



THE SANDISFIELD TIMES

Old and Unique Apples *GROWING THEM ECOLOGICALLY* IS A CHALLENGE

By Joe Pappas, Orchard Manager,
Sandisfield Orchard

It is not widely known to consumers just how difficult it is to grow fruit in the Northeast.

Here we face many challenges that our counterparts in the semi-arid apple-growing regions of the Pacific Northwest do not. Most organic fruit comes from there. But here, increased pest pressure, higher rainfall, humidity – and therefore more disease susceptibility – means a bushel of apples can cost almost twice as much to grow than out west.

To support Northeast growers, Red Tomato and the IPM Institute of North America developed an ecology-based growing protocol, specific to our region, that produces marketable fruit while using the most environmentally friendly orcharding practices possible. The Eco Apple protocol includes advanced practices for ecosystem and water conservation,

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The original barn, left. On right, the barn under renovation, 2026.

Photos: Sandisfield Orchard

This Season at Sandisfield Orchard

APPLE SEASON IN FULL SWING WITH BIG CHANGES ON THE FARM

By Ron Bernard

At Sandisfield Orchard this year, two large projects were completed, and others are underway.

The most noticeable change is the renovation of the 100-year-old main barn. The barn is believed to date back to the early 20th Century, likely predating the farmhouse that sits across the driveway. The original 30 x 40 ft. structure had received many additions over the years, including a series of lean-tos when the farm expanded dairy operations in the 1960s and more recent additions to house logging equipment and a chicken coop.

With work on the barn finished this summer, the building now more closely resembles its original form, including the cedar-shingle siding.

“We have an old photo from the 1940s that shows the barn before all of the additions,” said Calvin Rodman. “We used that photo

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A Major Power Upgrade for Town Hill Road

Story and photo by Larry Dwyer

Following the Select Board's approval at its June 29 meeting, Eversource began work on a major upgrade to the electrical infrastructure along the 4.9 miles of Town Hill Road. The work will continue another few months.

Eversource is spending up to \$1.3 million to replace approximately 209 utility poles and the associated electrical wiring along the Town Hill Road corridor. The scale of the work is substantial. Each new pole weighs approximately 2,500 pounds, meaning that the project will involve moving and installing more than 2.2 million pounds of utility poles.

The most significant change, however, will be in the electrical system itself. The existing system is primarily single-phase 8,320-volt service, which will be upgraded to a three-phase system operating at approximately 22,000 volts. Three-phase distribution provides substantially greater electrical capacity and is commonly used

where larger electrical loads are anticipated.

An Eversource representative explained that the new, heavier conductors require additional support and that the upgrades are necessary due to the high number of outages on Town Hill Road. The three-phase power line will allow Eversource to isolate outages to smaller sections of the road instead of affecting all customers. The company also noted that three-phase service improves reliability,



A new pole is hoisted into place on Town Hill Road.

helps mitigate power surges, and can be attractive for future development.

For residents, the immediate result will be a long period of construction crews working along Town Hill

Road and the inevitable disruption. Eversource explained that when poles are replaced, wires are generally transferred from the old pole to the new one before the old pole can be removed.

But there may be a larger story behind the project.

Upgrading the line from single-phase to three-phase and increasing its voltage and capacity could make this portion of Sandisfield considerably more attractive for future development. Properties that today face limitations because of available electrical capacity could have greater opportunities once the upgraded system is in place.

One possibility is large-scale solar development. When a solar farm was proposed for acreage near Yanner Park nearly a decade ago, the lack of a three-phase system was cited as a major obstacle. This will be overridden by the new installation.

What appears at first to be a project to replace old utility poles may therefore become something considerably more significant: a major investment in the electrical capacity of Town Hill Road and potentially a new chapter in the future development of that part of Sandisfield. **ST**



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TOWN NEWS

Is There An Unemployed Fire Chief or Town Clerk Out There?

By Bill Price

The Town's search for a replacement Fire Chief has been joined by a search for a replacement Town Clerk.

Janey Beardlsey, Sandisfield's Town Manager, has a full plate as she juggles the phone lines, help-wanted pages, and tip lines for names of qualified candidates for both jobs, and several others, too.

She told The Times that three Fire Chief candidates are on tap for interviews the first few days in October and two more the following week. The Town is waiting to see candidates' credentials because, depending on their licenses and skills, the result may affect the makeup of the firehouse. The Town is also seeking a Fireman/EMT, but if a person is qualified for chief as well as being a certified EMT they may filling both jobs.

The Town Clerk's position became vacant with Dougla Miner's partial but unexpected resignation in September. While he felt obliged to step down as Town Clerk, Miner is continuing to cover as Town Clerk in the event of time-sensitive issues such as birth and death certificates and voting. But someone is needed soon – the statewide election is coming up in early November, which will require a Town Clerk on duty to supervise a good-sized staff.

Beardsley has had one applicant for the Town Clerk job. She has also contacted the Berkshire Managers' Group for advice on how to conduct Town business without a Clerk and asked for advice in

searching for a replacement. She said she would settle for an interim candidate who might fill the spot until the November election, but there does not seem to be a wide pool of Town Clerk candidates.

And not a few other spots are available for hire. See the list on this page from the Town website.

Other business: Sandisfield Orchard license expansion approved

The Orchard's application for a Special Permit was granted for an expanded restaurant, a retail space, organized events, and a cider building beyond what would be allowed under the original base agricultural/residential zoning.

The Orchard's original application was filed last June but withdrawn during a Special Permit Select Board hearing. At that time the proposal lacked specificity and public comments from neighbors had raised concerns about lighting, noise, event use, site plans, and whether the expansion applied indoors or outdoors. Calvin Rodman, the owner, acknowledged then that event use had not yet been defined.

