food for you and deliver it in town. You can message me on messenger.

Out of time? Low on budget? Need a little helping hand? Please stop by any time the

library is open and browse our nonperishable shelf in the lower level.

Donations of non-perishable food items can be dropped at the Sandisfield Library during regular library hours as well.

We want to thank everyone who has graciously donated to our little food pantry. You know who you are and we greatly appreciate all your help and kindness.

Note: Zoe Nelson wrote on Connect-Sandisfield/Facebook that if anyone needs something from the Library Food Pantry but can't or doesn't want to go there that she would pick up food for you and deliver it within Sandisfield. She added: "You can message me on messenger or call me at 413-446-4028."

LATEST ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY SHELVES

Nobody's Girl by Virginia Roberts Giuffre. Non-fiction. The long-awaited memoir by the woman who dared to take on Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell. This is the unsparing and definitive account of her time being trafficked to numerous prominent men and her daring escape from their grasp.

Dogged Pursuit by David Rosenfeld. In his latest novel, the author takes the reader back to the start of this beloved series. Andy Carpenter begins his career as a defense attorney in Paterson, New Jersey. A smart, engaging legal mystery featuring a dog-loving defense lawyer whose first case brings danger, heart, and unexpected twists.

The Ride: Paul Revere and the Night That Saved America by Kostya Kennedy. Non-fiction. "As recognizable as the name is, we did not know the real Paul Revere until Kennedy revealed the man in full in *The Ride*. Thanks to a fascinating, detailed narrative, we discover not only Revere's heroism on the fateful night, but the larger and dangerous role he played with other famous patriots in creating a

new republic," writes Tom Clavin, the author of *Bandit Heaven*.

The Salt Stones by Helen Whybrow. Memoir. "This profound book returns our gaze to forgotten connections with our animal kin, the Earth, and ourselves. Each paragraph shimmers with heart. With sensibilities and poetic insights, Whybrow leads her readers through fertile fields of discovery and knowing. Her sentences, like carefully placed stones, mark the path toward a calm awareness of what true relationships feel like," writes Hank Lentfer, author of *Raven's Witness*.

Shots Heard Round the World by John Ferling. Non-fiction. America, Britain, and Europe in the Revolutionary War and the roles they played. An acclaimed historian, Ferling's masterpiece is a reappraisal of the Revolutionary War on its 250th anniversary.



The ongoing federal shut-down has triggered an emergency situation

for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). October benefits were distributed as scheduled, but the shutdown has kept November's benefits from distribution. A judge has ruled that the November SNAP benefits must be restored, but it is currently unclear when November benefits will begin to be paid and in what amount.

If you've been impacted by this, Project Bread operates a free confidential Food-Source Hotline at 1-800-645-8333 to help you find food. <https://projectbread.org/>

Looking for ways to help? Contribute now through the United Response Fund at <https://unitedwaymassbay.org/united-response>, or contact local food banks to donate money, food or time.

Need more information? Visit SNAP Resource Hub at Mass.gov/SNAPFreeze for information on how families facing hunger can get help, ways for people and businesses to offer help, and a new digital map showing how many people depend on SNAP to feed their families in each Massachusetts city and town. All are our neighbors. 

Sandisfield Ladies Book Club

Thursday, November 20 at 6:00 p.m., the **Sandisfield Women's Book Group** will meet to discuss *Leaving Time* by Jodi Picoult. A mystery about a young girl, Jenna, who hires a psychic and a jaded detective to find her mother, Alice, an elephant researcher who disappeared ten years earlier after a tragic accident at the elephant sanctuary they ran. The novel explores themes of grief, loss, and the complex bonds between mothers and daughters, both human and elephant. Join us for discussion and camaraderie.



Too many cooks in the kitchen

Adding lawyers to the mix
might get salty

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By Anna Wald, President

The Historical Society wishes to thank all of the homeowners who took part in the Townwide Tag Sale in October. It was a lot of fun again.

We'd also like to thank a few of those who helped the townwide sale come together: Wayne Keller and family, Amanda Leavenworth, Elizabeth Maylor, and Marilyn Scaglione.

