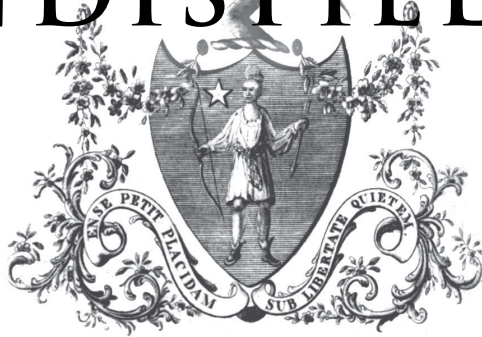


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Volume VIII Number 1

April 2017



Fire on Purpose

For this rare photo, taken at a training exercise at a controlled house burn on New Hartford Road on March 19, nearly all members of the combined volunteer Fire and EMT Departments of Sandisfield, Otis, and Tolland lined up to be acknowledged for their contributions to the three towns. And they complained. "We're supposed to be learning how to put the fire out," they yelled at the photographer, "not getting our picture taken." They were told to shut up and smile, then get back to work. More photos on page 15.

Photo: Dawn Lemon


Brigitte Ruthman: First Place

By Bill Price

Last month *The Times* reported that the New England Newspaper and Press Association (NENPA) had nominated our reporter, Brigitte Ruthman, for an award of excellence for an investigative series she wrote in 2016 for the Republican-American, a major print- and web newspaper covering Waterbury, Torrington, and western Connecticut.

Well, Brigitte won first place. We were not surprised.


The announcement was made at the Awards Banquet in Boston the end of February. Her series, detailing traffic problems on Rt. 8 in Connecticut, won over two other transportation nominees: a report in the Quincy Patriot-Ledger and a team of reporters from the Cape Cod Standard Times.

This was Brigitte's second first-place win. The first was a 2014 report that detailed how repeat drunk driver Fred Weller wrestled free from six convictions until he killed a young woman five years ago on Rt. 7 in Sheffield. He was sentenced in 2013 to 15-18 years behind bars. He's still there. 

Pancake Fundraiser

In early March, fire destroyed the Blandford home of the family of Shelby Andros, a Certified Nursing Assistant at the Bershire Rehabilitation Center in New Boston. The Red Cross has helped the family, as has Katie's Country Store in Otis.


Sandisfield VFW Post 456 is sponsoring a fundraising breakfast and raffle at Firehouse #2 on Rt. 57 for Sunday, April 2, from 8-11 a.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under.

In an email to *The Times*, Shelby expressed her appreciation for the generous support her family has received from local communities. "The generosity amazes us and we cannot thank everyone enough. Though we are going through such a hard time right now our family is staying strong, positive, and is doing well. I was shocked when I heard about the pancake breakfast. I'm incredibly honored to hear that so many of my coworkers and people in the community care so much for our family. We are all so grateful." 

Town Caucus, Coming Up


Below are the names of residents who have returned nomination papers for Town elected positions that will be open this year.

At the Town Caucus on Wednesday, April 5, 7 p.m., at Old Town Hall, Silverbrook Road, candidates can be nominated and voted onto the ballot. Write-in candidates are also permitted at the election, which will be held this year on Monday, May 15, 10 a.m.-8 p.m., at Old Town Hall.

Residents must be registered in order to vote at the Annual Town Meeting on May 13 and at the Annual Town Election May 15. Registration is at Town Hall Annex Monday-Thursday during regular business hours. The last day to register is on April 24 at Town Hall Annex from 2-4 p.m. and from 7-8 p.m. 

Moderator (1 year):	No papers
Town Clerk (3 years):	Dolores Harasyko
Selectman (3 years):	Mark Newman
Auditor (1 year):	No papers
Board of Assessors (3 years):	No papers
Board of Health (3 years):	Victor Hryckvich
Board of Health (1 year):	No papers
Planning Board (5 years):	No papers
Library Trustee (5 years):	Mary Turek
School Committee (3 years):	No papers
School Committee (1 year):	Billie Anderson Pachulski
Constable (3 years):	John Burrows
Constable (3 years):	No papers

Meet the Candidates


The Council on Aging will hold its annual Meet & Greet Town Candidates on Wednesday, April 26, at 12:30 p.m. at the COA Meeting room, downstairs at the Town Hall Annex, Rt. 57. 

Town Election: Voting, in Person or Absentee

Registered voters can cast a ballot in person at Old Town Hall on Monday, May 15, from 10 a.m.-8 p.m., or absentee.

Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko reports that there are three reasons to vote absentee:

1. Absence from Town during normal polling hours
2. Physical disability preventing you from going to the polling place
3. Religious belief.