At the Select Board meeting September 28, with these issues made clear in a new application, the permit was approved and the Orchard will proceed with its plans for expansion. Next month, the Times will outline what Emily Melchior and Calvin Rodman are planning for Sandisfield's crown jewel, the Orchard. 

Board of Assessor's Opening

Due to a resignation, a Board of Assessors member position is currently available. The term will be until the next election; however, the incumbent individual is eligible to run for the seat for a full term at the next election. As a member of the Board of Assessors, you would be required to complete the Division of Local Services (DLS) 101 course in a timely manner. You will be required to attend meetings at least once a month to approve/deny applications for abatements and exemptions. During the fall you will be required to participate in meetings to set the tax rate and prepare for the tax hearing. You will receive a monthly stipend for your participation on this board. Please send letter of interest to Laurie McArthur at lmcarthur@sandisfieldma.gov. 

CURRENT TOWN JOB OPENINGS

Go to www.sandisfieldma.gov for complete job descriptions.

Fire Chief

Full-Time, Benefited: 40 hours per week

Firefighter/EMT

Full-Time, Benefited: 40 hours per week

FireFighter/EMT Per Diem

On-Call DPW Equipment Operator/Laborer

Town Clerk

Part-Time, Up to 15 hours per week

Van Driver

Part Time, Up to 15 hours per week

If interested in applying, please complete an employment application and email manager@sandisfieldma.gov or mail to:

Town Manager,
66 Sandisfield Rd, Suite 1,
Sandisfield, MA 01255 

Come On to Yanner Park

It's YOUR PARK, AFTER ALL

By Adam Brown, Chairman, Yanner Park Committee

If you haven't been to Yanner Park recently, plan to make a visit - fall is one of the best times. Up Town Hill Road, on the right as you're driving uphill. You'll find it.

A picnic area next to the parking lot on Town Hill Road is a great place to enjoy a quiet lunch or an early dinner with a sunset view.

Several miles of easy to moderate, well-marked hiking trails take in a variety of forest types, from young early successional habitat to northern hardwoods to shady hemlock groves. The trails connect with the Clam River

Cultural resources from the 1800's, such as stone walls and a stone arch bridge, give a nod to our town's past agricultural heritage, while a spectacular eastern view is available along the ridgeline for those willing to walk a short distance uphill.

The park has been maintained and managed by Town volunteers, collectively known as the Yanner Park Committee, over the last 8 years. The Committee is looking forward to future projects and hopes to expand

its numbers in order to gain an influx of new ideas and perspectives.



Start of the Vista Loop Trail. Photo: Berkshireoutside.org

Are you interested in hiking, recreation, forest management, or bird watching?

Do you have kids and want a place nearby to get them outdoors and connected to nature?

Do you have a unique skill you are willing to share?

If so, please consider joining the Yanner Park Committee. Contact Janey Beardsley or Aimee Brzoska in the Town Manager's office to determine the process for being appointed and the length of term. \$1

Oktober Fest

**Saturday,
October 3rd
12PM-4PM**



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Hayrides**

OSRP Committee is Focused on Practical Opportunities

YANNER PARK MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

By Ron Bernard

Last month an expanded Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) committee reviewed Sandisfield's demographic and development patterns using maps and data about soils, water resources and plant ecosystems within Town limits. Much of the open space in Sandisfield is unsuitable for development due to ecological, topographical, or hazards limitations.

However, opportunities exist to upgrade and/or develop available public recreational facilities and locations.

With this in mind, the committee discussed strategies such as potential partnerships with existing organizations like the Farmington River Watershed Association, the State Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Army Corps of Engineers, or local recreational clubs including the Hanging Mountain (Western Massachusetts Climbers Coalition), the Sandisfield Snowmobile Club, Knox Trail Sno-Riders Snowmobile Club, and the American Legion facilities in New Boston.

Discussions turned to the most available opportunities in the short-term, including improving the town playground at the library, river access, and many possible activities at Yanner Park.

Yanner Park consists of 275 open acres donated by the Yanner family to the Town in 1995 for the purpose of "recreation." A master plan was completed in 1996, and committees ever since have been planning and working on various aspects of the park, including integration of hiking trails and public access and parking. Unfortunately, the gift of the land did not come with designated funds which has slowed implementation of recreational opportunities and facilities there. The OSRP project is the first and best opportunity to turn ideas about Yanner Park into reality because with a Plan in place, the Town will be able to apply for grant funding that it was not previously eligible for. The hope is that this Plan will be a turning point for the future of Yanner Park.

There is still time for residents, landowners, second homeowners, visitors, and neighbors to voice opinions about outdoor recreation here on the OSRP

FUN FACTS

- Sandisfield is comprised of 33,900 acres
- 92 percent of Sandisfield is classified as "forest."
- Surface water covers 600 acres.
- Wetlands account for 2,300 acres.
- Sandisfield has 17 lakes and ponds, and 9 streams and tributaries.

survey. More than 100 responses have been received to date. The online Survey, which takes only a few minutes to complete, closes on October 15. Every response is valued and all suggestions will be given serious consideration. To participate, please scan this QR code or visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/SNDOSRP. There will be a community meeting later this fall to share the results.



In October, the committee will continue to discuss preservation needs as well as review climate change data. Climate change data will help inform decision-making, recognize hazards to mitigate, and identify impacts it will have on the town's open space land.

Community feedback will be crucial during the upcoming process. Anyone interested in learning more or sharing feedback is encouraged to provide their thoughts to the committee by attending the monthly meetings. The next committee meeting is October 21 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall. 

Chris Maccarini, PMP
Owner

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Sandisfield Primary Results

Massachusetts held the primary for its 2026 election on September 1. In Sandisfield, 114 ballots were cast: 87 Democrats, 27 Republicans.

In the U.S. Senate race, on the Democratic side Edward Markey, the incumbent, won with 60 votes over Seth Moulton's 24. Markey won statewide as well and will be the Democratic candidate in the November election.