Now it is on to the Christmas Fair, December 6 at the Firehouse #2 on Rt. 57. Hours are 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Santa will arrive at 11:00 a.m. sharp and can only stay 45 minutes, so don't miss him. See the ad this page.

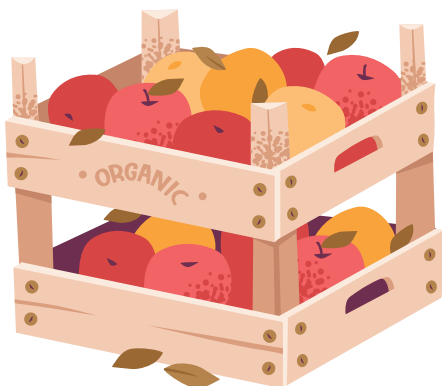
If you are a vendor and wish to take part in the Fair, please call me at 413-258-4415.

We would also like some music and the use of a microphone, neither of which we have yet. If anyone can help with either music or a mic, please call me. 🎵

PENNY AUCTION IS HERE AGAIN

The Penny Auction Table will be at the Holiday Fair December 6, at Fire Station #2 on Rt. 57.

Please contact Alicia Newsome at 413-233-7022 or Elaine O'Brien at 413-269-4465 with your donations of any kind.



Annual Holiday Fair!

Co-Sponsored by the
**Sandisfield Historical Society
& Recreation Committee**

12/06/2025 10AM-2PM

SANTA ARRIVES AT 11AM

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NEW BOSTON CHURCH SERVICES

**New Boston Church Veterans &
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Sunday, November 16
10:00 a.m.

**New Boston Church Christmas
Service**
Sunday, November 30
10:00 a.m.

All welcome.

**4 Sandisfield Road
Sandisfield, MA 01255**

newbostoncongregationalchurch.org



Building Inspector Hour Change

The Building Inspector, Vinny Tirone, has changed hours. He will now be at Town Hall on Wednesday's from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. or by appointment. You can reach him via phone or text at 413-272-9913.

Before you begin any new construction, please check the New Home Construction Permit Checklist on the Town website, sandisfieldma.gov, before you start. For any other type of new construction for an existing home, check with the appropriate building, wiring or plumbing inspectors as listed on the website. 



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- Wildlife Habitat Improvement
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- Climate Forestry

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Donations of any amount are needed to ensure the continuation of this newspaper. Please send checks to: The Sandisfield Times, P.O. Box 584,

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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

NOVEMBER 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 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.

Food Pantry on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library, lower level.

Hard Cider Tasting conducted by Tom Christopher with Music by Sally Terrell and Chris Casey on Saturday, November 8 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center located at 5 Hammertown Road. An introduction to the flavors and history of New England's traditional beverage, hard cider. Cider and cheese snacks from local cheesemongers will be provided. For more information visit sandisfieldartscenter.org. \$40.

Harvest Gala Dinner to support the Sandisfield Arts Center on Saturday, November 15 from 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Enjoy a delicious dinner prepared by local chef Adam Manacher and enjoy the bounties of the season. For more information, visit sandisfieldartscenter.org. \$75.

New Boston Church Veterans & Thanksgiving Worship Service on Sunday, November 16 at 10:00 a.m. A special service to honor our veterans and give thanks for the church. All are welcome. There will be a year-end Church Council Meeting at 11:30 a.m. following the service. The New Boston Congregational Church is located on Route 57. For more information and to view the calendar, visit newbostoncongregationalchurch.org.



Special Concert: Josh Luxon-Robinson Returns! on Friday, November 28 from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center at 5 Hammertown Road. Josh Luxon-Robinson is a brilliant young pianist who has delighted the Arts Center audiences for the last three years. This special Thanksgiving-weekend performance provides a great and uplifting alternative to couch-sitting on the day after Thanksgiving! \$25.

