




THE SANDISFIELD TIMES



Photo: Richard Migot

Happy 250th, America!

This image of fireworks at the conclusion of Sandisfield's 250th anniversary celebration (July 28-29, 2012) appeared in black-and-white on The Sandisfield Times cover for our August 2012 issue. The spectacular show at Carr Field was generously donated by Sandisfield resident and pyrotechnics expert, the late Dave Lewis. The image is reprinted here, this time in color, in celebration of our country's 250th anniversary. 



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Academy Graduates

(Back row) Chief of Police Brian Fahey, Public Safety Officer/EMT Mary Bredenfoerder, Rep. Leigh Davis, HHC Paramedic Amy Gemetro, FF/EMT Cianna Ferraro, Lt. Vincent Porcaro, Captain Collin Wolfe, Lt. Joshua Ramirez, FF/EMT Cameron Nearey, Chief Engineer Brian Reynolds, FF John Boulais, FF/Paramedic Grace Huskey, FF/EMT Travis Dingus.
(Front) Fire Chief Michael Grillo, Dep. Fire Chief Chris Colonair, Asst. Fire Chief Douglas Miner.

Photo: Josie Miner



Lifesaving Awards

(Stage left). Chief Engineer Brian Reynolds, Chief of Police Brian Fahey, Rep. Leigh Davis (seated), Capt. Collin Wolfe, Asst. Fire Chief Douglas Miner, Dep. Fire Chief Chris Colonair, Fire Chief Michael Grillo (speaking)
(Stage right). Lt. Joshua Ramirez, Lt. Vincent Porcaro, FF/EMT Cameron Nearey, Public Safety Officer/EMT Mary Bredenfoerder, HHC Paramedic Amy Gemetro, FF/EMT Cianna Ferraro

Photo: Josie Miner

Achievements Celebrated/ Honors Bestowed

*Article and photos
by Liana Toscanini*

The Sandisfield Fire Department celebrated dedication, service, and heroism during a graduation and awards ceremony June 14 at the Sandisfield Arts Center. More than 70 family members, friends, and community supporters gathered to honor newly certified firefighters and recognize first responders whose actions helped save a life earlier this year.

The afternoon began with a hearty luncheon of pasta, meatballs, salad, and desserts served by volunteers Barbara Cormier, Patricia Hubbard, and Zoe Nelson. Proud parents, siblings, grandparents, and even a few babies filled the room as the community came together to celebrate its hometown heroes.

A highlight of the event was the recognition of five firefighters who recently earned Firefighter I certification through the Litchfield County Regional Fire School. Firefighter I is the foundational national standard for career and volunteer firefighters, requiring months of classroom instruction, hands-on training, drills, and examinations.

The five graduates were Travis Dings, Grace Huskey, Cameron Nearey, Vincent Porcaro, and John Boulais.

Deputy Fire Chief Chris Colonair praised the graduates for their commitment and thanked their families for supporting them throughout the demanding training process.

“Firefighter I certification is more than a piece of paper,” Colonair said. “It is a national standard. It means these members have proven they can perform safely, effectively, and professionally. It means that when someone in Sandisfield calls 911, the people arriving are trained to the same level as firefighters in major cities – just with better scenery on the drive.”

In one of the ceremony’s most moving moments, family members were invited to the stage to pin each graduate with a Sandisfield Fire Department badge, symbolizing their transition from department member to certified firefighter.

The event also recognized six Fire and EMS personnel whose quick actions contributed to the successful resuscitation and survival of a community member on Easter Sunday. Each received a crystal 2026 Lifesaving Award in recognition of exceptional teamwork, rapid intervention, advanced medical care, and professionalism.

“They performed at the highest level when every second mattered,” said Fire Chief Michael Grillo. “Because of their actions, someone is alive today. There is no greater accomplishment in public safety than preserving human life.”

Although the town was not able to afford a Lifepack 15 cardiac monitor this year (approximate cost \$27,000), the EMS team happened to have a demo unit on hand for a 90-day test period, which proved instrumental in the save.

Recipients of the 2026 Lifesaving Award were EMS Lieutenant Vincent Porcaro, Firefighter/EMT Cameron Nearey, Fire Lieutenant Josh Ramirez, Firefighter/EMT Cianna Ferraro, Sandisfield Police Officer Mary Bredenfoerder, and Hartford HealthCare Paramedic Amy Gemetro.

The Sandisfield Arts Center was an ideal venue for the celebration, offering ample space for dining and a stage large enough to accommodate department leaders, graduates, honorees, and distinguished guests. Among those attending was State Representative Leigh Davis of the 3rd Berkshire District, who presented Massachusetts House of Representatives citations to the recipients of the lifesaving awards.

The partnership between the Fire Department and the Arts Center helped make the event especially memorable. Center board member Josie Miner suggested the venue because of its spacious layout, formal stage, and new kitchen facilities, while fellow board member Jean Atwater-Williams provided professional lighting and sound.

The ceremony served as a reminder that behind every emergency response are hours of training, dedicated volunteers, supportive families, and a community that values service above self.

To learn more about the Sandisfield Fire Department, visit www.sandisfieldfire.com. 



Heart & Soul Summer Social & BBQ

JULY 25, SANDISFIELD ORCHARD

By Times Reporters

Friends of Sandisfield Fire Department is hosting a family-friendly fundraiser at the Sandisfield Orchard on Saturday, July 25 from noon to 4:00 p.m.

The Heart & Soul Summer Social features authentic-style BBQ of brisket, pulled pork, and shredded chicken. Traditional sides include macaroni and cheese and others from Berkshires-based MadJacks. Live music, games, “touch-a-truck,” and an apple dessert contest.

