

# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

*Tribunus*



*Plebis*

RELIABLE. REGULAR. RELEVANT.

Volume XVII, Number 3

June 2026



## Memorial Day 2026

THE DAY RAINED ON OUR PARADE, BUT WE MARCHED ANYWAY.

*Mid-way through the parade, representatives of the Sandisfield Fire Department.*

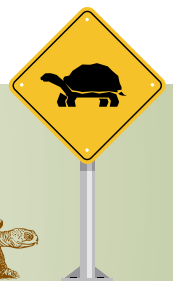
*Photo: Richard Migot*



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*Please watch out for turtles!*



# Memorial Day 2026

REMEMBER & HONOR



*Clockwise from top right:*

*Who is this patriot in the pickup window? Parents, let us know. Email [w.billprice@gmail.com](mailto:w.billprice@gmail.com)*

*An honor guard of Sandisfield veterans at the New Boston Cemetery.*

*Sandisfield's own drummers, in the rain.*

*At the end of the parade, a feast for about a hundred residents and guests at the American Legion. From left, cooks Melissa Bye, Steve Pincus, and Zoe Nelson. Chipping in also were Barbara Cormier, Christine Nadelman, Chuck Nelson, and other volunteers.*

*New this year: A bagpiper to honor our veterans.*

*Photos: Richard Migot*



# Our 264th Annual Town Meeting

## AFTER DISCUSSION, EVERYTHING PASSED

By Bill Price

Despite harsh words exercised earlier on posts on Connect Sandisfield/Facebook, Sandisfield's Annual Town Meeting proceeded without a hitch, once the residents gathered together under the roof of the Town's Fire Station.

The annual meeting, the 264th since the Town's incorporation in 1762, was attended by only 95 of the Town's 744 registered voters, 12.7 percent.

This year, stanchions separated voters from non-voters, a precaution suggested by a complaint on social media about the voting at a Special Election last fall. Town Clerk Douglas Miner announced this year's plan, adding that "We follow the rules, we count the votes, and however the votes end up, we follow the votes. It is essential for our town that the rules are followed by everybody and believed by everybody."

Town Moderator Dominic Konstam, also serving in his role as Chair of the Finance Committee, presented an overview of the Town's financial picture and the proposed fiscal year budget. Sandisfield's long-term property tax stability was highlighted, noting that the projected average single-family tax bill for FY27 is expected to remain below FY24 levels and only modestly higher than FY20 levels overall. Konstam emphasized that the Town has maintained stable tax impacts for residents while investing in infrastructure, public safety, and emergency service improvements.

During the meeting, Konstam also clarified that a formatting omission on the printed Warrant affected the prior year comparison figures used in the budget summary. After correcting the FY26 appropriations to reflect both Annual and Special Town Meeting votes, the Town's operating budget was determined to represent an increase of 0.37%. Residents ultimately approved an operating budget of approximately \$4.1 million for the upcoming fiscal year.

All of the dozen warrant articles passed, most unanimously.

Those articles dealing with Fire and EMT departments finances passed as well, but with majority



At the head table, from left, Town Accountant Margaret McClellan, Moderator Dominic Konstam, and Town Clerk Douglas Miner.

Photo: Larry Dwyer


vote. Many questions were asked on these articles, but no amendments were offered nor were any even discussed.

Article 4, which dealt with a requirement that half of all ambulance fee revenues be transferred into a newly approved fire/EMS stabilization fund for capital costs, drew probably the most questions of the morning, but the resulting vote was 68 to 17 and the article passed its 2/3rd requirement.

On May 19 reporter Talia Lissauer wrote in The Berkshire Eagle that "voters approved a revolving fund for the production and installation of 911 address signs, funded by the revenue from the signs themselves."

She continued, "In compliance with a state requirement, voters approved \$6,000 from free cash for two waveform capnography monitors, one for each ambulance, which monitors exhaled carbon dioxide in real time for EMTs to assess breathing."

She quoted Town Clerk Miner who said, "You tend to get the same people engaging, but this time it's a pretty wide group. There was plenty of debate among people who spoke, but that didn't translate to any amendments. There weren't any surprises and everything went as advertised."

Official minutes of the Annual Town Meeting are on the Town website, sandisfieldma.gov. Go to Town News and click on Annual Town Meeting. 



Rolls and doughnuts and coffee and tea were served.

Photo: Joanne Olson

# Select Board Chair Re-Elected

## TOWN TO CONTINUE ITS TRAJECTORY

By Bill Price

In one of the most contentious elections in Sandisfield memory, two incumbents won, another lost, and one candidate turned back a last-minute write-in effort.

Select Board Chair Steve Seddon was re-elected to a third term over first-time candidate Alex Russo. At the first Select Board meeting following the election, the Board turned to Seddon to serve another year as Chair. Veteran Selectman John Field announced he could not make the time to be Chair and the other Selectman, Jeff Bye, newly elected, faces a steep learning curve. The Board seemed poised to continue on the same trajectory as over the last few years, and the voters seemed to favor exactly that.

Jeff Bye, a candidate for the Select Board seat vacated by Bob Fedell, was initially running unopposed. Instead, he faced a write-in opponent whose candidacy was announced only a few days earlier by a post on Connect Sandisfield/Facebook, Dan Andrus, a former Town

Fire Chief and current president of the nonprofit formerly known as Sandisfield Fire Department, Inc., was not on the ballot nor did he appear at a Meet the Candidate forum prior to the election. He did, however, receive 61 votes.

Douglas Miner won a third term as Town Clerk, defeating Amanda Leavenworth who had recently resigned as Assistant Town Clerk.

In a surprise at the Board of Health, newcomer John Boulais beat current Chair Brigitte Ruthman by 45 votes, the closest of the contested races.