In Sandisfield, the Republicans put up one candidate, John Deaton, who received 22 votes. He also won statewide.

For Massachusetts Governor, the Republicans favored Michael Minouge with 18 votes over Brian Shortsleeve's 10. The Democrats had one choice, incumbent Maura Healey, who received 77 votes.

The only other contested offices were Democratic. For Representative in Congress, Richard Neal won with 50 votes over Jerome Whalen's 36. For Councillor, Tara Jacobs won with 68 votes over Michael Fenton's 8.

The general election will be held the first Tuesday in November, November 3. Early voting is currently underway at Town Hall.

ST

Fire Department News

Next month, the Friends of the Sandisfield Fire Department will report on (1) the AEDs (Automatic External Defibrillators) that are being purchased with the proceeds from August's Heart & Soul Fundraiser and other donations, (2) where the defibrillators will be located in Town, and (3) how volunteer residents can be trained on their use. The life one of these AEDs saves may be your own. ST

Drive Right In

Anyone with business at Town Hall can now drive right in without fear of falling off the driveway and rolling downhill to land embarrassingly in the middle of Sandisfield Road.

The Town Hall parking lot received a new, smooth coat of asphalt at the end of September. With a bonus.

DPW Superintendent Derek Boomsba asked the contractor, LB Corporation, a family-owned and -operated construction firm in Lee, what could be done about the steep, narrow, pot-holed driveway. LB had an answer.

The driveway is now wider and non-threatening. Old-timers – who put up with the old one all these years – may not like it, but everybody else will. ST



The new driveway

Photos: Larry Dwyer



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TOUCH ME, GENTLY:
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Experience 3-dimensional art through touch: Fabric arts, papier-mâché. Artists include **Bonnie Cordova, Susan Gilbert, Christine Novak, Jaye Alison** and the September papier-mâché workshop participants.

SAT. OCTOBER 3 7 PM \$30
NAZI TOWN, USA. A CHILLING
DOCUMENTARY FILM BY PETER YOST
Traces the rise and fall of the German American Bund and the fascist threat in 1930s America. Nominated for an Emmy and a Columbia-Dupont Award. **Director/Producer Peter Yost leads a discussion afterward.**

SUN. OCTOBER 4 3 PM \$30
THE THISTLES QUARTET

The Thistles Quartet—**Terry Keevil** oboe and duduk (Armenian oboe), **Lesley Rosenthal** electric violin, **Jaye Alison Moscariello** vocals, and **Bill Taylor** piano--blend classical, jazz and show tune influences in a unique and joyful way.

SUN. OCTOBER 18 3 PM \$30
NOAH BAERMAN AND HENRY LUGO: JAZZ PIANO AND BASS

Noah Baerman, jazz pianist, composer, educator, and activist and longtime collaborator bassist **Henry Lugo** together create a "deep lyrical expression and soulful sense of swing."

SAT. OCTOBER 24 FREE
FAMILY FOTOS

Opening Reception 4:30-6:30 PM. Family of Man meets Sally Mann meets a box of dusty photos. An intimate exploration of family in all its possible forms. **Closes December 5.**

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



Not Ready to Take it Easy *ARTS CENTER TO HAVE A BUSY MONTH*

By Suzanne OConnell

The temperature outside may be cooling down, but not the activities at the Sandisfield Arts Center.

October is a robust month, beginning with a not-to-be-missed doubleheader. The first weekend of October (3 and 4) features a sobering documentary, "Nazi Town, USA." Produced by Peter Yost, who will be present for a discussion about the film, the documentary describes a part of American history that few of us learn in our history classes. Certainly, I never learned about in my years in the Mt. Everett Regional School System. It is part of the acclaimed PBS American Experience series and the presence of producer Yost offers an opportunity to learn more about the series and this particular film.

Less than twenty-four hours later, The Thistles Quartet, will perform from 3:00-5:00 p.m. Instrumentation for this eclectic group includes: electric violin, piano, clarinet, oboe and duduk (Armenian oboe), with Sandisfield's own Jaye Alison Moscariello on vocals. Check out the Sandisfield Arts Centers Website (<https://sandisfieldartscenter.org>) to read about the accomplished members of this quartet (really a quintet for this occasion).



Noah Baerman, Jazz pianist

Music has always been a foundation for events at the Arts Center, and two weeks later Noah Baerman, Jazz pianist, composer, educator (Director of Wesleyan University's Jazz Ensemble) and activist, and his longtime collaborator bassist Henry Lugo, will provide another eclectic afternoon. Original compositions by Baerman and jazz repertoire by greats such as Monk, Coltrane, Hancock, and Rollins as well as material from Baerman's new

album "Independent Declarations," which is directly related to America 250.

All of the above is happening in the upstairs where Baptist and Jewish services were held for 150 years.

Below, in the newly renovated Garfield Family Gallery, you have an opportunity to view two magical art shows. Through October 11, "Touch Me Gently," invites you to experience three-dimensional art through touch. This tactile exhibition features fabric arts, papier-mâché, and other touchable sculptures designed to soothe during turbulent times. It provides an opportunity to gently explore textures and forms with your hands, engaging with art in an intimate, calming, and multi-sensory way.



Photo: From the Family Fotos exhibit, "Louie with a swollen eye," by Josie Miner

October 24 at 4:30 p.m., is the opening of Family Fotos, an exhibit that explores the idea of family in all forms – biological/chosen, remembered/imagined, whole/fractured – and considers questions of memory, intimacy, identity, absence, and belonging. As with "Tough Me Gently," it will be open weekends 12:00-3:00 p.m., during other Sandisfield Art Events through December 5 at 6:30 p.m., and by appointment at gallery@sandisfieldartscenter.org.