Absentee ballots will be available three weeks before the election. You will need to fill out a ballot application which can be obtained by writing or calling the Town Clerk's office at 258-4711, ext. 2. Deadline for requesting the ballot is noon, May 11. Once you have filled out the application you can request the ballot be mailed to you and you can return it by mail or you can vote in person at the Clerk's office. 

Broadband Information Session

An update on town-wide broadband services. Your questions answered.

Saturday, April 15, 10 a.m., at Old Town Hall, Silverbrook Road at the intersection with Rt. 57.

Hosted by the Sandisfield Broadband Committee and the Board of Selectmen. 

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Election

Thirteen positions for Town offices are open in the coming election, but only six residents have stepped up to run for any of them. This is the fewest number of Sandisfield residents who are willing to hold a Town office in many years, if not the fewest.

Only one candidate, Mark Newman, is running for the Select Board seat being vacated by Jeff Gray. Jeff has decided not to run again after seven years in office.

Candidates may still be nominated and voted onto the ballot at the Town Caucus on April 5. A couple of residents prefer this route, but there's no guarantee they'll be on the ballot.

Is this an indication of interest in the Town? Or a failure of representative government? Anybody want to run for a Town office?

Our Seventh Anniversary

It's not often that a small newspaper started by eager friends and neighbors lives to reach its 7th year. Stuff happens, nerves fray, tempers heat and people burn out. But not at *The Sandisfield Times*.

Some of our current writers, editors, designers, distributors, and web managers have been present since our beginning in 2010. I've been editor since 2012; my second issue was the report on the Town's 250th anniversary party. Others have joined *The Times* more recently.

Barbara Selvin of the Nieman Foundation of Harvard has written that Sandisfield has "no village green, town center, general store, coffee shop, or diner – few places to hang out and gather local tidings." To a large degree, she wrote, *The Times* has helped fill the role of "town center." Even when the Town eventually gets a new general store or a new town hall or a great place to hang out, *The Times* will still be glad to do what we do.

– Bill Price
West New Boston

Editor's Note: Our readers will be glad to learn that Sandisfield's Poet-in-Residence has recovered from surgery performed at the end of February and, as they say, is back in the saddle. He was out and about the day after the procedure and did not let it impede his regular delivery of The Times to Sandisfield's businesses and public offices. His poem this month is in honor of his surgeon.

Back In The Day (For Clayton Peterson, MD)

Back in the day
When words were long and sacred,
Old men salty and fresh,
When the blue earth was green
And kindness customary,
I would have thanked this young man
With a two-handed handshake
And a couple million dollars.

But all I have is a peaceful abdomen
And a world of winter gratitude.

Val Coleman
New Boston



TOWN NEWS

By Bill Price

"TIMBER" ON THE PIPELINE?

Tennessee Gas Pipeline, the company which proposes widening its right-of-way across the Beech Plain section, is nearing completion of its required agreements with the Sandisfield Conservation Commission.

A special meeting of the Commission has been called for Friday, April 7, 7 p.m., at the basement of the Town Hall Annex, to arrange for construction oversight.

Tree-cutting could begin in April. Company crews have been surveying and marking boundaries since last fall. And the Town has received calls for authorities to attend meetings and make plans regarding possible protesters and public safety issues once tree-cutting and construction begins.

BRIDGE REPAIR

At the special April 7 meeting, the Conservation Commission will also hear from Foresight Land Services, the company hired by the Town to repair the Rt. 57 bridge over the Clam River that has been limited to one lane since July 2015.

TOWN MEETING WARRANT

The Select Board approved the Town Meeting warrant at their meeting the end of March. They will continue to review warrant articles, but the Town is in a positive financial position with just over \$1 million in the stabilization account, more than \$600,000 in free cash, and a lower budget than last year. Following the Town Meeting, the Town will initiate the Capital Improvement Plan, but voters will have the opportunity to vote on a number of capital projects, including a new Highway Department truck (which the Board supports, with amended language to read "new or used"), a police cruiser, and purchase of land for future town use.

Both the Finance and School Committees have requested the creation of Capital Improvement Enterprise Accounts (the Finance Committee for future projects and the School Committee for capital expenses). Neither have as yet requested funding.


BROADBAND CONTINUED ...

The Town will receive a \$1.2 million grant from Massachusetts Broadband Institute whether the Town proceeds with Frontier Communications, as now planned, or if the Town builds its own network. With Frontier, the fund can be used

to offset a portion of the 15-year fee of about \$250,000 per year. According to Alice Boyd, the cost to the Town of building its own network would be much higher than using Frontier, and the Town would have to pay bonding costs as well.