Tickets \$35 for adults and \$10 for children 5-12. No charge under 5.

Friends of Sandisfield Fire Department received its official nonprofit designation in February,

It’s first initiative is to help Sandisfield attain a “HeartSafe Community” designation through community-wide CPR training and the placement of portable defibrillator units around Town.

“Our fundraising goal is \$20,000,” said Patricia Hubbard, Friends of SFD board chair. “Early, enthusiastic support from business and individual sponsors is truly energizing. We hope this event will become an annual tradition celebrating the spirit and generosity of our community.”



The Heart & Soul Event Committee includes Jeff Bye, Melissa Bye, Barbara Cormier, Patricia

Hubbard, Zoe Nelson, Cailin Rocco, Laurie Seddon, Liana Toscanini, and Susan Van Sickle.

“This is a powerhouse committee full of seasoned event-planners,” said Liana.

“They have skills, creativity, and connections. It’s truly an honor to work with this group.”

The committee is currently soliciting Fire Department sponsors from among local businesses and individuals.

For sponsor donations, three categories are 1-Alarm (\$100), 3-Alarm (\$300) and 5-Alarm (\$500) as well as an opportunity to sponsor a defib unit (also known as an AED) for \$1,500. Donations of any size are always welcome. ^(\$)

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- JULY 3RD THE ADAMS BROS. 7PM
- JULY 4TH GEN X ROCK 8PM**
- JULY 10TH EVEN IT UP! 8PM
- ★ **JULY 11TH SMILE LIKE JACK 5K/10K**
- 7AM REGISTRATION | 9AM KICK-OFF**
- JULY 17TH JON BERMAN 6PM
- JULY 19TH HILLTOWN BLUES JAM 2PM
- JULY 24TH NEW FALLEN DAY 6:30PM
- JULY 25TH FOOLISH U BAND 8PM
- JULY 26TH-1-5PM BACKYARD**
- ★ **CLAMBAKE & RAW BAR!**
- JULY 31ST TREVOR DAVIS 6:30PM

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JULY 13TH & 20TH 6PM

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JULY 13TH & 20TH 6PM

Liana “Retires” to Sandisfield

BUT HER WORK ISN'T FINISHED

By Bill Price

After 10 years leading the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires, which she founded in 2016, Sandisfield's Liana Toscanini stepped down as the Center's executive director this spring.

Although she's officially “retired,” Liana hasn't stopped working.

Back now in her own home town, she has agreed to serve as a Corporator of Lee Bank and on the board of the nonprofit Saint James Place in Great Barrington. And here in Town, she has joined the board of the recently created Friends of Sandisfield Fire Department and is serving as secretary.

After moving to Sandisfield from New York City in 1996, Liana was very active with the community's nonprofits. She helped with the creation of the Sandisfield Arts Center and contributed her talents to the development of Yanner Park and the Sandisfield Newsletter. In 2010, she was part of the group that founded The Sandisfield Times. In 2012 she moved to nearby New Marlborough, returning to Sandisfield in 2019, buying a home in Sandisfield Center.

Liana developed her organizational skills “on the job,” working in marketing positions at organizations like Guerlain and Newsweek Magazine. She spent a decade in Home Textiles where her Ugly Couch Contest received national attention. She operated a retail store called LT Home for several years before moving to the nonprofit side, taking a job at Community Access to the Arts (CATA) in 2007.



Liana at the NPC Awards event with former Representative Smitty Pignatelli.

Photo: Richard Migot

Nearly a decade later she founded the Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires (NPC), a county-wide capacity building and support organization for the Berkshires' 1200 nonprofits. A fact she often points out: One out of four jobs in Berkshire County is in the nonprofit sector.

NPC evolved into a robust provider of two dozen programs and services including workshops, networking events, volunteer fairs, publications, and a philanthropy curriculum for students. More recently, Liana laid the foundation for her succession, building NPC's infrastructure, hiring staff, raising operating reserves, and completing a succession plan. Of that

experience, Liana said, “It's a bit like sending a child off to college.”

Liana feels one of the least visible but most powerful impacts of NPC is as a connector organization. The ripple effects cannot be easily measured – but are deeply felt. She mentioned a local case: Sandisfield resident, Melissa Bye, volunteered at the recent Berkshire Nonprofit Awards event alongside a volunteer from Berkshire Pride. Melissa mentioned her work with Friends of Sandisfield Fire Department and was told of a woman who serves on the Berkshire Pride board who wanted to become a firefighter but could not find a welcoming department. A few days later, the woman joined the Sandisfield Fire Department.

Liana said she looks forward to relaxing at home where she gardens, reads, enjoys cooking, and is slowly whittling away on a long list of personal projects. Two of those projects are writing a book and organizing photos. But also, she said, I enjoy working with a group of neighbors to make good things happen in our community.” ST



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July at SArC Looks Good

AFTER A GREAT JUNE, WITH A UNIQUE EVENT

By Suzanne OConnell

As predicted, June was a busy month at the Sandisfield Arts Center.

Despite our full schedule of planned activities, we managed to squeeze in one unplanned event.

On June 14, friends, family, and community members gathered to celebrate Sandisfield firefighters who completed their Connecticut Firefighter I training through the Litchfield County Regional Fire School. The occasion also included presentation of the Sandisfield Fire Department's Lifesaving Award to firefighters and public safety partners whose quick actions during a sudden cardiac arrest saved a life. See pages 2-3 for a report on the event.

You may not realize that the Arts Center is also available to rent for private functions. Weddings, birthday parties, and even a Bar Mitzvah have been – or soon will be – held in this beautiful community space. And for Town events, like the firefighters' graduation, there is no cost.