New Boston Church Christmas Service on Sunday, November 30 at 10:00 a.m. Please join the congregation for a celebration of the season by singing favorite Christmas hymns and reading the Christmas story together. All are welcome. The New Boston Congregational Church is located on Route 57. For more information

and to view the calendar, visit newbostoncongregationalchurch.org.

A Conversation with Simon Winchester about *The Breath of the Gods: The History and Future of the Wind* on Saturday, November 29 from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center located at 5 Hammertown Road. Free, but donations are encouraged.

SAVE THE DATE

Sandisfield Holiday Fair on Saturday, December 6 from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at Firehouse #2 on Route 57. Santa at 11 a.m., for 45 minutes only.

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

Chair Yoga on Tuesdays from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. at the Tolland Public Safety Complex. To reserve a spot, please email MaryAnn (mademing67@gmail.com) or Bonnie (bonniescrivener@msn.com). Free.

Great Barrington Farmers Market on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. through November 8 at 18 Church Street. Featuring locally grown and produced foods, including greens, fruit, cheese, meats, honey, maple syrup, baked goods, and more. Local musicians perform.

Great Barrington Arts Market on Sunday, November 16 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at St. James Place on Main Street in Great Barrington

Monterey Makers Holiday Market on Saturday, November 22 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Monterey Community Center. This curated market will feature the work of local artisans and makers.

Meadows for Pollinators

A DIFFERENT WAY TO TEND YOUR FIELDS

By Bill Taylor

Are you interested in saving money and effort and enjoying wildflowers while supporting natural systems that manage pests and diseases in the yard?

If so, you may want to consider changing your lawn care if you are not already doing so.

What we do is to mow areas where we want to recreate or need visibility and create paths through the remainder of our cleared areas and allow the rest to grow perennial plants in abundance. Walking the paths, we see butterflies, bees, frogs and toads (which eat ticks by the way), and different wildflowers throughout the season.

Our one concern with not mowing the entire meadow is the tendency for shrubs and trees to get started, so annual mowing is what we currently do.

The timing of mowing depends on what is blooming and the nesting habits of birds. We usually mow after hard freezes, in November or even December. By mowing at that time, the resulting mulch is a mix of leaves and dry plant matter, and if there are a lot of weed seeds we may use this mulch near trees rather than in garden beds.

Often we do a second mowing in very early spring as soon as the meadow is no longer soggy from snowmelt, a time when more of the seeds have fallen below what the mower will pick up so this mulch can be used more widely.

Having a mower with collection basket or catcher on the back allows the mulch to be used elsewhere, although there is something to be said to use the mower to blow it onto the meadow/lawn to feed it.

We also use a mulch with mostly chopped-up leaves or a mix of leaves and grass onto garlic beds which benefit from a deep layer to protect the slowly emerging garlic from the coldest winter weather (it is rarer and rarer to have a deep snow cover to insulate it).

But please note that ground-nesting bees and other pollinators use the leaves for protection, so at least leave some of them undisturbed. Most of them will decrease greatly by

spring or decompose almost entirely so you have much less work to do. Leaving them under the tree that dropped them will also better feed that tree as they decompose and the fungi and microbes evolved with that species' leaves will have something to eat so it is shared with the tree roots. If anyone complains about your "neglected" yard, you can put up a "pollinator meadow" sign to demonstrate your intentions.

As for pruning dead canes of raspberries and other perennials, I was told in northern California by a bee enthusiast that often the canes are inhabited in the winter by native bees and other pollinators. I am not sure that is true in our colder climate and we have not seen evidence but are not sure. Pruning in early April is an option. But if you want to fall prune these, check for evidence of nesting (some species will "cap" the nest with mud or organic matter) and keep those branches or canes with nests in the area. I usually fall prune the dead canes and cut them into large pieces and mulch the berry patch with them because I do not trust my ability to see any pollinator nests.

Having more of those pollinators will ensure an abundance of bloom and seeds/fruits for people and other species next season.

Some of the ideas for this article came from an interview by Tom Christopher with Joanne Hall and Bram Gunther of Plan It Wild, along with other things we have learned over several years. 



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