Ticket sales rarely cover the performance expenses. Nevertheless, the Arts Center Board does not want ticket price to exclude participation. Reduced price tickets are available at our website and complimentary tickets can also be made available via a member of the Sandisfield Art Center Board (soconnell@wesleyan.edu). 

This Season at Sandisfield Orchard Cont'd from p.1

as a guide during the renovation. We're hoping that the building is ready for another 100 years, and we're excited to move into the much-needed space."

For now, the building will house the farm's workshop, but Emily Melchoir and Calvin, the farm's owners, hope that the building could be used in the future for small events, and for customers to enjoy the views from the old hayloft. Continuing construction includes a dedicated building for pressing cider and a tractor barn, both

being built by Ben Naylor, owner of Cherry Brook Construction, based here in Sandisfield.

The other large project this year was the planting of a new pick-your-own apple lot.

The new lot features almost 700 freestanding trees, planted in slightly tighter rows this spring. "Last year, our focus was on planting cider varieties, but this year we wanted to plant more familiar pick-your-own varieties at the center of the farm," said Orchard Manager Joe Pappas.

New plantings include lots more Honeycrisp, Macoun, Mutsu, and Liberty, as well as many varieties new to the farm such as Ambrosia, Esopus, Spitzenberg, Wealthy, Crimson Crisp, Granny Smith, Northern Spy, Ginger Gold, and Egremont Russet.

The new block represents the largest planting at the orchard since the first 1,500 trees were planted in the early 1990s. With 100 trees planted in 2024, 400 in 2025, and an additional 200 planted this year in other lots, the orchard now shows a contrast between new and old. Some of the young trees are expected to have a small crop as early as next year.

Although apples will always be the focus, Emily Melchior explained that other fruits will also be an important part of the farm's future business.

"Peaches, pears, and nectarines will eventually be available in August, after blueberry season, but before the apples are ripe," she said.

"We had a great blueberry season, and we've having a great apple season despite the rain. A well-timed early stretch of cool nights and sunny days created some of the best fruit color we've ever seen."

Cider donuts and sandwiches returned to the cafe for the fall season. The Orchard is open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 9-5, through the end of October.

You can find the orchard on New Hartford Road. If you approach from the north, it is a simply glorious sight as you pass over the last hill and the orchard spreads out ahead of you. 



More than 700 new trees were planted this spring.

Photo courtesy Sandisfield Orchard

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Old and Unique Apples *Cont'd from p.1*

pollinator protection, orchard floor management, and soil health. These cover everything from mitigating soil compaction to reducing fuel consumption of tractors. A minimum standard of practice needs to be met, which disallows many conventional methods, while promoting more thoughtful and science-based approaches.

Sandisfield Orchard has grown and certified this year's crop through the EcoApple program. We feel that growing under this program upholds our commitment to being good stewards of the land. When intervention is necessary to protect fruit quality, we use the best methods available and target specific pests while minimizing disruption to beneficial species.

This approach sometimes costs more money and is more work for the grower, but we believe is the right thing to do for the sake of keeping the orchard healthy, and therefore the fruit for our customers to consume.

I like to think that participating in this program acknowledges that we are not – and do not want to be – in total control of the trees.

Instead, we are guiding the orchard ecosystem with minimal intervention, creating the conditions that allow it to produce the delicious fruit we all love.

Finding a Wild Apple Tree

Wild apple trees often do just fine on their own if left alone and given the right conditions, but they don't necessarily produce supermarket-approved apples.

Pests and fungi will mark any fruit, but a wild apple tree's ability to thrive independently matters most and can depend on inherited disease susceptibility or resistance.

Apple trees are heterozygous, meaning each seed possesses a random genetic combination of its two parents, like humans. It is very rare for a seed to produce an edible apple – they are usually a rollercoaster of undesired flavor and texture, hence the competitive world of intentional breeding.

The chances of finding the next Honeycrisp growing wild from a seedling are very rare and the process requires a lot of lead time, so isolating parents with desired traits during pollination increases the chance of finding a money-making hit.

So, if an apple core is tossed out the window – or recycled by wildlife – and one lucky seed happens to sprout in a high-elevation, cool climate like ours, and possesses the genes to withstand disease pressure, and produce some sort of human-edible apple, that seed has accomplished more than we could have encouraged it to with our assistance.

These trees are all around us – you can spot them in the woods during heavy bloom years, like glowing pyres of white flowers surrounded by budding green forest. The tricky part can be determining if these are truly wild seedlings, or a long-lost but previously cultivated variety.

Luckily, we are now able to submit samples for DNA testing and cross-check them with an existing database of thousands of known apple varieties.

Of the twenty suspected wild trees we have tested at the Orchard over the last few years, twelve have been identified as genetically unique individuals, and a few of those are good eaters.

If not truly wild, these trees usually turn out to be lesser known or older heirloom varieties – often hardy, reliable growers whose fruit was sometimes desired for functionality over flavor. (Imagine how much you might prize an apple for its ability to keep in a root cellar all winter in the days before refrigeration.)

Our small on farm tree nursery holds replicated samples of these (via grafting), with the intention of having a small section of the orchard dedicated to local unique varieties.

Our goal is to explore the endless genetic possibilities that apple trees are creating on their own, share them with you, and identify individuals that are better suited to our particular climate. An heirloom apple who's name you've never heard of just might be your new favorite, and it may even help growers adapt to ever-changing conditions. 