Three years ago, 236 voters cast ballots in a contested Select Board race, followed by dismal turnouts of 46 in 2024 and, in 2025, a meager 27 voters, probably a historic low of 3.8 percent.

This year, that low point was followed by what could be a historic high of 38 percent of registered voters casting ballots. In all, 284 of 744 registered voters turned out on our Town Election Day.

Speaking with The Berkshire Eagle, Town Clerk Miner attributed the high turnout to "the multiple contested races." He added, "When it's that kind of turnout, the community as a whole wins every time. It's really cool when democracy works."

# ELECTION NUMBERS

744 registered voters; 284 voted. 38%

Board of Assessors	
<b>Roger Brown</b>	102
Board of Health	
<b>John Boulais</b>	152
Brigitte Ruthman (incumbent)	107
Library Trustee	
<b>Kathleen Burrows</b>	210
Moderator	
<b>Dominic Konstam</b> (incumbent)	223
Planning Board	
<b>Carol Garcia</b>	195
Select Board (3 years)	
<b>Steve Seddon</b> (incumbent)	196
Alex Russo	82
Select Board (1 year)	
<b>Jeff Bye</b>	197
Dan Andrus (write-in)	61
Town Clerk	
<b>Douglas Miner</b>	177
Amanda Leavenworth	100



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**KNOX HAPPENINGS**

- JUNE 5TH LINE DANCING 8PM
- JUNE 6TH ROCK 201 8PM
- JUNE 12TH KARAOKE 8PM
- JUNE 13TH ONE-ARM BANDIT 8PM
- JUNE 19TH TREVOR DAVIS 6:30PM
- JUNE 20TH CHALK DUST 8PM
- JUNE 21ST HILLTOWN BLUES JAM 2PM
- JUNE 26TH DAVE O DUO 7PM
- JUNE 27TH NATE MARTEL BAND 8PM

**CAR & BIKE MEET EVERY MONDAY 6PM**



## A GREAT MAY, A BETTER JUNE

### ARTS CENTER CELEBRATES 31ST SEASON

By Suzanne Oconnell

A great start in May. For our opening event, Anni Crofut's Family Cabaret, we filled 122 seats, our capacity (including the 32 cast members) and brought in lot of new people as participants as well as audience members.

Two weeks later, John Harpham discussed his new Pulitzer Prize nominated book, *The Intellectual Origins of American Slavery*, which recounts how "the English in America convinced themselves of the rightness of human bondage." If you missed the talk, the book is available, courtesy of the Arts Center, at the Sandisfield, Otis, and Monterey libraries.

Saturday, May 30, mathematician Jack Sanders, presented a lecture on the "Turning Points in Mathematica," which ties culture and mathematics together to explained more about mathematics than we believed could be remembered..

Rich programing continues through June.

On Saturday June 6, you can engage with three award winning poets, Joan Barasovska, Jayne Benjulian, and Hilde Weisert, as they read and discuss the many forms of kinship: with family, community, heritage, and the natural world.

Saturday, June 13, is a double header. A panel of local historians who collaborated on a

new history of the Knox Trail will present their findings, followed by a Q&A and book signing. See page 8 for more information.

That evening, at 7:00 p.m., Ari & Mia, New England's chamber-folk sister duo with "strikingly beautiful harmonies" and sophisticated Americana sound will give a concert celebrating the release of their new album, "Learning Your Name."

Maybe that will whet your appetite to try performing yourself, because beginning June 19 and continuing on the third Friday of the next three months is "Fabulous Friday." Everyone is welcome to participate in Open Mic sessions mc'ed by Jean Atwater-Williams. Come and try out your talent or cheer on friends, family, and strangers.

If performance isn't your thing, maybe drawing is. You might be interested in three Saturday morning sessions with Michael O'Rourke, a professional artist and recently retired professor of digital art at Pratt Institute. Michael will lead up to ten students ages 16 and over in an "Intro to Drawing" class, all materials supplied.

June performances end on Sunday the 28 at 4:00 p.m. with "Romantic Rhapsody," a return recital by the acclaimed pianists Paul Posnak and Anita Castiglioni. For this performance they will be accompanied by cellist Wendy Sutter, recognized by the Wall Street Journal as "one of the great leading cellists of the classical stage." Their program will include sonatas by Brahms and Debussy and works by De Falla and Cassado.

The renovated Garfield Family Gallery at the Arts Center opened May 16 with a solo showing of Serena Granbery's work reflecting the natural world. The exhibit will continue weekends or by appointment until June 14.



"Blue Vase", watercolor  
by Susie Crofut

Then June 21 a new exhibit "To Please the Palette" featuring watercolors by Susie Crofut and ceramics by Adrienne Miesmer. This unique art show will combine the fluidity of watercolors and the tactile beauty of ceramics, creating a rich sensory experience where color,

texture, and creativity merge to showcase the talents of two artists who share a lifelong bond.

More about these events including times and costs are available at [www.sandisfieldartscenter.org](http://www.sandisfieldartscenter.org). Many events are free and a limited number of reduced price community tickets are \$10. ♣



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# NEW BOSTON BLIGHT

## RESIDENTS APPEAL TO SELECT BOARD; TOWN IS ON THE CASE

By Ron Bernard

A group of New Boston residents have appealed to the Sandisfield Select Board to do something about blight at two properties in the Village, 94 and 96 South Main Street, which are the first two houses on the right as a driver enters New Boston from the south.

The Times has obtained a copy of a petition letter dated April 10, 2026, which describes the problem and cites Sandisfield bylaws and statutes that apply to such situations. Seventeen New Boston residents signed the petition which did not include contact party information.

The letter describes a situation where one of the “run down” properties has become a visible “junk yard” where refuse like tires and vehicles have accumulated along the sides and rear of the property not far from wetlands and the west branch of the Farmington River. The complaint further alleges that the occupants have “actively solicited house cleanouts” be delivered to their property.