Alice wrote: "If our plans with Frontier come to fruition, our goal is to keep costs reasonable so that low- to moderate-income households can afford to have internet and the Town does not incur debt for bonding. Personally, I now pay about \$45 per month for a phone. The proposal is that my costs will be \$30 a month, for phone and internet."

SOMETIMES IT DOESN'T WORK ...

Last fall, Sandisfield and Monterey decided to share Town Administrators and Treasurers. After all, the two employees work "part-time" in each town and the jobs must be fairly similar. Things didn't work out in Monterey. After only a few months Administrator Willie Morales' hours were increased in Sandisfield, and now he and Treasurer Terry Spohnholz are back on the job at home focusing all their working attention here. 



Broadband: At the Cost of Direct Democracy — and Neighborly Respect?

By Hilde Weisert

Despite the title, I think Alice Boyd's March "Rebuttal" misses the point of Jean Atwater-Williams' "Town Ready to Commit \$Millions to Private Broadband Company?"

As I read it, Atwater-Williams is simply asking why the current process could not have included the town's "express consent" through open hearings followed by a town meeting and vote similar to that we had in May 2014. That process was an example of our town's long tradition of direct democracy, where each citizen has the opportunity to vote on even small matters. According to Boyd, this kind of open process was not possible due to the constraints of the Municipal Light Plan Request for Proposal (MLP-RFP) process, where bids must be reviewed and negotiations conducted in secret.

Boyd writes at length about the legality of the MLP RFP process, but undercuts her own attempt to elucidate only facts when she veers into mind-reading and innuendo. How does she know that Atwater-Williams' mention that Otis

Woodlands would be excluded is "intentionally misleading?"

Most troubling in this extravagantly "FACT:" based piece, though, is Boyd's saying, "One would have to question the motivation of Ms. Atwater-Williams in writing her article." Really, would one? Sadly, Boyd did.

I don't, nor would most others who know Jean Atwater-Williams' almost boring integrity and years of tireless dedication to bringing broadband to Sandisfield when there were no profit-making alternatives and the MBI was throwing up obstacle after obstacle. To imply that "Some Wired West members have publically stated that they deserve a paying job for all their invested time" is that motivation — to imply that our neighbor and sister citizen Jean Atwater-Williams is that unnamed "some" — strays far from the ostensibly "FACT"-ual focus into unneighborly and unbecoming waters. I'd have more confidence in this article if that gratuitous paragraph had been omitted.


Finally, as someone who's worked for two decades in telecommunications (Cisco and now Dell EMC) and suffered the costs and depredations of our town's lack of broadband, I'm as eager as anyone to get real broadband ASAP. But what I hope Boyd understands is that asking questions about the process is not the same as questioning that the people involved have worked diligently and in what they believe represents the town's best interests.

The RFP non-pricing criteria appear thorough and well thought-out. Would those criteria have been better if fully aired in advance with the citizens? Perhaps not, but we'll never know.

I can't help but contrast the many explanatory meetings and slide shows from WiredWest leading up to the May 2014 town meeting and affirmative vote with the current process. I don't see that a 400-page online document or verbal

reports at routine Select Board meetings is a substitute. According to Boyd, the MLP RFP process we have embarked on has inherent constraints on sharing information and soliciting town input. Even if true, this is too bad in a town that has long prided itself on direct democracy for even the smallest decisions. As Atwater-Williams wrote, maybe the plan under consideration now is best, but we must recognize the crucial difference that it turns the decision into one for the SelectBoard/MLP Board rather than the direct, express vote of the town.

At the March 13 Select Board meeting, Boyd stated that they were "at the beginning of the process." If so, why the rush to sever ties with WiredWest, especially with many people in attendance asking to hold off on that action? What does "at the beginning" even mean when a vendor has been selected?

On April 15, there will be an opportunity for public comment on whatever the Select Board — technically the MLP Board, but the same individuals — has worked out in their private meetings with Frontier. Probably they are great negotiators and deal-makers, but the reality is that whatever the public comment is, it will be they who consent, and we who only, in this system, advise. 

Out on a Limb: an op-ed

Subject should be interesting to most of us and have a strong link to Sandisfield, written by and for Town residents. The Times does not accept Out on a Limb contributions submitted anonymously, but if the author identifies him or herself to the editor and asks not to be named in the article we may agree to withhold the author's name on a case-by-case basis.

Send to Editor, Sandisfield Times, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or by email to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org.