A very old apple tree in a field on Beech Plain Road

Photo courtesy Sandisfield Orchard



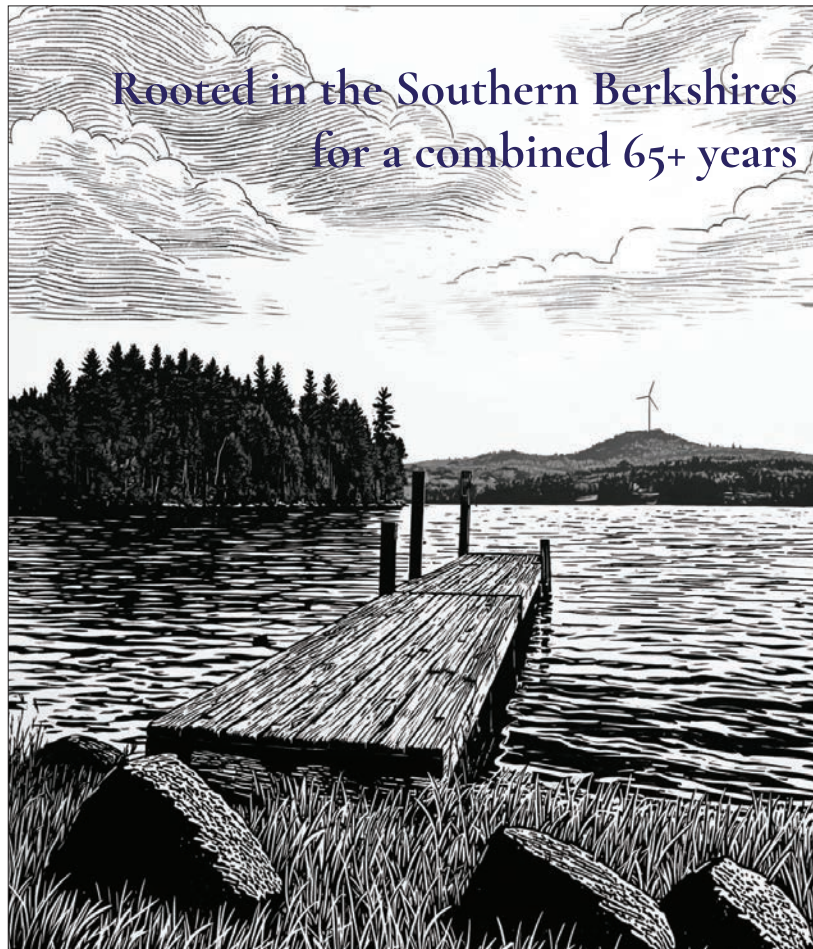
Sandisfield Welcomes Neighbors to the Pig Roast

About 120 people attended the 4th Annual Pig Roast at supertime, Saturday, September 19. Sponsored by the Town and the Recreation Committee, the free dinner was held at the American Legion pavilion in New Boston. Organizers Zoe Nelson and Christine Nadelman said they “couldn’t have done it without help from Steve Pincus, Barbara Cormier, Nina Carr, Billy Carr, Rose Nelson, Hanna and Phil Blume.” Below are pictured four Committee members: Rose Nelson, Zoe Nelson, Christine Nadelman, and Hannah Blume.

They also asked to thank all the guys who helped with the set-up and break-down of tables and chairs.

Christine said, “The food was delicious from John Ormsbee who roasted the pig, prepared the roast beef and stuffing. Tim McGrane of McGranes on the Green in Winsted made the sides of mac-n-cheese and coleslaw. Entertainment was by the fabulous band Harms Way, and we had a guest fire performer, Ali O'Donnell of Boston, aka Dame of Flames.

A neighbor, Bonnie Scrivener who lives up the hill to the east, wrote on ConnectSandisfield/Facebook: “Thanks for letting Tolland folks attend. We had a wonderful time!!!” 



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Church Yard Sale a Success

By Ron Bernard

An estimated 200 visitors wandered through the New Boston Congregational Church's 2nd Annual Yard Sale that was jam-packed with antiques as well as practical and novelty items.

Specials this year included an authentic wishing well, troves of stained glass and costume jewelry, and a one-of-a-kind "Sandisfield" sign painted by noted Connecticut artist Will Noad.

Seen above is church member Ruth McCormick setting up home-grown plants galore. Ali O'Donnell of Boston, aka "Dame of Flames," returned for another thrilling fire performance. Many enjoyed hot dogs and burgers. Others had fun ringing the historic church bell.

The congregation is grateful to the volunteers who worked so hard and to the generous donors of things and money which will be applied to the cost of a new church roof in 2027.

While the event proceeded without a hitch, planners were increasingly concerned about an "iffy" wet weather forecast. A call for just-in-case tents



was answered by individuals and especially A&M Auto and the Sandisfield Fire Department, who were on the spot with large tents and helpers. Thanks also to the New Boston Inn for again providing convenient parking for visitors.

The unique one by five-foot Sandisfield sign is available for silent auction bidding on the church website until October 15. Go to NewBostonCongregationalChurch.org and select "Fundraising."

See you next September, same church time, same church place! ST

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Our New Swap Shop

By Bill Price

Benjamin Franklin said at the founding of the United States that we had a republic, if we could keep it. He meant that all citizens had a duty to protect and defend the fledgling nation's new system of government.

Well, Sandisfield, we have a new and cleaned up Swap Shop at the Transfer Station. That is, we have a cleaned up Swap Shop, if we can keep it.

Remember what happened to the former shop? People felt so tender about some of their stuff that rather than throw it out they stacked it in the shop where they hoped someone else would find it useful

and take it home. That seldom happened. Instead, stuff piled up until it was hard to walk three feet into the shop.

Let's not let that happen again. If you have stuff that could be thrown out or might be useful to someone else, make the decision to throw it out. Don't clutter the Swap Shop with stuff that even you wouldn't want.

Since the Swap Shop was set up, rules have governed what should go into it, but we had forgotten about the list. A new monitor has posted a revised set of regulations. It is in all our best interests to follow them.

Four residents have volunteered to monitor the Shop, but so far only one has shown up. On a recent Saturday, with no monitor, stuff was being dropped off that a witness thought should have been thrown out. It's not the job of the attendant to monitor the Swap Shop. He does so when his real job – supervising the Transfer Station – allows him time to do so. But it's not his responsibility.