The petitioners state that “the town has the power to take these properties by eminent domain” and that situations at the two properties are within the definition of blight, violate statutes, and may be detrimental to health and safety. “Unless the matter is addressed, the undersigned will be prepared to file for tax abetment for our properties,” according to the letter.

The Times sampled residents for opinions including some who live in the historic district and others from various parts of town. Sentiment was fairly uniform especially the question of possible detriment to property values. Several who reside near the subject properties also mentioned health and safety. Another said, “sometimes trash is blowing around and has to be picked up.” One said that there are junk cars with out-of-state license plates. A common concern is the negative impression on travelers on Route 8. (The properties are at the south gateway to the New Boston National Register Historic District). A long-time resident of West New Boston recalled the protracted struggle up to 2010 to get rid of two blighted houses at the village center. They voiced what is probably on the minds of many here who recall the earlier problem: “Here we go again.”

In a lengthy response to an inquiry by The Times, Town Manager Janey Snyder on May 22 said, “The Sandisfield Board of Health and the Conservation Commission have been actively working to address the situation through the appropriate regulatory process.”

*Cont'd on next page*



96 South Main Street



94 South Main Street



Open-air storage behind one of the houses.

*Cont'd from previous page*

The situation apparently was already well known to the Sandisfield Board of Health and the Conservation Commission, local agencies that have different concerns. The BoH asked the state Health Agent to perform an inspection which took place on March 19. As a result, on or about April 8 the BoH issued "Orders to Correct" to the property owner and to the renting occupants relative to violations of sanitary standards. The ConCom on April 26 issued a separate violation notice regarding disposal of household debris "within 100 feet of a stream."

The parties were given 30 days from the notices to address the violations. The Health Agent on April 30 reported that the renters had begun to remove waste, including "one truckload of waste per week to the Town Transfer Station rather than utilizing a privately rented dumpster." This introduced a new

problem – stress on the station's capacity. Ms. Snyder said, "Officials are [collaborating] with the renters to identify a practical waste disposal solution that addresses the blight concerns while remaining mindful of municipal operations and costs."

"At this time, it is the Town's position that the matter is being addressed appropriately and in accordance with established procedures," she added.

As for the petitioners' suggestion for drastic action against the occupants, she said, "Eminent domain is an extraordinary legal measure, and the Town is not presently in a position to displace residents without first exhausting reasonable opportunities for voluntary compliance and remediation."

*The petitioners' letter can be found in The Times' website version, linked to this story.*

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# Five Historians Discuss Knox Trail JUNE 13 AT SANDISFIELD ARTS CENTER

By Ron Bernard

The passage of Col. Henry Knox's "Noble Train of Artillery" through Sandisfield on January 12, 1776, is the most significant historical event to happen in this town.

As well, this 300-mile, 56-day "mission impossible" to transport 60 tons of artillery to Gen. Washington in Boston changed the course of the American Revolution, if not our nation's founding on July 4, 1776.

Five local historians have collaborated on a new book of the event. Underwritten by the Berkshire County Historical Society, the book's title is *Ye Trodden Path. A History of the of the Knox Trail and Examination of the Longest Original Section of the Trail in Berkshire County, Mass.*

Over the past several months the group has made well-attended presentations about the event and their book in New York state and South County towns that witnessed the caravan and welcomed the Knox teamsters 250 years ago.

Bernard Drew and Gary Leveille of Great Barrington, Rob Hoogs of Monterey, and Ron Bernard and Tom Ragusa of Sandisfield and Otis will meet for possibly their last group presentation with Q&A, in Sandisfield at 10:00 a.m., Saturday June 13 at the Arts Center. Book signing to follow.

Their 56-page book focuses on the sections of the Knox Trail that passed through the Berkshires and includes new scholarship that adds to and corrects previous accounts of the episode. Sandisfield's role is told for the first time. The longest original section of the trail is in Sandisfield and Otis.

The book includes a 5-foot color fold-out map detailing what is considered to be the definitive route taken by Knox through the original section in Sandisfield and Otis. In fact, the decades of research by retired DCR employee, Tom Ragusa, was the inception of the concept for this book.



Contributing Authors (Left to Right):  
Tom Ragusa, Bernie Drew, Rob Hoogs, Gary Leveille and Ron Bernard

The book is a great read for anyone interested in American history and especially the role of Berkshire County towns in the winter of 1775-76. For information see the ad on page 14 or contact me at [Ronbernard@aol.com](mailto:Ronbernard@aol.com).

## Local Monument in the Works

Beginning in 1926 and continuing until now, monuments have been placed at historical locations along the 300-mile Knox Trail. Sandisfield is one of only two towns along the original route without a monument to this incredible event.

This oversight will be corrected, hopefully by the end of this year, with the installation of a granite monument near the site of the legendary Henry Spring Tavern at Upper Spectacle Pond in north Sandisfield. That is where, on January 12, 1776, Spring and probably

four other Sandisfield innkeepers played host to the 82 Knox teamsters, their many weary and hungry animals, and 42 sleds hauling cannons to Gen. Washington.

Sandisfield voters at the Annual Town Meeting approved \$2,500 toward the Town's share of the monument's cost of \$12,800. The remainder will be covered by grants from the Daughters of the American Revolution coordinated by the Commonwealth's "Revolution 250" Committee. An unveiling event will be announced as soon as known.



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**SAT. JUN 13 10 AM \$20**  
**YE TRODDEN PATH: A HISTORY OF  
THE KNOX TRAIL**  
Panel discussion/Q&A; book signing

**SAT. JUN 13 7 PM \$30**  
**ARI & MIA: New England  
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CERAMICS by Adrienne Meisner

**SUN. JUN 28 4 PM \$40**  
**ROMANTIC RHAPSODY:  
A Cello and Piano Concert**  
Renowned cellist **Wendy Sutter**  
and acclaimed pianists **Paul Posnak**  
and **Anita Castiglione** performing  
sonata masterpieces by Brahms  
and Debussy, the Siete Canciones  
Populares of Manuel De Falla, and  
the humorous Requeibros of Gaspar  
Cassado.

