

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume XVII, Number 2

May 2026



TWO DAYS IN MAY

MAY 16, SATURDAY. Annual Town Meeting. Sandisfield Fire Station, 207 Sandisfield Road (Rt. 57). 10:00 a.m. until it's done. Warrant is available at www.sandisfieldma.gov/town-news or by stopping by Town Hall during business hours.

MAY 18, MONDAY. Town Election. Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road., Sandisfield. 1:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Call Town Clerk at 413-258-4711, x 2, for information.

Three competitive races: Select Board, Town Clerk, Board of Health.



Berkshire Rehab Appoints Resident as Director

WORKING HER WAY UP

By Larry Dwyer

In January, local resident and Registered Nurse Nina Hrykvich became the Director of the Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center in New Boston.

She began working at the nursing home in 1978 when she was 17 starting in the kitchen. She progressed to housekeeping, then a nurse's aide.

The director at the time, Dale McCuin, who worked at the home for over 30 years, encouraged Nina to attend nursing school. Nina did, becoming an LPN then an RN. Over the years, she worked in other locations, such as Torrington Health Care and Avon Health Care in Connecticut, where she also became a director.

But she also continued to work in Sandisfield, per diem. Sandisfield was always special to Nina. Nina returned to nursing in Sandisfield to cut back on travel time. When the position of Director opened up, she applied for it and was accepted.

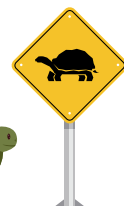
In a conversation with this reporter, Nina remembered what former Director Dale McCuin had told her years ago. "She told me, 'Someday you're going to be the director here,' and I said, 'Oh sure.' And now it's happened. It's a complete circle."

The rehabilitation center works closely with the Veteran's Administration and a large number of patients, all male, are veterans, often dealing with PTSD or mental issues. "There's really a lot of nice men who talk about their war years and your heart goes out to them," Nina said.

Cont'd on p.18



Watch out for turtles!





Scholarships Announced


By Abby Marks

The Sandisfield Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce the recipients of this year's scholarships:

Kyle Sermini (above left), a graduate of Mount Everett High School, will attend Berkshire Community College in the Liberal Arts program with an interest in history. As well as the Sandisfield


Scholarship, Kyle also won the Ruth J. and Robert D. Freeman award given to a graduating senior with an interest in nature, preservation of Sandisfield history, and Sandisfield public service.

Logan Pease (above right), a graduate of Monument Mountain High School, will attend the Southeast Lineman Training center in the Electrical Lineman Program.

Both Logan and Kyle have been active members of their school and local communities. We are proud to assist them in their vocational pursuits. 



MEMORIAL DAY COMMITTEE AND PARADE

The Memorial Day parade will be held on Sunday, May 24, at 10:00 a.m. The Town is looking for at least two more individuals to participate on the committee to help with planning and with the events the day of the parade. In addition if anyone is interested in participating in the parade itself (marching, driving a vehicle, helping with the bike brigade, etc.) please reach out to Laurie (lmcArthur@sandisfieldma.gov) for additional information. 

DETOUR: Sandisfield Road in Monterey

MAY 4 TO ABOUT JUNE 13

Sandisfield Road Culvert Replacement and Temporary Road Closure in Monterey


The Town of Monterey, in coordination with Comprehensive Environmental Inc.

(CEI), has contracted with Western Earthworks to replace the culvert located near 32 Sandisfield Road in Monterey This will impact Sandisfield Road traffic to and from Sandisfield.

This work will require a full road closure at that location, approximately one-third mile from Main Road. Construction is scheduled to begin on May 4 and is expected to last up to six weeks.

The Town has notified both Greg Massini Bus Company and Dufour Bus Company.

Each company will contact families directly regarding any changes to student pickup and drop-off locations. Throughout April, the Monterey Highway Department will prepare Chestnut Hill Road and Wallace Hall Road for use as local detours.

Commercial traffic should plan to access Sandisfield Road via West Street to West Hubbard Road in Sandisfield. Additional updates will be posted on the Town's website at www.montereyma.gov. 



INSIDE

TOWN ELECTION	3-9
CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENTS	8
HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S FUTURE.	10
TOWN BUDGET NUMBERS	14

TRANSFER STATION SUMMER HOURS

Wednesday – 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.
 Saturday – 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
 Sunday – 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

TOWN ELECTION MAY 18

What Did They Say?

CANDIDATES HONORED FOR STEPPING UP

By Bill Price

The annual “Meet the Candidates” event this year, on May 1, was sponsored by the Council on Aging (COA) in cooperation with The Sandisfield Times. Held at Old Town Hall, at least fifty residents attended the meeting with another ten or so joining on Zoom.

COA Chair Barbara Cormier was host, assisted by Ron Bernard, production manager and reporter for The Times. Speaking to the candidates, Ron said, “I want to say thank you very much for stepping up and volunteering for what are often thankless jobs.”

Each candidate answered general questions about why they were running, their credentials, their service on other town boards, and what they hoped to accomplish. However, most of the event was focused on the competing candidates for Select Board and Town Clerk.

SELECT BOARD CANDIDATES

Jeff Bye, running unopposed for the one-year seat vacated by Bob Fedell, spoke of his three decades with the U.S. space agency NASA and, after moving to Sandisfield nearly eleven years ago, his leadership on the Broadband Committee. He has served on other boards as well, and currently chairs the Planning Board. His candidate statement is on page 6.

Toward the end of the meeting, following an audience question about how the three candidates had voted regarding the purchase of EMS protective equipment at

the Special Town Meeting last November, Jeff said he had been appalled “when we found out the condition of some of the safety equipment” and how it put “our firefighters and EMS folks at risk.” He added that “what we have to do is to make sure our EMS people have the equipment they need to minimize the risks they take every day. To not do that, in my opinion, is just shameful for us.”

Alex Russo, in a race with Steve Seddon for a three-year term, explained that he views himself as a “Bridge of Unity” to help heal the “huge divide in this town.”

He encouraged an open-door policy at Select Board meetings. He said that many grants are available to the Town and committed to applying for them.