Our regular programming drew rapt audiences, and it would be impossible to pick a favorite.

As this goes to press, I'm looking forward to Sunday's cello and duo piano concert. Wendy Sutter has been acclaimed by The Wall Street Journal as "one of the great leading cellists of the classical stage." Having performed on five continents, she has earned praise from critics at The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The San Francisco Chronicle. It was a rare opportunity to hear one of the foremost and most versatile soloists of her generation in such an intimate setting.

Duo pianists Paul Posnak and Anita Castiglione are returning favorites whose performances are always warmly received by SArC audiences.

If you missed the two-hour gallery opening of To Please the Palette, you still have until August 9 to see this fascinating exhibition. Throughout the opening, there was a steady stream of visitors – young and old – who delighted in Susan Crofut's watercolor paintings and Adrienne Miesmer's imaginative, beautiful, and masterfully crafted pottery. Many visitors left with new treasures, while others placed the coveted red dots beside the pieces they hoped to take home.

July promises another wonderful month at the Arts Center. The popular Intro to Drawing class continues, and Open Mic Night returns on Friday, July 17.

The following morning at 10:00 a.m., Ellen Meeropol and Gail Gelburd will read from their newest books. Meeropol's *Sometimes an Island* is "a gorgeous and immersive story of family and circumstance, tragedy, and the hard work that leads to triumph" (Booklist, starred review).

Local artist and writer Gail Gelburd draws on the remarkable life of Otis resident Sue Moody in *The Liberation of Sue Moody*, telling the story of a journalist who forged her own path through personal and professional struggles, including surviving the Nazi occupation of France.

The month concludes with Chris Brubeck's Triple Play, an energetic blend of jazz, folk, and blues. As The Seattle Times wrote, "Triple Play is what jazz always was and always should be about: good times, unbridled joy, and the sweet release of the blues." This year's performance is supported in part by grants from the Sandisfield and Otis Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Mass. Cultural Council, a state agency.

Triple Play is always a highlight of the season. At press time, only about 20 tickets remained. ST

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Open Spaces & Recreation in Sandisfield

**STEERING COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED
NEXT MEETING, JULY 15, TOWN HALL**

By Ron Bernard

The Town of Sandisfield is developing a long-term strategy to preserve, improve, and manage its valuable natural resources and outdoor recreational properties.

The new Open Space and Recreation Plan sets goals and identifies actionable steps the Town can take to improve quality of life for all residents, protect natural resources, preserve the town's rich historical heritage, and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities.

Once the plan is complete, the Town will have access to state resources to achieve the goals.

The process is guided by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) and a local advisory committee comprised of at least five town residents, preferably people who have expertise or interest in conservation and outdoor recreation. Their role is to provide insight

and feedback to ensure the plan accurately reflects the needs and interests of the town.

Appointed members so far are Adam Brown, Calvin Rodman, Ralph Leavenworth, Kathleen Segrin, and Ronald Bernard.


The initial meeting was held on June 3. BRPC representative Andrew McKeever briefed the group on the purposes of the plan and its wide scope and examples of outcomes from other Berkshires towns.

Included in Sandisfield's plan will be the community's vision for the future of its open spaces. Areas to be evaluated include preservation of water resources, conservation lands, natural resources, working farmlands and wildlife habitats as well as recreational assets like playgrounds, hiking trails, and parkland.

The committee will do mapping, survey the community and have stakeholder interviews with, for example, residents with interest in any of the above topics, landowners and developers, Sandisfield commissions and boards, local nonprofits, outdoor recreation organizations and others. Everyone will have opportunities to chime in. The public will be informed of progress by the BRPC, on the Town's website and via monthly updates in The Sandisfield Times.

The committee hopes to have a completed draft plan in February 2027 for public comment and review by the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. A final plan will be submitted to the state in March.

Eight more committee meetings are tentatively scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday of the month, through February, 2027. The meetings are open to the public. The next meeting is set for 7:00 p.m., July 15, at the Town Hall basement.

The advisory committee has room for several more members. For more information or if you are interested in joining the committee contact, Andrew McKeever, BRPC, at amckeever@berkshireplanning.org. 

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Housing Rehab Program

POSTED ON THE TOWN WEBSITE

Does your Home need critical repairs? The Housing Rehab Program may be able to help. If you qualify this program can provide up to \$70,000 to help cover the cost of repairs in your home.

The Town of Sandisfield has partnered with the Town of Lenox for the Housing Rehabilitation Program. This program is funded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities with federal funds from HUD's Community Development Block Grant program. The Town of Lenox submitted the application on our behalf. This program can assist with providing critical home repairs.

Some of the qualifying repairs include, but are not limited to:

- New Roof
- New Siding

- New Windows & Doors
- New Heating System
- New Septic System
- Lead Paint Abatement
- Handicapped Accessibility and more!


If interested, please see the income limitation in the following chart. For applications and additional

information, see the Town website at sandisfieldma.gov. Click on Town News and go to Berkshire Community Development Housing Rehab Loan Program. Applicants can also contact resident Dawn Lemon at dawn@berkcd.com for more information on the opportunity and application process.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Income Limits

Sandisfield Income Eligibility Chart


Income Limits	
80% of Median Income	
Household Size	Berkshire County
1	\$73,650
2	\$84,200
3	\$94,700
4	\$105,200
5	\$113,650
6	\$122,050
7	\$130,450
8	\$138,900

INCOME ELIGIBLE CATEGORY – Available for income eligible homeowners – or income eligible property owners with rental units. If your present gross income falls within the HUD Income Limit Guidelines, you may qualify as an INCOME ELIGIBLE property owner, and receive rehabilitation funds. Additional income information must accompany this application. 