FOR DETAILS, RESERVATIONS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS, PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE. [SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG](http://SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG)

# Happy 50th A&M Auto!

By Ron Bernard

This year is A&M's golden anniversary, a remarkable accomplishment for a small local auto repair business.

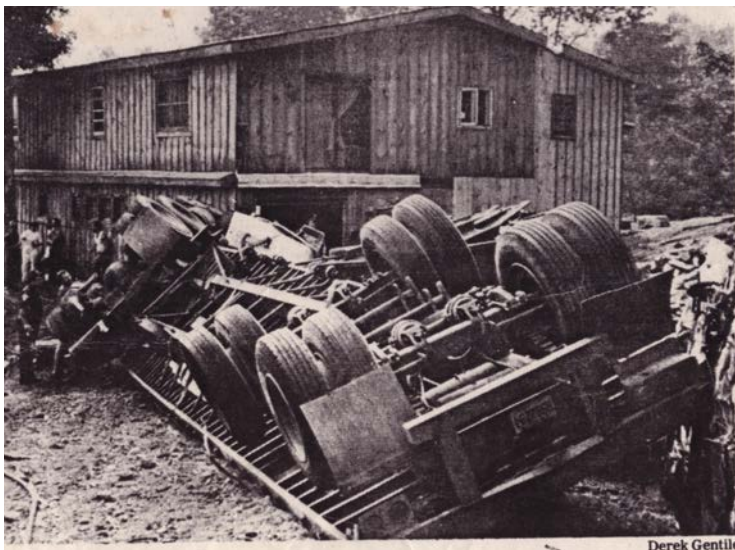
Only businesses that can adapt and embrace change with consistent good management practices can survive that long, especially considering up-and-down economies and the incredible technological transformations in the business since the Viet Nam War era.

A&M Auto is the longest continuously operating service business in Sandisfield.

The Times sat down recently with the company's founder, Ralph Morrison and his nephew, Alec Morrison, to discuss their experiences and expectations, paraphrased below.

**How did A&M start?** Ed Arnold and I teamed up in March 1976. Italia Henri let us use her garage until 1979 when we bought our current location (which had only a chicken coop) which has been transformed into the modern facility you see today.

**Memorable moments?** Bad accidents. Our facility is in a precarious location because of the steep curve on Rt. 57 behind us. Before the runaway ramp was installed, we experienced regular truck crashes, at least a dozen major incidents, some with significant property damage. There were no signs. Never had injuries to us but a driver died. It was terrible. That was one of two major incidents in one week! Things are much better now but the [2013] accident that destroyed the New Boston store was bad. Mike [Ralph's brother, then police chief] was first on scene. He pulled the truck driver and Susan Murray, the resident, out of the building.



Derek Gentile

## *A Fatal Accident*

*A trailer truck carrying logs crashed into the back of A&M Auto on October 28, 1983, apparently due to brake failure coming down the steep Tolland Hill. The Canadian driver was seriously injured and a passenger killed. It was the second accident at this location in the same week.*



*A&M employees, right to left; owner Ralph Morrison, Rodney Loring, and Alec Morrison.*

**What is the nature of the business today?** It has evolved into two functions, repair and towing. We value our towing contract with the Massachusetts State and local police departments. Our exclusive territory of eight towns includes Otis, Monterey and Great Barrington and Sandisfield west to the New York line. A&M is also designated as an AAA repair center, a NAPA auto center, and state inspection station.

There is seasonality. Towing is a growth area for us because of more visitors to the Berkshires, especially in winter. We are busier in summer with repairs.

**What about the future?** Technology and increasing state regulations, especially regarding safety, affects everything now, even towing. It means we have to retrain constantly. Now, practically everything is digital. Although our suppliers help, the burden is on us to stay current. Repair manuals, computer software and data bases are essential but are very expensive. We also have to buy or lease [diagnostic] equipment and the pace of that is increasing.

Expansion is not in the cards, but the business will be kept in the family.

**And the secret to your success . . . ?** Boils down to two things, customer loyalty and a great staff. Ninety percent of our repair business comes from repeat customers. Word of mouth by them has been important too. We put our customers first and have fair pricing. But if anyone is dissatisfied, we want to hear about it.

I can't say enough good things about so many part-time and full-time employees, especially Rodney Loring, my right hand for more than thirty years, and Alec, who is an excellent mechanic, with a promising career here. 🇺🇸

A big birthday party is ahead! Watch for announcements about a huge 50th anniversary celebration to be held at A&M on a weekend (TBD) this summer. Everyone is invited.