Asked about his background, Alex said, “I’ve been all over the place, honestly.” He outlined a series of workplaces, including “a few years” in auto repair in Florida, his own video companies with special effects including drone piloting, nonprofits, medical labs, investigative journalism, and currently “studying engineering with a major in photonic engineering.” He said he had been a Sandisfield resident for three years. His candidate statement is on page 4.

Steve Seddon, in the race for the three-year seat, cited his four years on the Board and his chairmanship for the last two. In his statement on page 5, Steve outlined in specific detail what he sees as his accomplishments on the Board.

If re-elected, he would seek to maintain the progress the Town has made in many aspects of governance, including Town Hall staffing, the highway department, and emergency services.

“Continuity is what I’m looking for,” He said, adding that he’d like to pursue the work he’d started. “We’re getting close to the finish line. I’d like to continue.”

TOWN CLERK CANDIDATES

Amanda Leavenworth, when asked about the most important aspect of the Town Clerk position, answered, “Being there.”

Amanda currently serves as appointed Monterey Town Clerk. She acknowledged that she has serious family commitments – “I’m raising a sixth generation of Sandisfielders and I’m proud of that.” When asked why she had left earlier positions in Town government without explanation, she cited personal family commitments as well as complicated hourly demands that didn’t jibe with the job description.

She said that in Monterey she had written protocols for the office in an “ever-expanding 200-page continuity plan.” She added that she would like to produce that in Sandisfield, as well, in order to have “an idea of what records are in the clerk’s office, and where they are, and creating that plan so that if, in the event, somebody cannot continue in that role, at any point, there is some sort of blueprint for them to follow.”

Douglas Miner, the incumbent Town Clerk, when asked about the most important aspects of the job replied, “Maturity and professionalism and the ability to deal with the Massachusetts Attorney General and Secretary of State. Commitment to the office.” He added, “It is essential that you have people who fully and completely and unquestionably buy into that commitment.” His candidate statement is on page 8.

The meeting closed after almost two hours of in-depth discussion. 

TOWN ELECTION MAY 18



the mindset I will bring to our local government.

If elected, my priorities will be:

Restoring Your Right to Be Heard. Public comment at Town Hall is not a privilege, it's your right. On day one I will work to restore open public comment at Select Board meetings.

Genuine Transparency. While a financial audit is a good beginning, it does not provide the complete picture. I will advocate for comprehensive operational and performance evaluations of municipal expenditures, encompassing contracting methods and departmental supervision. This is to ensure that taxpayer funds are allocated appropriately, and I will make it public knowledge.


Bringing Grant Money Home. Sandisfield has won grants, and I want to build on that. The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant, the Municipal Technical Assistance Grant for rural towns, and Public Health Excellence

funding remain unclaimed. I will make grant acquisition a priority.

Proactive Planning. Our volunteers and community members are the backbone of this town. They deserve a Select Board that plans ahead, not one that lurches from crisis to crisis. I will push for a Long-Term Capital Improvement Plan.

I am a father; my daughter Leona is growing up here. Every decision I make on that board will be made with her future and yours in mind.

Sandisfield doesn't need to fear new leadership. It needs leadership that listens and answers to the residents.

I ask for your vote on May 18th. 

SELECT BOARD: THREE-YEAR TERM **ALEX RUSSO** Sandisfield Road

After two years in neighboring Otis, I have proudly called Sandisfield home for the past three years. I was asked to run and I intend to fight for this community and bring our neighbors back together. My background is that of a jack of many trades, and I am actively studying engineering at Berkshire Community College. Engineering has taught me one thing above everything else: when a system keeps failing, you do not keep rigging it, but you find the root problem and fix it. That is



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Dutchess
Litchfield

HERE

for our farmers

business assistance | flexible loans | resources

Who is Berkshire Agricultural Ventures?

We're a community nonprofit helping farmers grow and thrive. Together, we're supporting a stronger, more resilient food system.

berkshireagventures.org



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Rose Nelson, Instructor and Owner

•
Massachusetts certified,
Pony club eventing participant and USEA eventer

Email: sunnyrosefarm@yahoo.com
Phone: (413) 446-4944

TOWN ELECTION MAY 18



From left, Hunter, Steve, Aiden, Laurie, and Fiona.

SELECT BOARD: THREE-YEAR TERM STEVE SEDDON

Town Hill Road

In 2021, Town Hall endured a mass exodus of staff, including one seasoned Select Board member. At that time, I was on the Finance Committee and already familiar with the budget structure and process, so when a Special Election was announced I made the decision to run for the open Select Board seat. With the knowledge from my experience on the Finance Committee and my business background, I knew I would be successful in helping rebuild the team. My goal was to strengthen Town operations by hiring qualified staff and implementing long-term plans aligned with the Board's and taxpayers' priorities.

The creation of a Capital Fleet and Facility Plan were among the first of my initiatives, helping to prioritize Town projects and forecast spending. The facility plan gave a road map of the maintenance and repairs needed to preserve our town buildings for future use.

Implementation of clear, State-supported, financial policies to help manage the budget process for future successors was also an early achievement. Together, the Select Board reviewed and

tailored critical financial policies to fit Sandisfield's unique needs.

Two significant achievements of this Select Board:

- Implementation of the split tax rate to reduce the tax burden on nearly all residential properties
- Supporting the School Committee while they successfully negotiated a new Regional School District Agreement significantly benefiting all taxpayers.

Another significant initiative I focused on was the establishment of a new wage matrix for Sandisfield's DPW employees. The new matrix is based on licenses and credentials, incentivizing employees to build skills and increase their value. It was also negotiated that the Town would cover the cost of classes in exchange for an employee's commitment to remain with the department for a defined period.

Other Select Board accomplishments since I have been a member include:

- Installation of GPS tracking systems on all Town-owned vehicles and equipment to ensure safety and accountability.
- The first favorable audit results in many years, thanks to our amazing financial team.
- New building permit fee structure to minimize repair fees and maximize improvement permit fees.
- Addressing accountability concerns with building code and bylaw violations through new policies and consistent enforcement.
- Auditing the assessment process to ensure all properties are fairly and equitably reassessed on an ongoing basis.

- A complete revamp of public safety services with a new transparent path forward.