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TO PLEASE THE PALETTE:
 WATERCOLORS by Susie Crofut
 CERAMICS by Adrienne Meisner
 Closes August 9th.

SAT. JULY 11 10 AM
INTRO TO DRAWING

Session 3 of 3 with
Michael O'Rourke.

FRI. JULY 17 7 PM DONATION

FOUR FABULOUS FRIDAYS: OPEN MIC SERIES

Seasoned performer or just starting out, share your talent— Music, poetry, comedy or whatever! Or just come enjoy some live entertainment.

Performers please arrive 15 minutes early to sign up.

SAT. JULY 18 10 AM FREE
CONVERSATION AND BOOK SIGNING WITH ELLEN MEEROPOL & GAIL GELBURD

Two powerful takes on survival and resilience: **Ellen Meeropol's** sixth novel, *Sometimes an Island*, (Booklist starred review) and **Gail Gelburd's** true-life *The Liberation Of Sue Moody*.

SAT. JULY 25 7 PM \$40
CHRIS BRUBECK'S TRIPLE PLAY

Blending jazz, folk, and blues, Triple Play features **Joel Brown** on guitar, **Peter Madcat Ruth** on harmonica, and **Chris Brubeck** on bass, trombone, and piano. "Rollicking fun, the vocal trio stole the show with their flair and virtuosity."

Be Aware of Bears By Bill Price

The bears are out. There were several reports last month of Sandisfield bears wandering our fields and woods and through our front yards and back yards, looking for food.

According to a report on Connect-Sandisfield/Facebook, a bear visited Matthew Sermini's home in South Sandisfield when he and his wife were out of town. The bear broke into the house and rummaged around. Captured on a home camera, the bear was wearing an ear tag, indicating he had been a problem before.

On Sandisfield Road, Rachel Burdick filmed a large black bear wandering through her front yard, taking his time.

Others have seen mother bears with cubs. Driving with a friend on Cold Spring Road, I saw a young bear in a field, which was not unusual.

Another Town driver saw what

appeared to be a very large black bear, "maybe 300 pounds?" on the side of Route 57 near the York Lake sign on the border between Sandisfield and Monterey.

If you surprise a bear while hiking any of our Sandisfield trails, do not run. The common advice is to stand as tall as you can and raise your hands. You might shout at the bear. They are fearful animals, unless provoked, and will normally run away from you faster than you can run from it.

So don't provoke a bear. Especially a mother bear with cubs.

And while driving, drive with the knowledge that there are a lot of animals on our roads, from tiny turtles to fast-moving deer, some with fawns scurrying behind them, to slow-moving bears and occasionally, a very tall moose or two.

Give them all the right of way. 🇺🇸

community entertained. Anyone who wants to join us, please come on. Email Zoe Nelson at zoernelson@yahoo.com or phone Nina Carr at 258-3314.

Thanks go to all of our past members that have kept these community events going.

Have a safe and great summer!! 🇺🇸

recreation COMMITTEE

Two Dates to Remember

Mark your calendar for these dates:

August 23, Sunday. Birds of Prey at Looking Glass Gardens, 10 :00 a.m.

September 19, Saturday. Sandisfield's Annual Pig Roast. 5:00 p.m. Details to follow.

Newly appointed members Zoe Nelson and Christine Nedelman are looking forward to working with Katie Murray and Anina Carr. Our Committee of Four are looking for other members to help to keep our

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9 am - 1 pm

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Remembering 1944

Editors Note: The following report flies in the face of our cardinal rule that everything in The Sandisfield Times has to have a Sandisfield connection.

There is a connection, but it's as tenuous as it gets.

The author is a Sandisfield resident and a terrific reporter who has written for newspapers in Connecticut and Massachusetts, including The Times. That's some help, but not enough. The story is about her mother. Still not enough.

The real reason this report is published here in our July issue is that it reminds us of Memorial Day, just past, and now the 4th of July. It reminds us of the 250th anniversary of the Republic, patriotism, and sacrifice. It is a story of World War II, a pilot who never came home, and a woman who has kept a clear memory for 82 years.

The story touches all of us.

A FIGHTER PLANE CRASHES AND STILL, MOURNING CONTINUES

By Brigitte Ruthman

On December 12, 1944, a P-51 Mustang crashed near Ziegenhain, Germany, killing its 23-year-old pilot, Lt. George C. "Carlton" Kuhn.

I know of him only because of an arbitrary connection between the pilot and my mother at what was the height of so much death in a brutal war.

Until now, the circumstances of the crash had been lost to history. Finally, there are answers for five American sisters who knew of their uncle but never had a chance to know him.

As was customary at a crash site, the local German doctor was assigned to retrieve the dog tags and report the death to the Red Cross, along with a "finding of death."