# FOREST TO STAY FOREST

## DCR ACQUIRES MORE OF SANDISFIELD

By Larry Dwyer

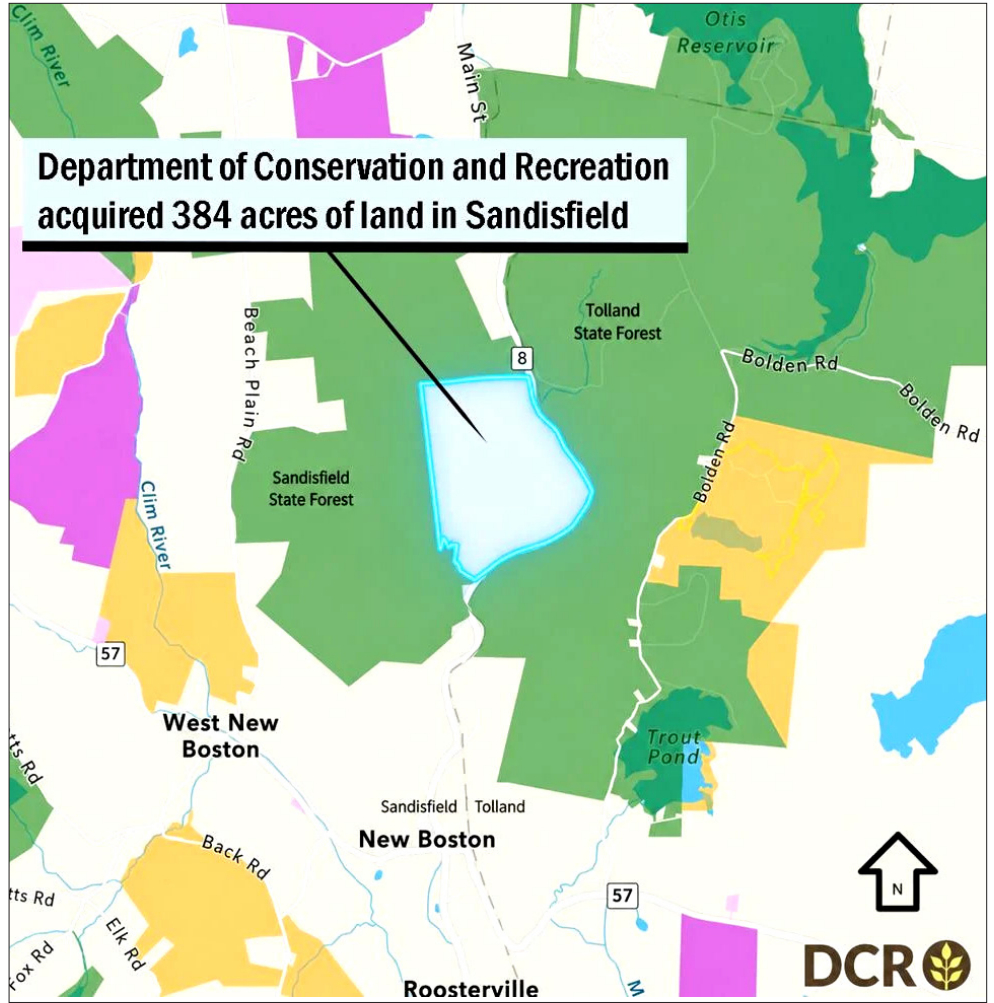
The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has enlarged its footprint in Sandisfield.

Recently, the DCR acquired 384 acres of private forestland lying along the west side of Route 8 and the Farmington River, just north of New Boston. This acquisition forms a link between the Sandisfield State Forest with the Tolland State Forest across the river to create, according to the DCR, a much larger protected property that “strengthens wildlife connectivity, preserves critical natural resources, and increases opportunities for public access and outdoor recreation.”

In a press release, DCR Commissioner Nicole LaChapelle said, “The acquisition represents an important investment in both environmental conservation and public enjoyment. By protecting the land, the state is helping preserve biodiversity, improve climate resilience, safeguard water resources, and ensure future generations can continue to experience and enjoy the region’s natural beauty.”

The newly acquired parcel lies within the Berkshire Wildlife Linkage, a region identified by The Nature Conservancy as one of the most intact forest ecosystems in southern New England. The area serves as a critical habitat and migration corridor for wildlife including black bears, moose, bobcats, deer, mink, and wild turkey.

What the acquisition does not provide for is habitat for humans and it very likely will reduce Sandisfield’s real estate tax income. The privately owned 470 acres with one house located at 159 North Main Street (of which 384 acres were acquired by the DCR). In a



statement, a DCR spokesman declined to identify the owner or the sale price, but the land was listed on Town records as property of Brighenti Nominee Trust with an assessed value of \$870,800.

To make up for real estate taxes that will be missing from Sandisfield’s coffers, the spokesman reported that the land “will be added to the town’s inventory of state-owned lands. From these properties, the town receives annual PILOT payments (or payments in lieu of taxes) from the state to help offset changes in tax revenue. Payments are administered by the state Department of Revenue and subject to appropriation by the Legislature.”

The acquisition was completed through DCR’s Land Protection Program, which focuses on preserving lands with significant ecological, cultural, and recreational value. The heavily forested property includes stands of sugar maple, hemlock, birch, and ash trees and is located within the Farmington River watershed, an area considered a potential future water supply source for Hartford, Connecticut.

The project also supports Massachusetts’ broader conservation goals of protecting 30 percent of lands and waters by 2030 and 40 percent by 2050.



# At the SFD

By Melissa Bye

*In an effort to provide insight into what's happening at our Fire Department, the Friends of Sandisfield Fire Department (FSFD) will periodically publish interviews with members of our fire department.*



*Fire Chief Mike Grillo*

The first interview is with Fire Chief Mike Grillo.

**What is the best way for people to reach you if they have questions or concerns regarding what's happening with our Fire Department?**

Call or text me at 413-717-8393. My email is [firechief@sandisfieldma.gov](mailto:firechief@sandisfieldma.gov). I also encourage people to stop by the fire house, especially if they see the doors open and activity around outside – which especially with warmer weather will be quite often.

**When residents drive by the firehouse, it often looks like there are quite a few people working. Are they all being paid?**

No, all the people at the firehouse are not being paid. Per the November 2025 Special Town Meeting, the voters approved funding for 24-hour, 7-days-a-week coverage. This means

that currently only myself and Public Safety Officer/licensed EMT Mary Bredenfoerder are on duty Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. From 4 until midnight, there is one paid (per diem) staff member and one volunteer on duty. From midnight to 8, there is one paid staff member and one volunteer on duty. The coverage is the same Saturday and Sunday except Mary is not scheduled on the weekends. [Editor's note: That coverage is provided by other per diem and volunteer staff. Plus, Chief Grillo, while salaried, typically works more than his regularly scheduled hours.] This schedule needs to be flexible so that it can accommodate Mary's commitments to her law enforcement operations. All of the other personnel at the fire house outside of these regularly scheduled shifts are there strictly in a volunteer capacity.