I have personally overseen the following Facility projects:

- Installation of the heat pumps and generators at Town Hall.
- Replacing the roof, furnace, and drop ceilings at Old Town Hall.
- Painting the exterior of Old Town Hall, and installation of storms on the large windows.
- Replacing the roof, correcting the basement flooding, and painting the Library.
- Emergency repair of the Handicap ramp at Old Town Hall.

I am running for re-election to the Select Board to ensure we continue to accelerate the steady pace of progress we've established over the last four years.

Moving forward, I would like to continue to focus on persistent infrastructure needs. While we are already addressing the ongoing deferred maintenance on Town buildings, Sandisfield's bridges and roads will be one of the next heavy lifts. The town has hired a great new DPW superintendent who will be instrumental in this process.

There is also the concern of revenue generation. The town receives most of its revenues from tax dollars which severely limits our ability to tackle these larger problems. The current Master Plan created roughly 10 years ago by a great group of volunteers made recommendations to the Town for some of these opportunities. Unfortunately, they were not acted on.

Those opportunities still exist, and I believe that with the team we have in place and the continued collaboration between boards and committees, we will be successful in establishing meaningful new revenue sources for Sandisfield. 🇺🇸

TOWN ELECTION MAY 18



I'm currently chair of the Planning Board where one of our projects is to craft a proposal for new zoning bylaws.

I served on the Green Committee where my skills as an electrical engineer were needed to secure grant funding for solar panels on our Town Hall and DPW garage.

I'm on the Board of Assessors where I helped provide our Select Board with data so that the Board could make the decision to implement a split tax rate which lowered taxes for Sandisfield home owners.

I'm running for Bob Fedell's seat on the Select Board because the Board has made significant progress on several issues and would like to contribute to that positive momentum. I've attended almost every Select Board meeting during Bob's tenure, and agree with The Times statement last month that Bob "served with calm distinction." I'd appreciate your vote so that I can do the same. 🇺🇸

BOARD OF ASSESSORS: (WRITE-IN CANDIDATE): THREE-YEAR TERM

ROGER BROWN

81 West Street

I am running as a "write-in" candidate for the Sandisfield Board of Assessors.

I am currently on the Board and am serving as Board Chair. If re-elected, this would be my second three-year term. I have previously served the Town on the Finance Committee from 2017-2022, the last two years as Chair.

The Board of Assessors is a non-political office: we do not determine taxes. But we are responsible for the fair allocation across all property owners in Sandisfield of the amount to be raised from taxes approved at Town Meetings. To do that, we must follow the Massachusetts laws/regulations consistently and fairly.

The Assessors' office experienced significant challenges in the last two years when our Principal Assessor retired, ending their consulting arrangement, and our long-standing service provider closed their business. We have hired a new service provider, are in the process of upgrading our software, and we recently hired an office manager.

I would like to serve an additional term to manage these activities to completion and ensure a smooth transition for the new office manager. 🇺🇸

Write-In Candidate Roger Brown is running unopposed for re-election for the Board of Assessors. In order to successfully vote for a write-in candidate voters are required to provide the candidate's address: For nearly the past 50 years, Roger has owned a home at 81 West Street.

SELECT BOARD: ONE-YEAR TERM

JEFF BYE

New Hartford Road

My wife Melissa and I moved from Houston to Sandisfield in 2015. Melissa's Berkshire roots run deep, so after visiting her family's New Marlborough farm for year, we knew we wanted to settle here.

A little about my education and professional background – I have a master's degree in electrical engineering and worked for NASA at the Johnson Space Center for 35 years, beginning as an intern and ending as a senior technical leader.

My education and professional experience honed my strategic thinking and leadership skills. While at NASA, I helped solve complex problems such as being one of the senior engineers who supported the investigation of the Challenger explosion. I also have extensive experience creating and managing multi-million-dollar budgets.

Soon after moving to Town, I was asked to chair Sandisfield's Broadband Committee. For six years, I worked with the governor's office, our neighboring towns, and our Select Boards. I remained on that committee until the last home was connected.

TOWN ELECTION MAY 18

BOARD OF HEALTH: THREE-YEAR TERM

JOHN BOULAIS

South Main Street

John Boulais did not submit a Candidate Statement.

BOARD OF HEALTH: THREE-YEAR TERM

BRIGITTE RUTHMAN

Dodd Road



*Brigitte with her dog,
Buck Ruthman*

One of my most impressive memories from childhood is of my father motoring off in our 1965 Volkswagen Beetle aiming for some meeting on an odd midweek night after he finished work. Raised in Chicago and on the family dairy farm in Spooner, Wisconsin, he was passionate about soil and water conserva-


tion and was a consummate conservationist at large. A World War II veteran, he instilled in me and my two brothers a love of country, community, strong work ethic, and a responsibility to give back.

I have been certified for more than 40 years as an emergency medical technician and for nearly that many years have been involved in the fire service, both working professions that I cannot imagine having lived my life without. In my younger years I served as an interior/haz-mat firefighter in Litchfield County and remain a member firefighter in Salisbury. I worked for many years at Lime Rock Race Track Fire Rescue as a paid EMT/FF and have served as an EMT in Vermont, Massachusetts (including Sandisfield), and Connecticut. I currently answer emergency calls 24/7 in Norfolk and Colebrook.

I bought land and moved to Sandisfield after restoring a large portion of the former Joshua Smith and later Thomas Dodd farmland, beginning in 1996, and moved from a couple of towns over in Salisbury in 2004 to a log house I fitted together with two friends. Cattle and poultry now occupy the land saved from house lots.

Three years ago, I stepped up to fill a vacancy on the Board of Health and have, since then, learned much from our inspector and from extensive classroom training in Pittsfield and Holyoke. I'm currently Chairman of the Board of Health.

We are privileged to have a very skilled and responsible inspector in Jason Dragonetti to work with and advise our effective three-member board about rules and regulations that are sometimes clear and sometimes require careful interpretation. To my own great surprise, I look forward to meetings and challenges that can seem overwhelming to homeowners. Each case is a puzzle needing unravelling for solution, rather than obstacle building.

Sandisfield, like much of South County, is a beautiful place and under development pressure that requires now more than ever responsible oversight. I am proud to live and farm on 100 beautiful acres that I love dearly. I have and if re-elected will continue to serve with honesty and integrity on behalf of the Town. 