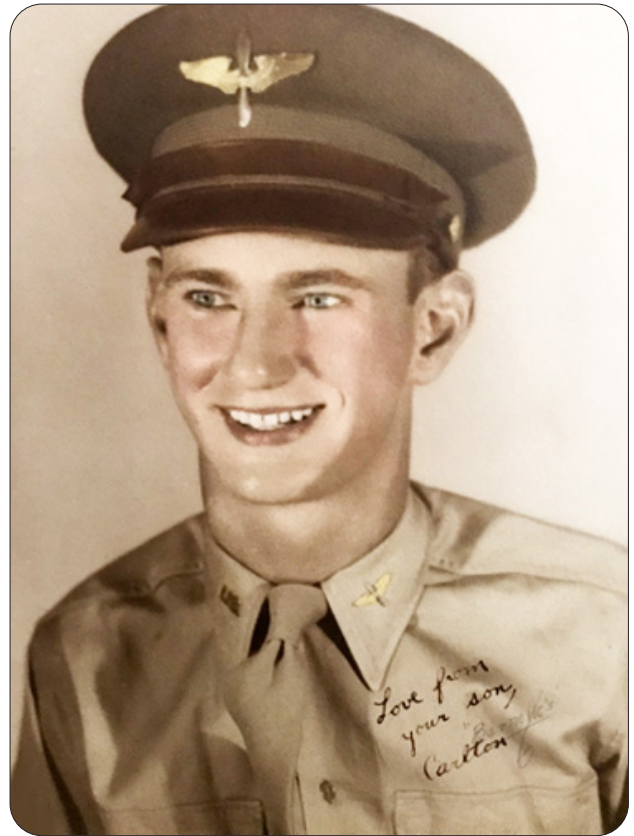
That doctor was my grandfather, Dr. Karl Merkel. His driver was my mother, then 14-year-old Gisela.

Now, thanks to a bit of research and the Internet, she is able, at nearly 96 years of age, to see for the first time a photograph of the young pilot.

My family had heard the incomplete story many times, along with her many other war stories of a time before she met and married my U.S. military father:

She told us of ditching a coveted bicycle on the way to school to avoid fighter planes that "shot at everything that moved." Of hearing Hitler's rants on the radio. Of the death of a teacher as bullets rained from airplanes above

a train platform. Of American soldiers on the front line tossing oranges. And of a brainwashed generation of Hitler Youth being handed Panzerfausts near the end of the war with an assignment to destroy American tanks. (Instead, a beaten population wanting no more of war threw them in the moat.)



The plane crash happened in a potato field just outside the village in a place known as a medieval court and gallows, Galgenberg.

A truck, one of very few vehicles allowed petrol to travel and likely involved in the transportation of farm products, must have caught Lt. Kuhn's attention as he was heading back to England with his wingman, Lt. Jack V. Johnson, whose plane had been damaged by FLAK while the pair escorted bombers to a Frankfurt rail yard.

Lt. Kuhn may have believed it to be a military truck, or it may have simply "caught his eye."

After shooting at the truck, Kuhn didn't pull the plane up fast enough and it struck treetops and overhead electrical wires before crashing.

Arriving at the scene of the crash, my grandfather realized this was not a place for his daughter and sent her to walk the short distance home, but not

Cont'd on next page

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before she had witnessed yet another casualty of war in the mingling of body and plane parts.

The surname Kuhn she remembered, but only because it confused her. It was not an enemy name, but German – the same as a family living in the village.

Neither Kuhn nor Johnson were ever heard from again. No details of any crash were recorded in military records at a time when information gathering was difficult. Both deaths were eventually attributed to “combat” in letters to Kuhn's mother from the War Department which initially listed him as missing in action.

A search of military records today reveals that Lt. Kuhn was a decorated pilot born and raised in Chadwicks, New York. A 1939 graduate of Chadwicks High School, he joined the Air Corps in Albany in November of 1942 when he turned 21.

He was a boy with big ears, second from left in the top row of neatly attired 8th graders. He had a sister Marie and a brother James, who became a veterinarian.

Assigned to the 364th Fighter Group, Lt. Kuhn is buried beneath a white cross at the American Military Cemetery in the Ardennes, Belgium.

Finding his records, I was able to find his surviving five nieces and put them in touch with my mother. They are eager to meet the only connection they have to the crash site, my mother Gisela who will turn 96 in a few weeks.

No winners or losers in war, but the lingering loss of a bright-eyed smiling young man who loved to fly. Together soon, the nieces and my mother will mourn the young man 82 years after his untimely death. **\$1**

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 **NEW MARLBOROUGH MEETING HOUSE**
UPCOMING EVENTS!

Arkai • July 18, 4:30pm



The thrilling violin-and-cello duo returns with their genre-defying music, fresh off their Grammy win for Brightside, captivating global audiences with high-energy, boundary-pushing performances.

Aimée Allen Quartet • July 25, 4:30pm



Experience an afternoon of expressive jazz with Aimee Allen, featuring timeless standards, soulful bossa nova, and evocative originals. Her latest album, *Love & the Catalyst*, earned a prestigious NAACP Image Award nomination for Outstanding Jazz Album – Vocal.

Michelle Goldberg and Katha Pollitt • Aug 1, 4:30pm



New York Times' Michelle Goldberg appears in conversation with poet and essayist Katha Pollitt to discuss the current political moment and the future of American democracy.

programs subject to change

For more events in August through October, visit nmmeetinghouse.org
Tickets available Online nmmeetinghouse.org | 413.229.5045

A Preservation Story

THE RESTORATION OF THE SPECTACLE POND ABATTOIR

By Ron Bernard


In conjunction with Massachusetts Preservation Month, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) on May 1 sponsored a free guided tour of historic Spectacle Pond Farm (formerly the Rowley Bros. Farm) on Cold Spring Road.

About 40 residents of Sandisfield and interested others learned about one of Sandisfield's earliest and longest continuously operating farm under the same family. A collection of early photos of the farm and its sawmill, some not previously seen, enhanced the talk.

DCR Preservation Planner Kevin Allen from Boston and Otis State Forest DCR caretaker Alex Gilman spoke and entertained many questions from a curious audience. A member of the Sandisfield Historical Commission also participated in the Q&A.

Mr. Allen also explained in detail why the surviving buildings including a house and an impressive barn, both dating to the 18th century, were demolished this winter. Some beams from the barn were salvaged to be used in other DCR restoration projects. The foundation outlines ("ghosts") of the barn and houses remain.