**If a resident feels they can't commit to being a firefighter or EMT, what other ways can they help the Fire Department?**

The Fire Department always needs people willing to be First Responders which entails driving the emergency vehicles. And we always need people willing to help with administrative work. [Editor's note: Training to be a First Responder does not require near the number of hours required for Fire 1 or EMT training]

Individuals can also choose to support the new nonprofit, Friends of Sandisfield Fire Department, whose mission is to fill gaps that occur due to budget constraints. Individuals can volunteer at fund raising and recognition events (i.e., fire academy graduations), or engage in community outreach such as spreading the word to potential volunteers or sharing important facts about the Fire Department.

For more information regarding what your fire department is doing, go to the Town of Sandisfield Fire Department Facebook page, or the Fire Department website, [sandisfieldfire.com](http://sandisfieldfire.com).<sup>ST</sup>



## FRIENDS OF SFD: JUNE

Friends of SFD, organized just two months ago, has held four board meetings, so far largely focused on operations and activities. We've obtained our IRS 501c3 status, incorporated with the Commonwealth, set up a bank account and a web site (visit us at [FriendsofSFD.org](http://FriendsofSFD.org)), and have been getting educated on current initiatives by Select Board budget sessions and by the Fire Department itself.

**Save the Date:** Our first fundraising event will be Saturday, July 25 at the Sandisfield Orchard from noon to 4:00 p.m. Enjoy BBQ brisket/chicken, apple-themed desserts, and fun activities for kids and adults. More about this special event coming soon.

This year, we'll focus on raising funds for a HEARTSafe Community initiative to improve cardiac-arrest survival. Through community-wide CPR training and education and the placement of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in public areas, we can strengthen our "chain of survival."

We are grateful to the following donors for their contributions to Friends of SFD:

Paul & Alexia Adams

Anonymous

Jeff Bye

Michael Grillo

Jerry Herman

David Hubbard

Steve Kopiec

Douglas Miner

Bob Platt

Liana Toscanini<sup>ST</sup>

# Sandisfield Hosts a Large Herd of Bikers


By Bill Price

Sandisfield welcomed this year's annual gravel bike ride fund-raising event, sponsored by the Connecticut Cycling Advancement Program, on Sunday, May 30.

The 50-mile ride began at the Norbrook Farm Brewery in Colebrook and headed toward Campbell Falls, then up and through Sandisfield passing York Lake, coming around and down to the Arts Center, then up Hammertown to emerge on Cold Spring Road where it headed east a bit before turning south down Beech Plain Road to emerge again at Rest Stop #2 at our Old Town Hall. Then the bikers (young and old) pedaled

up Silverbrook Road to turn south on New Hartford Road, past the Sandisfield Orchard and eventually further south to arrive back home in Connecticut.

If you were on any of those roads May 30, Sunday, I'm sure you yielded the right-of-way.

The CCAP's mission is to give kids access and exposure to the sport of cycling through a structured and supported team environment. It takes a village, as they say. 

## Sorry, No Picture

Your editor wanted to take a photo of the bikers from his front porch as they pedaled past his house on River Road. but your editor was not home. Convinced the bike ride was Sunday, he was in Torrington on an errand when the bikers came by on schedule on Saturday, May 30. Miriam was home, however. She said the bikers came not in a group but often one at a time, sometimes in pairs or three, wisely spaced so as not to impede traffic on our back roads. She said nearly all cheerfully waved as they passed by.

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## NEW MARLBOROUGH MEETING HOUSE EVENTS

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

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

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

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

**Arkai | July 18, 4:30pm**

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

**Aimée Allen Quartet | July 25, 4:30pm**

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

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

*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, 4:30pm**

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, 3:30pm**

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

**The Mammals | August 22, 4:30pm**

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, 4:30pm**

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

**Itay Dayan Band | September 26, 4:30pm**

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, 4:30pm**

A classical program of great American music.



NEW MARLBOROUGH  
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**2026**

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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](http://www.sandisfieldlibrary.org)

### FOOD PANTRY AT THE LIBRARY

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 Friday, June 19th, Juneteenth Day, we will be celebrating at the library from 10:00 a.m. until noon. We will host an Arts & Crafts for Adults and Kids with summer activities such as planting, birds and butterflies. Come join the fun. Light refreshments will also be available.

### LATEST ADDITIONS TO THE BOOKSHELVES

#### ADULT FICTION

*Midnight Train* by Matt Haig, author of *The Midnight Library*. An adventure through time. The novel is one of wonder and transformation, a story of love and second chances.

*Honeysuckle* by Bar Fridman-Tell. "A lush, dreamlike, wholly intoxicating novel with the elegant lyricism of modern fantasy and the deep, dark roots of ancient folklore. *Honeysuckle* is a fever dream that I won't soon forget" - Ava Reid, author of *A Study in Drowning*.

*The Loneliness Of Sonia And Sunny* by Kiran Desai. A spellbinding story of two young people whose fates intersect and

diverge across continents and years- an epic of love, family, India and America, tradition, and modernity.

*Iron Wood* by Michael Connelly. A Catalina novel. Page turning, packed with intrigue, and bringing together unstoppable investigative team, IRONWOOD continues the Catalina series with all of Michael Connelly's signature relentless narrative drive and well-developed characters.

*Paradox* by Douglas Preston and Alethea Preston. One of the holiest relics in Christendom, inexplicably defaced, a paranoid old prospector, ritualistically murdered, a controversial exobiologist, tortured and dismembered – yes, it's a Preston book. The team of Cash and Colcord from the bestseller *Extinction* are back!