PLANNING BOARD: FIVE-YEAR TERM

CAROL GARCIA

North Main Street

I accepted this nomination at the Town Caucus to volunteer my expertise to the town of Sandisfield for the greater good. I have a very specific set of skills as a real estate appraiser over the last 30 years that I believe will benefit members of the community who wish to present plans to the town.

Having completed thousands of appraisals throughout my career, I have extensive knowledge and education in real estate research, legal analysis of real estate deeds, and legal contracts culminating in market valuations. I have also recently retired from the past 10 years in corporate banking for Bank of America as a Senior Real Estate Analyst and Senior Appraisal Reviewer for compliance and regulatory adherence on a national level. I also worked as a Change Management Liaison to relative groups in corporate banking to assist, manage, and advance their initiatives.

I look forward to sharing what I have learned over my career and to bringing my expertise to the Planning Board to advance the mission of the Town's initiatives going forward. 

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES: FIVE-YEAR TERM

KATHIE BURROWS

New Hartford Road

Kathie Burrows did not submit a candidate statement. 

TOWN ELECTION MAY 18

TOWN CLERK: THREE-YEAR TERM **AMANDA LEAVENWORTH** Sandisfield Road

Amanda Leavenworth did not submit a Candidate Statement.

TOWN CLERK: THREE-YEAR TERM **DOUGLAS MINER** Cronk Road

I am running for Town Clerk for a third term because continuity, stability, and integrity in the Town Clerk's Office matter deeply to me. Over the past several years, this office has made meaningful progress – modernizing operations, improving access to historical records, increasing the level of service, and doing so with a lower budget than when I first took office. That work should be built upon and continued, not left uncertain.

Originally, I was not planning to run. The plan was for the Assistant Town Clerk to remain in the office through the Annual Town Meeting and election and then run for the position unopposed, with my full and public support. I believe this approach would have allowed for a smooth and responsible transition.

However, that is not what occurred. The Assistant Town Clerk recently resigned abruptly and without notice and without a clear transition plan in place. This created an immediate need for stability. Based on the limited information available to me at the time, I made the decision – after careful consideration with my family – to run again so that there would be someone on the ballot and the office would remain fully functional.

Even after that decision, there were opportunities for clarification that may have led to a different outcome. By the time I was able to confirm the full situation, the deadline to withdraw my name from the ballot had passed.

This was not the path I planned, but I believe strongly in stepping forward when the Town needs it.

My commitment is simple: I will serve this Town responsibly, consistently, and without hesitation.

MODERATOR: ONE-YEAR TERM **DOMINIC KONSTAM** Sears Road

I accepted the nomination again because, to me, it's a great opportunity to contribute to this amazing town. The Annual and Special Town Meetings are some of the most important events that occur each year; it's where, at the end of the day, all important decisions are made, and they're made by the people of Sandisfield.

I try to remove myself from the equation as much as possible and let everyone get to business. The participation and turn-out that seems to be increasing year over year makes the role even more enjoyable.

So, if the voters will have me, I'll keep showing up.

KNOX TRAIL INN

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KNOX HAPPENINGS

- MAY 1ST SAL GRILLO 6PM
- MAY 2ND MIDNIGHT 30 7PM
- MAY 8TH DAVE O SOLO 6PM
- MAY 9TH FOOLISH U 8PM
- MAY 15TH JON BERMAN 6PM
- MAY 16TH SIX-PACK OF BLUES 8PM
- MAY 17TH HILLTOWN BLUES JAM 2PM
- MAY 22ND BRETT & STEVE ACOUSTIC 7PM
- MAY 23RD BRB BLUES BAND 8PM
- MAY 29TH NATE MARTEL 6PM
- MAY 30TH FULL BURN BAND 8PM

TOWN ELECTION MAY 18

IN SUPPORT OF STEVE SEDDON AND JEFF BYE

I am writing this after 36 years of service to our town as an EMT. As of March 31 this year, my license expired. I would like to thank all my fellow taxpayers who made it possible for me to help and do what I could to make our town better and safer.

I hope when it comes to voting this month that people keep in mind how far our town has come and the progress we have made in keeping our town safe.

Before you cast your vote, please be well informed. Let's stop looking in the rear-view mirror and instead see all the good progress our town has made and will continue to make in the future under our current leadership.

A vote for Seddon and Bye is a positive vote and will assure us of that continuing good progress for the future of our town.

Happy spring and happy voting.

Zoe Nelson
Dodd Road

IN SUPPORT OF ALEX RUSSO

When I bought my house in Sandisfield 22 years ago I was ecstatic. Peaceful, beautiful, friendly, and just 15 minutes from work. It was perfect. But not so any more, in large part because of less-than-ideal Town leadership. What some of us are experiencing are the attacks on our questions about the manner in which the Town operates. At the Select Board meetings the leadership sometimes appears to be falling asleep over their boredom with their agendas. Several times the Town has appeared on the front page of *The Eagle* with information about our fire chief and his practices, not the least of which is the enormous amount of money he's demanding for our fire department, money that many of us feel is way out of line. Yet the Select Board supports his budget.

Alexander Russo is a young, talented, honest, and intelligent man, willing to stand up to refresh a system that has gone astray. He is a photonics engineering student at Berkshire Community College and approaches problems with an analytic mindset. He believes in looking at an entire system to find long-term solutions and values the truth, careful planning and hard work. Beyond his technical background, Alexander is an investigator, navigating public records, reading between the lines of municipal budgets, and he holds the institutions accountable.

He will be a tireless advocate for every single resident, closing the divide between Town Hall and the people it is designed to serve.

That is why I am supporting Alexander Russo for the 3-year opening on the Select Board.

Rita Kasky
Silverbrook Road

IN SUPPORT OF STEVE SEDDON

Our Select Board, with Steve Seddon as chair, has made progress we feel has improved all our lives.