No, it's our responsibility. Take it seriously.

If there is no monitor on site, think three times before dropping anything off. If you don't carry it around the corner to the dump bin, somebody else will have to. Think of Ben Franklin, and work to protect our new system. 

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Editor's Note: *Fixing anything on our roads in Sandisfield costs a whole lot of money, whether it's to replace a culvert, a wee little bridge, or pave a section of dirt road that washes out after every spring freshet. The Berkshire Eagle story, reprinted here with permission, explains much of the reasons the cost is so high, but it doesn't make us feel better.*

— Bill Price

A 50-Foot Lee Bridge Costs \$8 Million to Replace. Why?



The Mill Street bridge over Washington Mountain Brook in Lee is visibly decaying. Replacing it will cost \$8 million.
Photo: Stephanie Zollshan, The Berkshire Eagle.

By Nate Harrington,
The Berkshire Eagle.

September 17, 2026.
Reprinted with
permission.

LEE — The Mill Street bridge that spans Washington Mountain Brook is about 50 feet long and takes less than 15 seconds to walk across.

In 2025, as the bridge's structure deteriorated, traffic was restricted to one lane, with alternating one-way traffic. Drivers traveling in opposite directions take turns crossing, with only a stop sign at each end of the bridge to determine who goes first — if drivers stop at all.

The 1911 bridge is small, but it is a big headache for neighbors concerned about roadway safety.

Mike Coty, who crosses the bridge almost every day on his three-mile walk, said drivers routinely ignore the stop signs.

"That's why I got this," he said, holding up his pointed walking stick. "Once in a while, I have to bring it up, let them know I'm near."

As he spoke, Coty pointed to a government truck that had just blown through the stop sign, illustrating his estimate that about 20 percent of drivers do the same.

Despite spanning just 50 feet, replacing the Mill Street bridge is expected to cost more than \$8 million — roughly \$160,000 for every foot of bridge — a figure that reflects far more than the concrete and steel needed to cross Washington Mountain Brook. Engineering, permitting, environmental requirements, drainage, utilities and construction all add to the cost, illustrating why even small bridge projects can be such a financial challenge for municipalities and the state.

"That's the reality of how they're designed," said William Tyrell, chief estimator at Northern Construction, a Massachusetts company that builds bridges and does repairs. "A bridge built now is going to be cheaper than a bridge built five years from now, and that's just reality."

No matter how much repairs cost, it has to be done right and to code, Tyrell said.

When a road fails, it may lead to damage to the car, like a flat tire, Tyrell said.

"What happens if a bridge fails?" he asked. "Nothing good. People get hurt, or worse."

Why Moswen Bridges Cost More

The estimated cost to replace the Mill Street bridge pales in comparison with some other bridge projects in the Berkshires. The Brookside Road Bridge in Great Barrington, for example, is projected to cost \$50 million.

The two projects are among the many bridge replacements and repairs underway or planned across the county, where much of the infrastructure dates to the early decades of the automobile.

Bridges built more than a century ago weren't designed to meet today's engineering standards, carry today's traffic or withstand the range of conditions modern bridges are expected to endure.

"Some of the bridges that we drive over are just masonry rubble abutments on a spread footing, and then the bridge is built over that," Tyrell said. "It's safe, but it would never meet modern codes."

Bridge construction has evolved over years of research, testing and, unfortunately, failure, said Simos Gerasimidis, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

"Design codes have evolved substantially," Gerasimidis said. "Engineers can now model complicated structural behavior that would have been extremely difficult to analyze several decades ago."

Designed for Worst-Case Scenarios

Before a bridge can be replaced, however, the need has to be identified and the project designed. MassDOT prioritizes bridge repair projects using "a relative ranking system which, amongst other factors, considers current condition, future condition and bridge usage," said John Goggin, communication analyst with the department.

Once a bridge is identified as needing repair or replacement, a new design needs to be drawn up.

Modern designs are built to last 75 to 100 years and withstand worst-case scenarios, like extreme weather and flooding, Tyrell said.

To assess a bridge's safety, researchers create mathematical models that show how cars and trucks will load and stress the structure, Gerasimidis said. For more complicated bridges, there are sometimes millions of elements that the computer is tracking and modeling to generate data about how the design will hold up.

"When we design a bridge, we do not design it so that the expected traffic load brings the structure anywhere close to failure," he said.

All of those considerations are built into the design of the bridge itself. But the bridge structure accounts for only about one-sixth of the Mill Street project's \$8 million price tag: \$1.5 million, according to MassDOT.

So where does the other \$6.5 million go?

All the Other Costs

Out of every line item in the Mill Street bridge project breakdown, only one other eclipsed the million-dollar mark: Drilled micropiles at \$1.77 million.

Older bridges were often built on structural supports called spread footings, which were dug 4 or 5 feet into the ground, Tyrell said. If a bridge using that support is over a river, like the Mill Street bridge is, a flood can potentially wash it out.

Micropiles, on the other hand, are drilled into bedrock, he said. The install requires specialty equipment, which makes it more expensive.

In the Mill Street project, there are 24 micropiles that are each drilled 10 feet into the ground to support the bridge, Goggin said.

But before that can even happen, there is a lot of work to prepare the area around the construction site.

"You have to protect the work from the river," Tyrell said. "There's all sorts of design engineering costs that go into planning the work."

This work can include figuring out the number of trees that need to be cleared, installing barriers to keep sediment out of the work area, supporting the crumbling bridge while it's still in use and accounting for a temporary traffic light that will control vehicles during construction.

All of these line items add up, contributing to the cost of the overall project. And the cost of labor and materials rising means the project cost rises too.

"Things have gone up, you know, 30, 40 percent since COVID," Tyrell said.

Still, experts say it's worth remembering that when you pay to repair a bridge, you're not just paying for steel and concrete.