### 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
- Forest Park in Springfield



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### Trees Come Down

Seven trees that once stood in the narrow space between the Town's basketball court and the Clam River are now logs. Ground-level stumps show where once a towering oak, four or five sugar maples, and a couple ash trees cast shade and leaves and debris over the court. A few of the older trees had been hollowed out by rot, as you can see in the photo, but the oak, more than 100 years old, was magnificent even lying down.



## NEW BOSTON CHURCH SERVICES

Worship Service on  
Sunday, June 14  
10:00 to 11:00 a.m.  
at the New Boston  
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A special worship service  
with guest speaker  
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Stay for fellowship  
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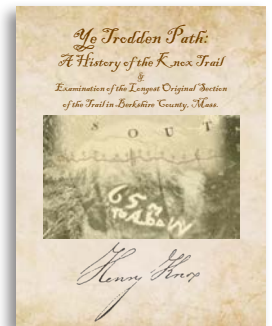
Sunday, June 28  
10:00-11:00 a.m.

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after the service.

All welcome.  
4 Sandisfield Road  
Sandisfield, MA 01255  
[newbostoncongregationalchurch.org](http://newbostoncongregationalchurch.org)

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# Senior and Veteran Tax Work-Off Program

The Senior and Veteran Tax Work-Off program offers seniors the opportunity to earn up to \$1,000 that can be applied towards their tax payments. Individuals can work up to 66 hours paid at minimum wage (currently \$15 per hour).

- Town Hall has listed some projects for this program:
- Sorting items at the swap shop at the transfer station
- Working in the gardens here at Town Hall and at the Old Town Hall
- Helping with Transfer Station Stickers and Dog Licenses
- Sorting items for the Town Clerk



We are particularly searching for individuals to assist with selling Transfer Station Stickers at Town Hall anytime Mondays through Thursdays from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. through June and July.

If you want to take part or have questions, please contact Laurie McArthur at Town Hall (413) 258-4711 or atr lmcarthur@sandisfieldma.gov.



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# A Bridge Too Far

## OR NOT FAR ENOUGH

By Bill Price

The Clam River bridge at the bottom of South Beech Plain Road remains closed, as it has been since October. This does not create too big a problem, since the detour over to Rt. 57 (Sandisfield Road) is the relatively short, scenic River Road.

However, River Road does get narrow, particularly as it rises to crest in front of Margaret O'Clair's place (the historic Ozias Deming house from about 1800, one of Sandisfield's finest architectural specimens). Other than that, the road is well oiled and for the most part smooth.

Across the river, running parallel to River Road, is Rt. 57, or Sandisfield Road, with its own small bridge, this one circa 1950s lying across Silver Brook next door to the former Silverbrook Café.

Unfortunately, according to State inspectors, this bridge is also in need of replacement. While not as decrepit as the closed bridge across the Clam, it's on the State's list.




The trouble is that these two bridges lie perpendicular to each other, two sides of a triangle.

Should the Silver Brook bridge suddenly be taken out of service, as the Beech Plain bridge was last fall, traffic on Rt. 57 would be stymied big time. And 57 is the main artery across southern Sandisfield, from Tolland to New Marlborough. With no 57, it's a long detour to get from here to there.

DPW Superintendent Derek Boomsma is well aware of that ugly possibility and has been working hard to avoid it.

"We've had construction plans on the Beech Plain bridge approved for some time," he said. "We're waiting on State grants, which we should hear about in a month or so. Then we can get started replacing that one."

He added, "I've used the risk of losing both bridges at the same time to encourage the State to speed up the process, if possible. They know the risks here."

Many Sandisfielders, negotiating the scenic route along River Road, are aware of the risks, too. 

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[berkshireagventures.org](http://berkshireagventures.org)

THE SANDISFIELD TIMES is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization staffed by volunteers from the Sandisfield community and funded by individual and business sponsors. Its mission is to connect the community through reliable, regular, and relevant information. The paper is published 11 times each year, with a joint January-February issue and monthly issues thereafter.

Donations of any amount are needed to ensure the continuation of this newspaper. Please send checks to:

The Sandisfield Times, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or donate online at our website: [www.sandisfieldtimes.org](http://www.sandisfieldtimes.org). Donations to The Sandisfield Times are deductible under section 170 of the Federal Income Tax Code. Donations do not include subscriptions. Subscriptions do not qualify as donations.

The Times is distributed free of charge to all Sandisfield postal address and boxes. Free copies are available at the following town locations: The transfer station (Wed/Sat/Sun), the Library, and in New Boston at A&M Auto, the

Farmington River General Store, and the New Boston Inn. The Times is also available in West Otis at the laundromat, the library, and Paige's Place; in East Otis at Katie's, Pappas, and the Knox Trail Inn. Also at the Monterey Library (outside box) and the Roadside Cafe, in Colebrook at the post office, and in New Marlborough at the Southfield 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](http://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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Web Editor: Larry Dwyer

Now Hear This!: Laura Rogers-Castro

Founding Editor: Simon Winchester

### How to Contact Us

Mail can be directed to

The Sandisfield Times, PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255.

If internet accessible, all letters, news events and tips, ideas, obituary and family announcements, photos (600 dpi if possible) and advertisement queries to [editor@sandisfieldtimes.org](mailto:editor@sandisfieldtimes.org)

# NOW HEAR THIS!

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

## JUNE

**The Poetry of Kinship with Joan Barasovska, Jayne Benjulian and Hilde Weisert** on Saturday, June 6 at 2:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. A reading and conversation with three award-winning poets on the many forms of kinship with family, community, heritage, and the natural world. Free.