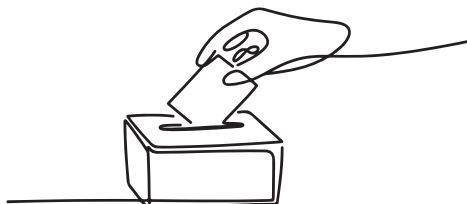
Steve and John Field were members of the Regional Amendment Advisory Committee (RAAC) tasked with drafting a Regional District Agreement (RDA) for the Farmington River Regional School District. The School Committee is an independent body responsible for the district budget and hiring and evaluating of the superintendent. Still, the support Steve and the board gave the committee during the RDA negotiations was critical for getting this document finalized and approved by Otis and Sandisfield voters. Sandisfield now pays a more equitable portion of the school bill – and our taxes reflect this.

Under Steve's chairmanship, our Select Board studied data provided by the Board of Assessors and approved a split tax rate. The revised RDA at the school and the split tax – along with prudent financial management – means our 2026 taxes are almost identical to what they were in 2019, a rare accomplishment few Berkshire towns can claim.

Steve has been guiding Sandisfield's reset of our public safety. Our town went from responding to approximately 60 percent of its emergency calls to 100 percent – undeniably impressive results.

All of these reasons and too many others to name in the space allowed are why we support Steve Seddon for Selectman.

Melissa and Jeff Bye
New Hartford Road



Historical Society to Close

LAST CALL FOR NEW LEADERS

By Ron Bernard

May 16 this year is the 56th anniversary of the founding of the Sandisfield Historical Society.

This month may also mark the end of this community organization that has for nearly six decades collected and preserved Sandisfield heritage and promoted local awareness and interest in our past.

Think of the society as Sandisfield's museum, housed since 1979 in a former Congregational Church building (1909) in South Sandisfield Center.

In a "message from the board" in the March issue of The Times, society President Ann Wald signaled that due to confirmed retirements of current board members, unless new leadership including a slate of officers emerges, the society's future is in doubt and will probably close.

Succession is a frequent problem for legacy community service organizations, especially in small towns. Aging populations and changing social patterns are factors. In recent memory Sandisfield has lost its Grange, the Ladies Aid Society, and the Taxpayer's Association because of dwindling membership and leadership.

When long-time Historical Society president Norton Fletcher retired in 2013 no successor was available. The board considered invoking a bylaws provision which allowed for a limited period of inactive

status with acting officers who would serve as caretakers of the building and its contents until new officers were in place. John Kuzmeh answered the call and provided able and effective leadership for three more years.

When John resigned in late 2016, again there was no successor. Norton Fletcher agreed to serve "temporarily," but he died in October 2018 at age 95.

To avert inactive status a second time, Ann Wald stepped up to lead. She said then, "I'm no historian but I just could not stand by and do nothing." Thanks to Ann the Society has continued activities since 2019, albeit with a limited schedule.

Reached by The Times, Ann said, "I really hope that there are some people out there with energy and ideas who understand and appreciate the importance and the need to promote Sandisfield history."

The Society normally opens for business every May but will not do so this year. According to Ann, unless others take the reins, the process of dissolution will begin by this summer. The Christmas Fair, which for many years has been sponsored by the Society, will continue under other Town groups.

The potential loss of the Historical Society would leave only one Sandisfield community social service organization from that era, American Legion Post No. 456.

Chris Maccarini, PMP
Owner

617-816-6152

info@crmhomewatch.com
crmhomewatch.com


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SAT. MAY 2 7 PM \$20
12 AND UNDER \$5

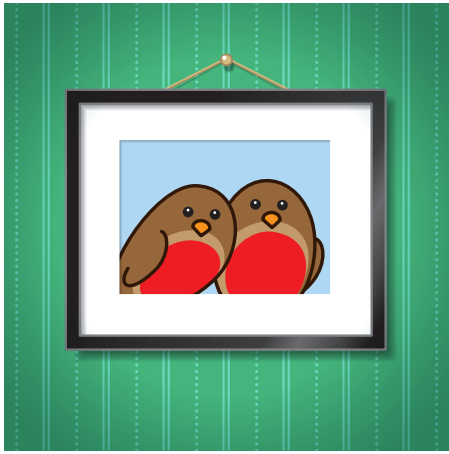
SEASON OPENER:
Anni Crofut's Family Cabaret!
A hilarious, romping evening of madcap mischief, song, dance, comedy, fiddle, yo yo, ukes, jazz and more.

SAT. MAY 16 10 AM \$20
The Intellectual Origins of American Slavery
A conversation with historian John Harpham about his new book, a "landmark account of the origins of American slavery showing how ancient Roman ideas were used to defend the establishment of a slave empire in the English Atlantic world."

GALLERY SAT. MAY 16 FREE
Serena Granbery Solo Show
Opening Reception 4-6 PM. Using bronze, clay, concrete, oil, wax, and wood, Serena Granbery's work reflects her deep connection to the natural world in work that echoes her reverence for the environment and ecology. *Closes June 14.*

SAT. MAY 30 10 AM \$20
Turning Points In Mathematics
Mathematician Jack Sanders ties culture and mathematics together to explain the first major turning point in mathematics, from the Sumerians' practical math to the deductive math of the ancient Greeks creating Euclidean geometry and number theory we still study today.

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



NATURE PHOTO CONTEST

A WEEKLY FEATURE IN THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

Town residents are invited to participate in The Berkshire Eagle's "Nature Photo of the Week" and share Sandisfield's natural beauty.

BerkshiresWeek.com is looking for landscape, wildlife, plant photography, and everything in between. Readers, hikers, early risers, backyard birdwatchers, and photographers of all experience levels are invited to submit their favorite nature photos from around the Berkshires.

Each week, one photo will be selected to be:

- Featured on the Berkshires Week website homepage
- Shared across Berkshires Week social media
- Included in the Berkshires Week newsletter
- Credited clearly to the photographer

Phone photos are welcome. First-time photographers are welcome.

To access the submission form, please visit www.berkshiresweek.naturephotooftheweek.



The Sandisfield Arts Center's new kitchen!

The brand-new kitchen at the Arts Center, to be enjoyed by all.

See ad for May events at bottom of previous page.

Photo: Jean Atwater-Williams

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 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
 Phone: 258-4966
sandisfieldlibrary@gmail.com
www.sandisfieldlibrary.org

FOOD PANTRY

Donations of food items can be dropped at the Sandisfield Library during regular library hours.