The highlight of the event was a tour of the only surviving original structure, an early-19th century abattoir (slaughterhouse), believed to be one of only a few of its kind remaining in New England. The fully restored building was opened for the first time. Billed as a two-hour program, many stayed on past the scheduled ending time.

The DCR is evaluating possible heritage educational programs for the site, which is in the vicinity of the historic Knox Trail, also in Otis State Forest. 



Kevin Allen revealing the newly-restored exterior of the abattoir.

Photo DCR, 2025.



Kevin Allen and Alex Gilman described why the Rowley farm buildings except one were removed and explained remediation plans for the site.

Photo Sandisfield Times



Sandisfield American Legion Summer Events

81 South Main Street (Route 8)

Join us on the third Sunday of every month (except August) for:

- Free Tractor Pulls: 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
- Tag Sale: 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (\$20 per vendor space)
- Food and beverages available for purchase

Vendors Wanted! Call 413-258-4578 for information.

Maria Domato, Commander, American Legion Post 456



Monday, 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
 Wednesday, 1:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
 Thursday, 2:00 p.m. - 6 p.m.
 Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
 Closed Tuesday, Friday and Sunday
 Phone: 258-4966
sandisfieldlibrary@gmail.com
www.sandisfieldlibrary.org

Food Pantry at the Library

Food Pantry at the Library is open whenever the library is open.

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

There are no special events for the month of July but we are planning an August beach party before the end of summer. Times and activities to be determined.

Latest Additions to the Bookshelves

Adult Fiction

Darkrooms by Rebecca Hannigan, a creepy, imaginative, and moody thriller that explores the rippling effects of a young girl's disappearance in the woods near a small Irish village.

The Calamity Club by Kathryn Stockett, the novel is set in the South in the 1930s. A group of strong, southern women from Oxford, Mississippi, who break the odds during the Depression.

Yesteryear by Cairo Claire Burke. The novel follows Natalie Heller Mills, a modern-day "tradwife" influencer and mother of six, who suddenly wakes up in 1855, forced to live a harsh, pre-industrial life. The story explores themes of social media performance, traditional gender roles, and the contrast between curated online personas and reality, blending dark humor with social commentary.

Whistler by Ann Patchett This is a story about two adults looking back over the choices they made, and the choices that were made for them. It's a story about bravery, memory, the often small yet consequential moments that define our lives.

Land by Maggie O'Farrell, author of *Hamnet*, In this, her 10th novel, she spins a haunting tale of loss,

endurance and renewal. The novel spans generations and explores Ireland's map-making, history and memory.

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
- We recently added the **Trustees** - passes to wonderful places to explore. 

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NEW BOSTON CHURCH SERVICES

ALL WELCOME

Worship Services on:

Sunday, July 12

10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

All welcome to stay for
fellowship after the service.

Sunday, July 26

10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

All welcome to stay for
fellowship after the service.

New Boston
Congregational Church
4 Sandisfield Road
(located on Route 57)

newbostoncongregationalchurch.org

Farmington River Elementary School Summer Starts Again BUT STAY TUNED IN, WHEN YOU CAN

By Times Reporters

When the doors opened June 17 at the end of the school year, the kids poured out for the summer, thinking and hoping they'd seen the last of school until September.

Principal Laurie Flower sent a message to parents along with the monthly FRES Newsletter. To see her message and the Newsletter online, go to frrsd.org.

In her note, she reminded parents and students of what had been accomplished during the year and pointed out that the Newsletter included "highlights from an incredible year of learning and growth, including district accomplishments in student achievement, attendance, and literacy instruction that reflect the hard work of our students, staff, and families."

She ended her note "thank you for your partnership, support, and commitment to our students. We wish all of our families a safe and enjoyable summer and look forward to welcoming everyone back in the fall."

In an excellent summary of all that happened during the school year, the Newsletter includes many photos taken over the year of the students and teachers and is a good reminder for kids of what they learned and experienced.

But one item included in the Newsletter is something that could help kids stay tuned in to school during the summer break. Occasionally or regularly visiting these websites may be a good way

over the summer break for parents to guide their kids' activities.

Free Computer Websites with No Password Required:

PBS Kids (pbskids.org) – Helps children build skills in reading, math, science, and social-emotional learning.

Sesame Street (sesamestreet.org) – Supports early literacy, math, emotional development, and healthy habits.

Code.org (code.org) – A beginner-friendly coding platform that teaches computer science through interactive lessons, puzzles, and projects.

Scratch (scratch.mit.edu) – Encourages creativity, problem-solving, and computational thinking.

Britannica Children (library.eb.com/levels/children) – Provides reliable information on a wide variety of school subjects and research topics.

ABCmouse (abcmouse.com) – Designed to support early childhood learning and foundational skills.

IXL (ixl.com/signin/farmriver) – Provides personalized practice in math, language arts, science, and social studies.

Websites with Login Required

(school accounts - contact croberts@frrsd.org):

ABC Mouse (Grades EK-3)

IXL (Grades 1-6) ST



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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

graduation day

commencement speaker
 procession of robes
 it's that time of year
 parents in droves

to celebrate their son,
 daughter or niece
 they go out to dinner
 buy college swag fleece.

parents reminisce about
 their own college days
 it's seems just like yesterday
 oh time has its ways.

packing the SUV
 up to the brim
 with knickknacks, laptops,
 books, clothes, and gin.

it's a bit sad amidst
 the cheers and recognition.
 what's next they all think
 our lives, our volition.

alas to go home
 a teenage bedroom,
 wallow and wonder
 clothes on the floor strewn.

some go abroad quickly
 to Italy to Spain.
 some go to grad school
 some go to Maine.

some have jobs
 lined up right away.
 others have time
 to hang out in the fray.

it's an exciting time
 in the graduates' young lives.
 it's an exciting time
 to grow up and thrive.

much more to come
 days, months, years.
 the future is vast
 the future is near.