"You are paying for a structure that has to safely carry millions of vehicles, often for 75 or 100 years, while being exposed continuously to water, salt, temperature changes, wind, snow, fatigue and sometimes floods, earthquakes or vehicle impacts," Gerasimidis said.

In Lee, Coty is eager to have his neighborhood bridge repaired, which is expected to be completed by 2030, no matter the cost.

"They let it go so far," he said about the condition of the bridge. "We don't have much of a choice." ST



Too many cooks in the kitchen

Adding lawyers to the mix might get salty

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Comings and Goings



Dave and Cooper

DAVID (DAVE) JOHN CONKLIN 1957-2026

*Never Stop! Create, Learn, Love, Live.
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*It's a Wonderful World. ~
Keep Calm and Carry On.*

Dave Conklin, 69, born in West Nyack, New York, a 27-year resident of Otis, unexpectedly passed on from this world with his loving wife Kathleen Burke Conklin beside him on Tuesday, July 28, 2026, at Bay State Hospital in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Dave was a kind and gentle soul who was a good friend to those he knew and even those he just met. He had been described by many as being the most selfless, kind, creative, talented, caring, honest, loving, amazing human with a sense of humor and a passion for life and love.

Dave was always full of life and always creating something. He loved learning and sharing knowledge with those who wanted to learn. His love of animals, nature and always finding the good in people was shared with everyone he knew.

Dave had many interests and passions: chess, riding, music, writing, art, gardening, remodeling his home, snow sculptures, ice sculptures, and what most will remember was his talent for chainsaw carving. His carvings are everywhere, his wood spirits, fish, dragons, owls, lighthouses, bears, bird houses, benches, and so much more can be found all over Otis, Sandisfield, and beyond.

To his wife, he was her man, husband of 23 years, king of the mountain, the true love of her life. Dave loved all his family unconditionally. Even when the chips were down, Dave always supported his family and friends.

Dave was predeceased by his father, Arthur Conklin and his brother Andrew Conklin.

Dave is survived by his wife, Kathleen Burke Conklin of Otis, Massachusetts, his mother Audrey Conklin of West Nyack, New York, his two sisters Joy Conklin (Tim) of Raymond, Maine, Katherine & Kevan Brooks of Middletown, New York, his four brothers Michael Conklin and Peter Conklin, both of West Nyack, Arthur & Sally Conklin of Arlington, Virginia, and Timothy & Peggy Conklin of Middletown, New York, his son David Conklin (& Heather) of Milford, Pennsylvania, his step-son David Wilkinson & fiancé Katrina of Sandisfield, two grandchildren, Macayla and Darin, and many nieces and nephews. Special friends Clayton, Angel, Charles & Terry. And of course, his pups, Cooper, Luna & Dudley. Words cannot express how missed he will be by so many.

After retiring from the phone company, where he started as a switchboard operator in his 20's, he acquired his contractor's license and worked as a handyman for many in the area. Dave volunteered his time locally at the Veteran's Home in Sandisfield, the New Boston Church, the Otis Library, the Berkshire Humane Society, and served on the Otis Conservation Commission for a time as well.

A Celebration of Life was held on September 26, 2026, at the American Legion Post 456, in Sandisfield. The dress was to be casual, and attendees were invited to bring a dish and a memory to share.

To honor Dave's generous spirit, the family kindly requests that, instead of flowers, donations be made to Berkshire Humane Society, an organization close to his heart. www.BerkshireHumane.org.





*Kim Paspuletti (left) and her friend Maxene,
two weeks before Kim's death.*

KIM MARTINEK PASPULETTI 1961-2025

Kim Paspuletti was my loving friend.

A lot of folks in Town could say the same thing. She was generous of spirit, had an easy laugh, and would be available to help with everything. She knew a lot of people I still don't know, and when she would come up to Sandisfield to visit after they sold her house, she would drop in on friends for coffee and a chat. And she would inevitably bring something she had made, whether to wear, to eat, or to decorate with.

I can't remember when I met her, but I am pretty sure it was through Karlene Blass, who still lives on the same road as Kim. I remember being so impressed with Kim's huge unique log house on Beech Plain Road, decorated with care and imagination, and seeing the biggest Christmas tree I'd ever laid eyes on.

One of the features of Kim's character and personality was indicated by a sign at the entrance to her driveway that said ALWAYS, and although there were folks who thought that was their family name, what Kim meant was that people were always welcome.

And then we would swim in the summer at York Lake. Although Kim could drop into any water anywhere, I couldn't, so after helping me into the lake, she would swim past the ropes with Karlene and they would swim dozens of laps. She was powerful, was our Kimmie. And we decided that we would be the Sandisfield Swim Team. Others were invited, too, such as Christine Nadelman and Miriam Karmel. We always enjoyed our time together.

Although she swam as often as she could during the summer months, every fall, Kim would don her insulated shirt and leggings to swim in York Lake, no matter how cold the temperature. She had the perfect swimmer's long body and powerful legs and arms.

Kim was also an avid and fierce golfer. When she belonged to the Canaan Country Club, she would play as part of a men's foursome, always holding her own with strength and low scores.

On July 9, 2025, Kim Paspuletti died suddenly in New York City as she lived: quietly, alone, and after helping a friend. She did not like to be a bother to others. As a two-time breast cancer survivor, with 15 years between diagnoses, she never complained. Kim simply adjusted.

Kim was a gifted clothing artist whose abilities stretched far beyond sewing. Her fabric designs included reworking material from one genre to a totally different one, and she wore her designs beautifully. She also worked in interior design, imaging space creatively for new and clever uses.

Once, when I complimented her on a pleated damask skirt she had worn, she told me she had crafted it from an old tablecloth. Imagine!

Originally from Appleton, Wisconsin, Kim graduated from the University of Minnesota and proceeded to work in various fields of the garment trade, including design and merchandising.