We want to thank EVERYONE who has graciously donated to our little food pantry. We greatly appreciate all your help and kindness.

ARTS & CRAFTS AT THE LIBRARY

On Saturday, May 8, the day before Mother's Day, (hint, hint) the library will be hosting an Arts & Crafts for Adults and kids. Felt Inspirations will be here from 10:00 until Noon to assist in creating beautiful felt necklaces and bracelets. Come join the fun. We had so much fun last time we thought we'd do it again!

LATEST ADDITIONS TO THE BOOKSHELVES

ADULT FICTION

Son Of Nobody by Yann Martel, author of *Life of Pi*, winner of the Booker Prize. This is a brilliant retelling of the Trojan War from the perspective of two commoners: an ancient soldier and a modern scholar.

Revenge Prey by John Sanford. A Lucas Davenport Novel. In this latest thriller he must track down a ruthless Russian hit team.

Bloodlust by Sandra Brown. A new sexy suspense novel about a detective seeking justice for his murdered wife with the help of a psychotherapist he is attracted to.

A Day Of Judgement by Charles Todd. July, 1921. A corpse washed ashore on the Northumberland coast bringing a new case for Inspector Ian Rutledge.

Stay Alive by Ian Baruma. Berlin, 1939-1945. This nonfiction work is an astonishing account of life under a murderous regime amid a great city's descent into utter annihilation. In this epic we see again and again that most people do not do the hard thing most of the time. Most people go along. It's a lesson that has not lost its timeliness.

NEED A NOTARY?

The Library can do that to! Give us a call for an appointment or stop by during regular hours.

MUSEUM PASSES

Don't forget the Library has passes to several local museums!!

- Springfield Museums – all five!
- Clark Museum
- Hancock Shaker Village
- Norman Rockwell Museum
- Mass Moca
- Ventfort Hall
- The Zoo at Forest Park



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SCHOOL DISTRICT TREASURER

Farmington River Regional School District in Otis is searching for a qualified person to serve as School District Treasurer.

Farmington River is a small rural community school of about 190 students PK-12, with one class of each grade level. The general roles of the School District Treasurer are to provide supervisory oversight of the district's financial operations, stewardship of the district's accounts, and assurance to the school committee and town governments that public funds are being used for their intended purposes. Duties include:

- Maintenance of the "cash book:" Recording all activity that may affect cash on a monthly basis.

- Certification of E&D (Excess and Deficiency) Funds: Assist with the processing of end-of-year reports and verifying all balances filed to the state.
- Assessment certification: Once the school committee has adopted a budget, submit certification of town assessments to town governments and finance committees.
- Annual Audit: Support auditors by providing Cash Book records and information related to the internal financial controls used by the district to ensure separation of duties.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

The School District Treasurer should have a background in finance or accounting, preferably in the area of municipal or public finance. A degree in the areas of business, finance, accounting and/or public administration is preferred. An intermediate to advanced knowledge of Excel is needed.

HOURS/DAY OF WORK: Approximately 6-10 hours per month, remote work is possible

COMPENSATION: Annual stipend, negotiable

TO APPLY: Send a letter of interest, resume, and three letters of reference to:

Timothy Lee, Superintendent
 Farmington River Regional School District
 55 North Main Road
 Otis, MA. 01253



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 source: Berkshire County MLS based on dollar volume 2002-2025

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Just Numbers

THE MONEY COMES FROM SOMEWHERE

By Larry Dwyer

At the FY27 Budget Information Session held on April 17, the Town reported that the tax levy had increased by 18.78 percent, or \$606,344. By accessing different sources of Town funds, the increase was reduced to 6.79 percent.



The Town plans to use \$200,000 from Free Cash and borrow \$100,000 from the Stabilization Fund. Of the Free Cash being used, \$100,000 comes from an Overlay Surplus provided by the Board of Assessors. An additional reduction of \$98,000 in vocational expenses further reduced the levy.

The funds borrowed from the Stabilization Fund are expected to be repaid as revenue is received by the Fire Department. However, due to the recent acquisition and investment in Fire Station

#2, the Town's Free Cash reserves could not support a larger contribution to further offset the levy. For FY26, Free Cash was certified at \$1,289,838, leaving a remaining usable balance of \$68,884 after these allocations.

Between FY26 and FY27, total operating costs for the town rose by 9.81%, or \$373,350. Fire/EMS expenses increased by \$262,844, while the school budget rose by \$133,747. Fire/EMS salary costs alone grew by \$220,000, including \$190,000 approved at the November 2025 Special Town Meeting and an additional \$30,000 added afterward. Retirement expenses remained unchanged, and employee benefits decreased by \$50,561.

Several compensation adjustments were also made within the Fire Department. The Deputy Fire Chief stipend, previously unpaid, has been set at \$15,000. The Fire Chief stipend, originally \$15,000 at the May 2025 Annual Town Meeting, was increased to \$52,000 at the November 2025 Special Town Meeting, and will now rise further to a salary of \$75,000.

To improve transparency, fuel budgets for Fire/EMS, Police, and the Department of Public Works will be separated into individual accounts.

Additionally, a proposal will be introduced to establish a new Fire/EMS Stabilization Fund. This would replace the previous Ambulance Stabilization Fund, which was limited to ambulance purchases, and instead allow funds to be used more broadly for related expenses such as capital costs, medical services, equipment, and turnout gear.

Finally, the prior Fire Department administration had accumulated approximately \$345,000 in uncollected funds. These largely stem from the gap between billed ambulance service fees and reimbursements from Medicare or Medicaid. For example, if a service is billed at \$1,800 but Medicare reimburses \$500, the remaining \$1,300 cannot be collected under current rules. Fire Chief Mike Grillo is working to implement a Balance Billing program to recover some of these funds, though no money has been collected so far.

In recent years, careful budgeting has allowed Sandisfield to build an Excess Levy Capacity of \$690,778 for FY2026. As a result, despite a 6.79% increase in the town's levy, the town will not need to seek a Proposition 2½ override vote.