- karen garfield

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LISA A.
LEAVENWORTH

Lisa's Family wrote:

It is with our deepest sadness that we announce the passing of Lisa A. Leavenworth. Lisa was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer earlier this year and succumbed to her illness on June 19, 2026.

Lisa created a safe, welcoming place to rest for everyone she knew and was rewarded with love and respect from those who knew her. This was evident in the seemingly endless stream of visitors who took the time in her final weeks to come laugh, cry, and remember the good times with her. She embodied kindness and compassion.

Lisa was always ready for fun and always ready with a dirty joke or prank. She never took herself too seriously and tried to influence those around her to do the same.

We know she will be well received on the other side by her countless family and friends who have gone on before, knowing that they must have missed her just as much as we do now.

Lisa leaves behind the love of her life, Ralph C. Leavenworth III. They knew from middle school that they were meant to be and would have celebrated their 41st anniversary in July.

She also leaves behind her daughters, Jenna (Jamie) Crandall and Amanda (Elijah) Holland as well as her honorary sons, Timothy (Jessica) Hamilton and Jeffrey (Ellen) Hamilton.

Lisa and Ralph shared four beautiful grandchildren, Graysyn Holland, McKinley Holland, Ryan Crandall and Bryce Crandall. She leaves behind her mother, Linda Riiska and sister, Eve Bannish, as well as

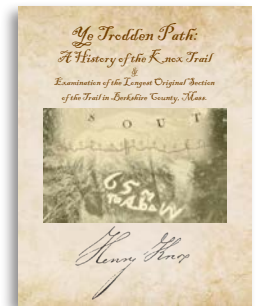
many other family members. She was predeceased by her father, Ed "Butch" Riiska.

On June 26, as requested by Lisa, graveside services were held at Sandisfield's Center Cemetery followed by a picnic at the Leavenworth residence on River Road. All who knew and loved Lisa were welcome to attend. Her funeral and the picnic afterward were one of the largest gatherings in the Town's recent memory, with at least 150 relatives, residents, and friends attending.

Montano-Shea Funeral Home of Winsted had care of the arrangements. Those wishing to leave a message may visit an online guestbook at montano-shea.com. To plant a beautiful memorial tree in memory of Lisa, please visit the Montano-Shea Tree Store online.

250TH COMMEMORATIVE BOOK

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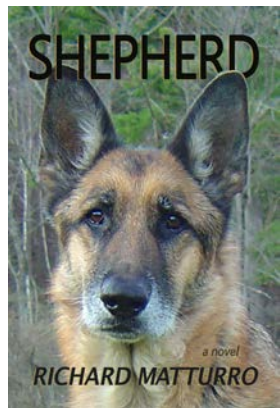
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*Proceeds benefit the Berkshire County Historical Society
For more information contact Ronbernard@aol.com*

Author Visits Women's Book Group

By Ellen Croibier



The Sandisfield Women's Book Group was honored to host author Richard Maturro and his wife at the library on June 18 for a discussion of Professor Maturro's book, *Shepherd*.

The book is subtitled *A Heartwarming Tale of Love & Loss*, a compelling story of love lost and regained. It is also "a meditation on grief and its survival, with something about what a good shepherd (in this case a dog) can do to mediate that process."

We enjoyed discussing the writing process with Mr. Maturro. The author was impressed with us too, and offered to return if we decide to discuss any of his other seven books.

In the photo, left to right from the back row left, are member Mary Gonzalez, the author's wife Mary Trev Taylor, and author Richard Maturro. Middle row: Ellen Croibier and Rosanne Skrip. In front holding the book we discussed is Josephine Freedman. Photo is by member Barry Freedman.



The library now has a hardcover copy of the book for those who haven't yet read it – or want to read it again.

Shepherd is a compelling story of love lost and regained—and also a healing meditation on grief and its survival, with something about what a good shepherd (in this case a dog) can do to mediate that process. S1

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

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

Sandisfield, MA 01255 or donate online at our website: www.sandisfieldtimes.org. Donations to The Sandisfield Times are deductible under section 170 of the Federal Income Tax Code. Donations do not include subscriptions. Subscriptions do not qualify as donations.

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

New Boston Inn. The Times is also available in West Otis at the laundromat, the library, and Paige's Place; in East Otis at Katie's, Pappas, and the Knox Trail Inn. Also at the Monterey Library (outside box) and the Roadside Cafe, in Colebrook at the post office, and in New Marlborough at the 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. Classified ads, 30 words or less, are free.

We welcome submissions, comments and suggestions, including letters to the editor by the 15th of the month prior. Maximum 300 words. We may edit for space, style or clarity. We will try to publish Public Service Announcements when we have room, with priority given to Sandisfield organizations. No portion of the The Sandisfield Times may be reproduced without permission.

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The Sandisfield Times, PO Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255. If internet accessible, all letters, news events and tips, ideas, obituary and family announcements, photos (600 dpi if possible) and advertisement queries to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org

NOW HEAR THIS!

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

JULY

Worship Service on Sunday, July 12 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.

Fabulous Fridays: Open Mic Series on Friday, July 17 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center at 5 Hammertown Road. Seasoned performer or just starting out, share your talent! Music, poetry, comedy or whatever. Or just come and enjoy some live entertainment. Performers please arrive 15 minutes early to sign up. Donation.