Kim was a well-traveled woman, as well. Among her visits to other countries were Costa Rica, Mexico, India, France, Japan, Italy, and the Bahamas. From each of these countries, Kim collected small works of art and culture that enhanced the lives of herself, her husband Chandru, and her children Dru and Klay.

And she was a gardener! She could plant anything anywhere and coax it to life. In her apartment in New York City, she had lots of small potted plants on her windowsills, and she always said they reminded her of the gardens she had tended on Beech Plain Road.

Her surviving family lives all around the United States. She is fondly and lovingly remembered by her daughter Klay and son Dru, her two grandchildren, Amira and Esther Conaway, her sister Sherry and her brother Rick, and by lots of other people who just loved her.

I am proud that I am one of those people.

—Maxene Kupperman-Guiñals





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Events at the Library this month

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.

We especially wish to thank Holloway's Appliances in Simsbury, Connecticut and the Johnson's who generously donated a gently-used refrigerator for the Pantry. The gift is very much appreciated!

Also at the Library this month

Thursday, October 22 at 6:00 p.m., the **Sandisfield Women's Book Group** will meet to discuss "The Good Earth" by Pearl S. Buck. The Pulitzer Prize winning novel depicts a Chinese family's life in the village of Anhwei. It is the first novel in Buck's House of Earth trilogy.

Additions to the shelves: Adult fiction

Delusional by James Patterson and James O. Born. Detective Michael Bennett and former army sniper NYPD officer Rob Trilling travel to

Montana to investigate a case that crosses state borders and family lines.

Our Noble Selves by Kate Atkinson. A witty and compelling historical novel set in post-World War II Britain. Set in the summer of 1951, *Our Noble Selves* follows Harry Flynn, a former war correspondent and reporter, as he returns to Britain after a harrowing experience in the Far East, including forced labor on the Burma Railway during the war.

Taipei Story by R.F. Kuang. The novel follows Lily Chen, a college freshman who arrives in Taipei for an intensive language program, expecting connection and belonging. Instead, fraught classes, social missteps, and her grandfather's sudden death propel her into a messy, funny, and aching quest to piece together family truths.

We Chase Shadows by Richard Osman. The Thursday Murder Club takes a breather while Osman's other group of amateur investigators handles its second case. It's a pleasure spending time with Osman's quirky detectives, who are much more capable than they seem. A cozy mystery for a cold fall night!

Exit Party by Emily St. John Mandel. A breathtaking novel of doubles, shadow worlds, and fractured timelines as a man disappears from a glittering Los Angeles party and a woman – a gun runner, an art

collector, an operative of the State – searches for answers.

Under Story by Chloe Benjamin. An epic love story and a sweeping odyssey of scientific discovery by NY Times best-selling author invites us to consider the promise of this life, what might lie beyond it, and how far would we go for more time with the people we love.

And There is more

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

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

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NOW HEAR THIS! OCTOBER EVENTS

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

Oktoberfest on Saturday, October 3 from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m., at Looking Glass Gardens on 19 Dodd Road. Food truck, kids' crafts, live music, \$5 pony rides, hayrides, beer. Sponsored by the Sandisfield Recreation Committee. Please RSVP to recreation@sandisfieldma.gov.

Nazi Town, USA-Chilling Documentary Film by Peter Yost on Saturday, October 3 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road. The film traces the rise and fall of the German American Bund, exposing the fascist threat in 1930s America. Nominated for an Emmy and a Columbia-Dupont Award. Peter will lead a discussion following the film. For tickets, visit sandisfieldartscenter.org. \$10-\$30.

Tractor Pull on Sunday, October 4 from 10:00-2:00 pm., at the American Legion pavilion. Free to enter and free to watch. Burgers, hot dogs, and drinks for purchase. The last pull of the season.

The Thistles Plus One Quartet on Sunday, October 4 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road. Classical and jazz-inspired music. The quartet includes Terry Keevil on oboe and duduk, Lesley Rosenthal on electric violin, Jaye Alison Moscariello with vocals, and Bill Taylor on piano. Clarinetist Gerold Mohn will join the group. For tickets, visit sandisfieldartscenter.org. \$10-\$30.

Flu Clinic on Friday, October 9 from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at the Sandisfield Town Hall on 66 Sandisfield Road. For appointments, call 413-243-5540, ext 2.

Worship Services on Sunday, October 11 and October 25 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.

Family Fotos-Opening Reception on Saturday, October 17 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road. An intimate and raw exploration of "family" in all its possible meanings. This show will close on December 5 (open most weekends 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., or by appointment, contact gallery@sandisfieldartscenter.org). Free.

Noah Baerman and Henry Lugo in Concert on Sunday, October 18 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., at the Sandisfield Arts Center on 5 Hammertown Road. Jazz piano, bass, soulful music. Visit sandisfieldartscenter.org for tickets. \$10-\$30.

RECURRING EVENTS

A Farm and Garden Show with Sandisfield residents Bill Taylor and Jaye Alison Moscariello alternating with Growing Greener show hosted by Sandisfield resident Tom Christopher every Monday from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m., at berkshireradio.org. The past two weeks of the shows are also available on the website. Older shows can be found at touchtheearthmuskc.com.

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

Playgroup on Tuesdays from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., at the Otis Town Hall. Sponsored by South Berkshire Kids. No pre-registration is necessary. Led by Nina Carr. This fun program includes free play, crafts, stories, and songs! A great time to meet up with friends and meet new friends! For confirmation of dates, please call Nina Carr (258-3314). Free!

Coffee Hour on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m., at the Council on Aging, Town Hall. 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, sponsored by the Council on Aging. For more information, contact Nina Carr (258-3314). Free.

Zumba Gold for Seniors on Thursdays through October from 10:00 to 10:45 at the Old Town Hall. Wear comfortable clothing. For more information, call 516-660-0036. Free.



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

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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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