These figures are preliminary and subject to change. The final figures will be posted on the FY27 Town Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting on May 16. 🗳️

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- Timber Sales
- Boundary Marking
- GIS Mapping
- Foresters for the Birds
- Wildlife Habitat Improvement
- Recreational Trail Layout
- Climate Forestry



SANDISFIELD Hazard Mitigation Plan

Sandisfield is developing a Hazard Mitigation Plan to identify risks and take practical steps to reduce damage from storms, flooding, extreme weather, and other hazards.

WHAT IS A HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN?



A Hazard Mitigation Plan focuses on actions taken *BEFORE* a disaster to reduce damage and disruption. These actions include steps like improving drainage, protecting roads, and strengthening infrastructure.

Take the
Community Survey!

Your input helps the Town:

- Identify top risks
- Understand past events
- Focus on key actions



Scan the QR code or visit:
bit.ly/Sandisfield-Survey

WHY THIS MATTERS



This plan helps the Town decide which projects to move forward with and supports applications for state and federal grant funding.



Improve roads
and drainage



Protect the natural
environment



Support
public safety

**Your feedback ensures the plan
reflects real conditions and concerns
across the community.**



Questions?

Contact:
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Courteny Morehouse, Principal planner
cmorehouse@berkshireplanning.org
413-442-1521 ext 26

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SOFTBALL SUNDAYS IN MONTEREY

By Jim Stern

Maybe most Sandisfielders don't realize it, but just over the town line in Monterey a long-running Sunday morning pickup softball game has been happening for decades.


It's not quite since the Knox Trail era ... but close enough. As soon as the snow melts, the mud dries, and the field becomes playable, the emails start flying and the bats start swinging.

Anyone can play. The roster changes week to week, but the spirit stays the same: everyone is welcome. All ages, all genders, all skill levels. Over the years we've had energetic 12-year-olds, seasoned players in their late 80s, and everyone in between.

Batting practice begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays. First pitch is a half-hour later, at 10:30. We play April through mid October (and sometimes beyond).

To keep things fun and inclusive, younger kids get to bat at the start of each inning without affecting the score — a great way to spark the next generation of players. We also mix in occasional home and away games with friendly groups from Copake, New York, and Lakeville, Connecticut.

Come play, cheer, or simply hang out — everyone is invited this Sunday and every following Sunday, weather permitting. Just swing by the field at Greene Park — right behind the Monterey Town Hall and the Police Station on Rt 23. Join the fun.

Contact: Jim Stern. email: soundprojim@gmail.com or text (516) 318-9962 for more info and to be added to the email distribution list. 



“The Sandisfield Nine”

In the photo above, seated from left are: Carlton Sage (1865-1913), Sherman Clark (1864-?), Edward [Edwin?] Twining (1865-c.1930) and Bennie Mills (1865-?). Standing are Howard Twining (1860-c.1922), Fred Clark, “blacksmith,” Frederick W. Ives (1865-1948) and Billie Madden (1869-1907).

“Base ball matches are getting to be common occurrences,” *The Berkshire Courier* noted in August 1866, “and though the exercise and sport may be invigorating and unexceptionable, we fear the general result among the lads who comprise the clubs is derogatory to their minds and morals....”

That statement alone would serve to recruit more players. Baseball was, and remains, a fun community recreation. Numerous town teams played over the years.

Although none of Sandisfield’s historical accounts or news clippings in the scrapbooks mention sports of any sort, it is nevertheless likely that Sandisfielders in the late 19th century cheered on their baseball team.

Photo c.1895, Ethel Wilbur Millard, granddaughter of F.W. Ives, reprinted from Sandisfield Then & Now: 1762-2012



The Monterey Pick-Up Softball Crew, recent season photo.

Spring and Summer Tree and Road Work

This spring and summer there will be a lot of tree work and utility work occurring in Town. Significant paving and culvert replacement work will be completed on Route 8 from Otis to Connecticut, and is expected to start this spring and run through the summer. In addition the following roads will have tree and/or utility work being completed at different times during the spring and summer, so please use caution when driving on those roads during that time.

- Prock Hill
- Silverbrook Road

- Fox Road
- West Street
- New Hartford Road
- Town Hill Road (significant tree and utility work will be completed on this road and will take the majority of the summer)
- Roberts Road
- South Sandisfield Road
- Sandy Brook Turnpike
- Norfolk Road
- North and South Beech Plain Roads

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NEW BOSTON CHURCH SERVICES

Mother's Day Worship Service on

Sunday, May 10 from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

A special worship service to honor the special women in our lives. Stay for fellowship after the service.

Sunday May 24 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Service is one hour earlier due to the Memorial Day parade.

All welcome.

4 Sandisfield Road Sandisfield, MA 01255

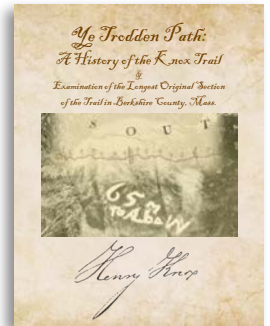
newbostoncongregationalchurch.org

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*Proceeds benefit the Berkshire County Historical Society
 For more information contact Ronbernard@aol.com*

Sandisfield Nurse Appointed Director

Cont'd from p.1

She added, "They get really good care from the nurses, Certified Nursing Assistants, and all our staff. We have monthly staff meetings, and the nurses are great."

She added, "My spirit was always here. I feel comfortable here because I'm close to home. My family has been here for four generations."

MANY YEARS IN SANDISFIELD

Nina's grandparents, Libby and David Pinsky, were Jews who emigrated to America because of early 1900 pogroms in Russia, first settling in the Lower East Side of Manhattan and coming to Sandisfield through the sponsorship of the Jewish Colonization Association. They owned a boarding house on Silver Brook Road where her father, Sid Pinsky, was born in 1928.

Raised in Sandisfield, Sid earned a Ph.D. from Columbia University in psychiatric social work and became a director at the Long Island

Jewish Medical Center in New York where he worked for 30 years. Her mother, Terry, a Canadian, was a professional ballet dancer who taught dance at the Manhattan School of Dance and the Joffrey Ballet in New York. After Sid's retirement, the family returned to the Sandisfield home. Her mother danced and performed at Jacob's Pillow in Becket and established the Barrington Ballet. Nina's parents, along with others in the community, worked to found the Sandisfield Arts Center. Terry died in 1991, Sid in 2015.