***Ye Trodden Path: A History of the Knox Trail*** on Saturday, June 13 at 10:00 a.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. In a new book, local historians trace the history of the trail that Col. Henry Knox took to bring captured British cannons to General Washington in Boston, including fascinating original research. Books will be available for sale. Visit sandisfieldartscenter.org to purchase tickets. \$20.

**Ari & Mia: New England Roots Music** on Saturday, June 13 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. New England chamber-folk sister duo combine the styles of Southern and Northeastern fiddle music and the early American songbook with their "strikingly beautiful harmonies" and sophisticated Americana sound. Visit sandisfieldartscenter.org to purchase tickets. \$30.

**Worship Service** on Sunday, June 14 from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church located on Route 57. A special worship service with guest speaker Dr. Alynne MacLean. Stay for fellowship after the service. All are welcome. For more information and to view the calendar, visit newbostoncongregationalchurch.org.

**Car Show** on Sunday, June 14 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the New Boston Inn. Cars, food, and music. Free to enter and view cars.

**Four Fabulous Fridays: Open Mic Series** beginning on Friday, June 19 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Seasoned performer or just starting out, share your talent! Music, poetry, comedy or whatever. Or just come and enjoy some live entertainment. Performers should arrive 15 minutes early to sign up. Donation.

**Intro to Drawing** on Saturdays, June 20 and 27 and Saturday, July 11 at 10:00 a.m., Sandisfield Arts Center. Three 1.25 hour sessions with instructor Michael O-Rourke,

artist and Emeritus Professor of Art at the Pratt Institute. Students work from simple still lifes to develop observational skills and learn basic drawing techniques. Maximum of 10 students, ages 16 and up. All materials will be provided. Visit sandisfieldartscenter.org for more information and to register. \$75 for the three sessions.

**To Please the Palette**-Opening Reception on Sunday, June 21 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center. Watercolors by Susie Crofut and ceramics by Adrienne Miesmer. Combines the fluidity of watercolors and the tactile beauty of ceramics with color, texture, and creativity to showcase the work of two artists who share a lifelong bond. Free.

**Worship Service** on Sunday, June 28 from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the New Boston Congregational Church located on Route 57. Stay for fellowship after the service. All are welcome. For more information and to view the calendar, visit newbostoncongregationalchurch.org.

**Romantic Rhapsody: A Cello & Piano Concert** on Sunday, June 28 at 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road. An afternoon of intimacy and virtuosity with renowned cellist Wendy Sutter and acclaimed pianists Paul Posnak and Anita Castiglione performing sonata masterpieces. Visit sandisfieldartscenter.org to purchase tickets. \$40.

### RECURRING EVENTS

**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 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!

### 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

**COA Coffee Social** every Monday at 9:00 a.m. at the Tolland Public Safety Complex. Open to all Tolland residents and those of neighboring towns. Coffee, pastries, and good company! Free.

**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.

**Native Plant Sale** on Saturday, June 6 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Monterey Community Center in Monterey. Come browse the collection of plants and chat with the resident plant enthusiast about what will work best in your space.

**Otis Community Day** on Saturday, June 13 from 1:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Otis Ridge. Otis local business owners and artists are invited to set up tables and showcase their products and services.

**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.

# The Watering Hole

By Brigitte Ruthman

Salamanders, tree frogs, and spring peepers live here, where cows come down in single file to drink.

The cows lean against the muddy slope to dip their noses in the gathered rain-water, warmer and more tannin sour than spring water. They slurp loudly.

The 20-foot diameter trough isn't a natural feature in the lower southwest corner of the pasture where it dips down to the road. It was dug there many years ago to collect the runoff from storms in rivulets and little streams that run into it.

It reminds of ingenious farmers, lacking the option of Rubbermaid containers from a Tractor Supply store, who engineered essential watering systems.

At Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, cisterns connected to roofs provided water at high ground, except during drought when it had to be hauled. Throughout New England, fences were extended where they could to include steams, springs, and other water sources.

In winter, ice was cracked every morning near the barn and cows were "watered" just twice daily.

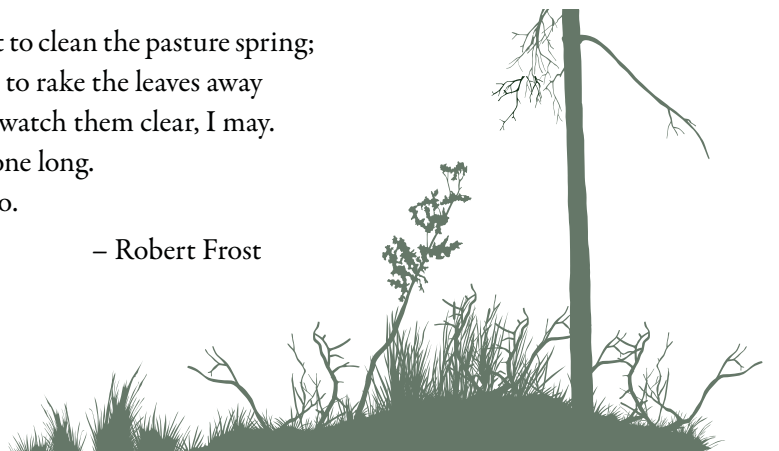
As at Monticello, the high ground here was a dilemma for farmers Joshua Smith and Thomas Dodd, whose ancient fence lines still wind through the lower woods.

The watering hole they dug and maintained had been here all along, hidden for years in a thicket of multiflora rose, Viburnum, and birch trees. An apple tree grows over it, its gnarly limbs decorated now in blossoms. The cows prefer it over the Rubbermaid. 🐄



I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;  
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away  
And wait to watch them clear, I may.  
I shan't be gone long.  
You come too.

– Robert Frost



# THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

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*Daniel & Jeanne Keener*

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Each office is independently owned and operated 

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



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