Conversation and Book Signing with Ellen Meeropol and Gail Gelburd on Saturday, July 18 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center at 5 Hammertown Road. Join local authors for a conversation on their recent books. Ellen Meeropol's novel, *Sometimes an Island*, is "a gorgeous and immersive story of family and circumstance, tragedy, and the hard work that leads to triumph". Gail Gelburd's book, *The Liberation of Sue Moody*, is the story of a journalist who carved her own path through personal and professional struggles, including Nazi occupation in France. Free. Books will be available for sale and signing.

Friends of Sandisfield Fire Department Heart & Soul BBQ Fundraiser on Saturday, July 25 from noon to 4:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Orchard at 101 New Hartford Road. BBQ brisket, pulled pork, chicken, cornbread, sides apple-themed dessert contest, and fun activities. \$35 adults, \$10 children. Kids under 5 free.

Chris Brubeck's Triple Play on Saturday, July 25 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Arts Center at 5 Hammertown Road. Jazz, blues, and fun. Triple Play features Joel Brown on guitar, Peter Madcat Ruth on harmonica, and Chris Brubeck on bass, trombone, and piano. This program is supported in part by a grant

from the Sandisfield and Otis Cultural Councils. Visit sandisfieldartscenter.org to purchase tickets. \$10-\$40.

Worship Service on Sunday, July 26 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.

RECURRING EVENTS

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

Sandisfield Select Board Meetings are currently through Zoom and in-person at 6:00 p.m. on alternate Mondays (summer only) 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. Or whenever the Library is open.

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.

Great Barrington Farmers Market every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on 18 Church Street in Great Barrington. Produce, baked goods, food vendors, crafts, and music.

New Marlborough Farmers Market on Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on the Village Green. Farm bounty, baked goods, handmade items, on other offerings.

Happy 250th Birthday America Country Picnic on July 4 beginning at noon at the Great Barrington VFW. Fife and Drum Corp, live bands, Yankee Street Rods Car Cruise, kids activities, food truck, bring your own picnic, cash bar.

Music Brings Communities Together: Bobby Sweet Band on Saturday, July 11 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at North Becket Park on Maple Street in Becket. Bring chairs, blankets, picnics and beverages to enjoy on the grounds. The performance will be moved indoors in the event of rain. Free and open to all.

Kids' Fishing Derby on Sunday, July 12 from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. at the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery on Hatchery Road in Monterey. Open to children ages 13 and under. Learn to fish and compete for prizes. No child goes away empty-handed.

Community Concert & Annual BBQ on Wednesday, July 15 at 12:00 p.m. at the Otis Town Hall. Hamburgers, hotdogs, salads, beans, coffee. \$10. Reservations required (413-269-0100, ext. 5), no walk-ins. Sponsored in part by a grant from the Otis Cultural Council.



Five Firemen Friends

(left to right) Dep. Chief Chris Coloniar, FF/EMT Cameron Nearey, Asst. Chief Douglas Miner, Chief Engineer Brian Reynolds, FF John Boulais

Photo: Josie Miner



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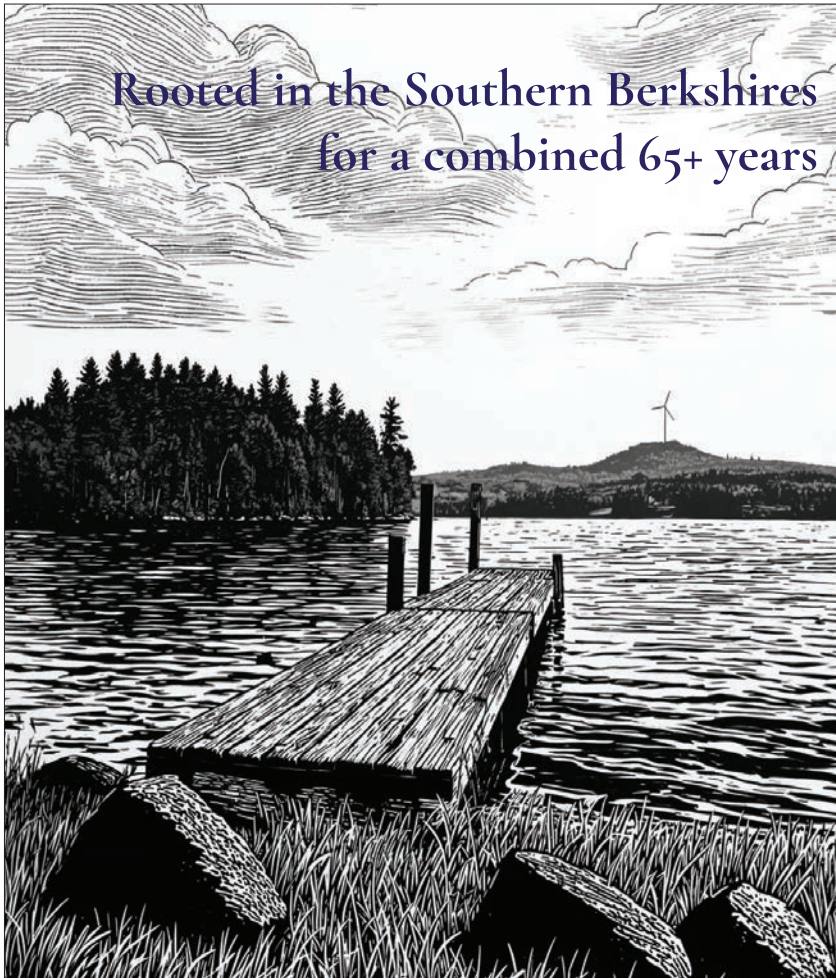


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