Nina, born in Manhattan, studied ballet and almost became a professional dancer, but was not as dedicated as her mother. She said she wanted to live in Sandisfield so she could have a farm. "We had a nice apartment in New York, but I didn't want to live there."

In Sandisfield, she married Victor Hrykvich in 1990. Like Nina, Victor's family had been here several generations. Dedicated to the Town, Victor served for many years as chairman of the Select Board and of the Board of Health. He died in 2022.

Nina now lives on Beech Plain Road, across the road from where she and Victor's three daughters, Nicole, Theresa, and Jessica, are upgrading the house that Victor built. Nina said, "The house is special," adding that all of the wood that went into the house came off their land and from the lumber mill that Victor's father Nick and his uncle Alex owned and operated on Rt. 8 in New Boston.

In 1978, when Nina first started working at the New Boston Nursing Home – as it was called then – the Home still accepted women as patients. Her grandmother, Libby Pinsky, became a patient.

Nina said, "I feel honored to be the director here and being with the veterans and understanding them and being a compassionate nurse and advocate. Just trying to make their life as good as it can be."

She added, "My family is still on the same land on Beech Plain Road where it all started. Our roots run deep. My daughters and I want to continue our farm and legacy here." 

NEW MARLBOROUGH MEETING HOUSE EVENTS

One Town, One Read | June 27, 4:30 pm

A shared reading and moderated discussion of Daniel Mason's bestselling novel *North Woods*.

Celebration of the Nation's 250th Anniversary | July 4, 10:00 am

A celebration with readings from the Declaration of Independence by local residents.

Arkai | July 18, 4:30 pm

Innovative and genre-defying music. Grammy winner Arkai returns following their acclaimed 2024 appearance.

Aimée Allen Quartet | July 25, 4:30 pm

An afternoon of expressive jazz. A blend of jazz standards, bossa nova, and original compositions.

Michelle Goldberg and Katha Pollitt | August 1, 4:30 pm

New York Times columnist Michelle Goldberg with poet and essayist Katha Pollitt discuss current American democracy.

David Nasaw with WAMC's Joe Donahue | August 8, 4:30 pm

Discussing Nasaw's recent book *The Wounded Generation*, on the impact of World War II on the soldiers who fought in it.

Tales of New Marlborough | August 15, 3:30 pm

An evening of local storytelling celebrating the voices and experiences that make the town unique.

The Mammals | August 22, 4:30 pm

A folk favorite bring their energetic blend of Hudson Valley folk traditions, string-band sounds, and socially engaged songwriting.

Manon Hutton-DeWys Trio | September 19, 4:30 pm

Two exceptional musicians join Manon in an afternoon of outstanding piano trios.

Itay Dayan Band | September 26, 4:30 pm

Led by Boston-based clarinetist Itay Dayan, widely regarded as one of the most exciting voices in contemporary klezmer music.

Violinist Grant Houston and Pianist Dina Vainshtein | October 3, 4:30 pm

A classical program of great American music.

Tickets available Online in May! nmmeetinghouse.org



NEW MARLBOROUGH
MEETING HOUSE

2026

NOW HEAR THIS!

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

MAY

Sandisfield Select Board Meetings are currently through Zoom and in-person at 6:00 p.m. on Mondays unless otherwise posted. Please visit sandisfieldma.gov or call 258-4711 for information.

Playgroup on Tuesdays from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at the Otis Town Hall. Sponsored by South Berkshire Kids. No pre-registration is necessary. Led by Nina Carr. This fun program includes free play, crafts, stories, and songs! A great time to meet up with friends and meet new friends! For confirmation 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 Town Hall Annex, 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.

Pick-up Baseball every Sunday, 10:00 a.m. batting practice, 10:30 first pitch. Come play, cheer, or just hang out — everyone is invited this Sunday and every Sunday thereafter weather permitting, until mid-October. Players from many towns, all ages, genders welcome. Kids get to bat at the start of each inning to keep the game fun and inclusive. Greene Park in the center of town - just behind Monterey Town Hall on Rt. 23.

Mother's Day Worship Service on Sunday, May 10 from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church located on Route 57. A special worship service to honor the special women in our lives. Stay for fellowship after the service. All are welcome. For more information and to view the calendar, visit newbostoncongregationalchurch.org.

The Intellectual Origins of American Slavery on Saturday, May 16 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center

at 5 Hammertown Road. A conversation with historian John Harpham about his new book hailed as a "landmark account of the origins of American slavery, showing how ancient Roman ideas were used to defend the establishment of a slave empire in the English Atlantic world." \$20. A limited number of reduced-price community tickets are available for \$10. Visit sandisfieldartscenter.org to purchase tickets.

Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, May 16 at 10:00 a.m., Sandisfield Fire House at 207 Sandisfield Road.

Serena Granbery Solo Show-Opening Reception on Saturday, May 16 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center at 5 Hammertown Road. Using bronze, clay, concrete, oil, wax, and wood, Serena's work reflects her deep connection to the natural world in work that echoes her reverence for the environment and ecology. The show will continue most weekends from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or by appointment (galler@sandisfieldartscenter.org). Free.

Annual Town Election on Monday, May 18 from 1:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall at 3 Silverbrook Road. Please call the Town Clerk, 413-258-4711, option 2 for more information

Service at New Boston Congregational Church, Sunday May 24, 9:00-10:00 a.m. Service is one hour earlier due to the Memorial Day parade.

Turning Points in Mathematics on Saturday, May 30 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center at 5 Hammertown Road. Mathematician Jack Sanders ties culture and mathematics together to explain the first major turning point in mathematics, from the Sumerians' practical math to the deductive math of the ancient Greeks creating Euclidean geometry and number theory we still study today. \$20. A limited number of reduced-price community tickets are available for \$10. Visit sandisfieldartscenter.org to purchase tickets.

ONLINE EVENTS

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

Habitat Chat on first Wednesday of the month from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. sponsored by the Massachusetts Pollinator Network. Learn about wildlife habitat, pollinators, and more!





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Our thanks to those who donated last month.

Melissa Bye

Dr. Nina Jemmott

Hannah Mele-Andrews



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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,

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

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