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Broadband Decisions Being Made

By Bill Price

Sandisfield's pursuit of broadband internet service seems closer to a resolution.

An information session will be held Saturday, April 15, at 10:00 a.m. at Old Town Hall. The Select Board, which has chosen Frontier Communications as the broadband provider, will report on negotiations with Frontier and answer questions from residents.

If the end result is that all residents have access to broadband internet at the lowest possible cost – and risk – to users and the Town, the process and the hard work of getting there will have been worth the effort. It been a long, complicated road. Residents with the interest and time can review the 444-page Broadband Procurement Process or an 11-page slide presentation, Sandisfield Broadband Options, both at www.sandisfield.gov.

While negotiations and discussions are continuing with Frontier, however, disagreements and arguments still exist within the Town.

These were apparent at the Select Board meeting March 13, which was held at Old Town Hall to accommodate an expected larger-than-usual audience (more than thirty residents attended).

As most readers know, Sandisfield has joined with New Marlborough, Monterey, and Tolland to form a four-town coalition to bring internet to residents. In January, the coalition issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an internet provider.

The Sandisfield Select Board has the authority to issue an RFP and respond to bidders due to its designation as the Town's Municipal Light Plant (MLP). MLPs were originally set up by the state to provide electricity and gas oversight to a town; their reach has been extended to internet services. In Sandisfield, as in other small towns, the Board of Selectmen is often designated MLP.

At the March 13 meeting, two items relating to broadband were on the agenda: the Select Board would announce which bidder received the award and vote to resign from WiredWest.

Of three RFP bids received, the Select Board judged the bid by telecommunications giant Frontier Communications as the most responsive and the one most likely to successfully carry the work to completion. The Board, in effect, awarded Frontier the contract, subject to negotiations involving the four-town coalition.

Several residents at the meeting held that a better choice would have been for the Town to have built and owned its own broadband system. To do that, it was pointed out, the Town could have

worked with WiredWest, the municipal cooperative that for the last six years has worked to bring high-speed internet service to Berkshire County. There was concern, as well, that the Town intended to contract for broadband with a private for-profit provider without public comment or voter approval.

These issues were debated in detail in last month in *The Times* in an article by Jean Atwater-Williams, the Town's former representative to WiredWest, and a rebuttal by Alice Boyd, Select Board chairman (see pages 4-5 of the March *Sandisfield Times*).

At the Select Board meeting, Boyd responded that the Board will proceed with Frontier. The Board and the Town's Broadband Committee did not feel the Town had the capacity to build and maintain its own system and that doing so would be more expensive than hiring a professional provider.

Atwater-Williams insisted that in 2015 the Town had voted to own its internet system and that a second referendum should be provided.

Boyd said that RFP procedures included requirements that precluded time for a separate vote. As reported in *The Berkshire Edge* on March 4, she said that the process had been "transparent through Select Board announcements" and that a public session would be held. The public session is the information meeting scheduled for April 15, mentioned at the beginning of this report.

The Board brought up the issue of withdrawing from participation in the WiredWest cooperative. Some in attendance wondered why withdrawal was necessary. Boyd felt that the town's continued association with WiredWest caused confusion since the Town was still listed as a member of the co-op. Select Board member John Skrip suggested


that the Town's negotiating position with Frontier might be improved if the company wasn't worried that the coalition was considering alternatives.

It was pointed out that WiredWest had offered to review its most-recent plan with the Board and the Broadband Committee but had been refused. In a later e-mail, Atwater-Williams wrote that the current WiredWest plan would remove most of the burden and expense of operating the network from the Town and might return income to the Town, making the cost closer to that of the Frontier proposal – and that the Town would own the infrastructure.

In the audience WiredWest's Executive Committee Chairman, Jim Drawe, announced that should Sandisfield at some point wish to return to the cooperative, the Town would be welcomed back. The Board (with Boyd and Skrip present, but Jeff Gray absent) voted to resign from the cooperative, with appreciation for the work WiredWest has done.

Since the March 13 meeting, the four-town coalition has engaged in discussions with the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (the state entity that provides oversight regarding broadband issues), with Frontier, and with the three other towns in the coalition.

In an e-mail, Boyd said, "MBI and the Governor's office are officially in full support of the Frontier solution. Each town has submitted their negotiating points and we're getting them together for our attorney. One person from each town will be on the negotiating committee to meet with Frontier. Our hope is to have negotiations finalized by early May."

Residents with questions should be in contact with Select Board members and attend the information session April 15 at Old Town Hall. 

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What's Up with Sandisfield Jewish History Book Project?

By Sandy Parisky

The Jewish History Book Committee is looking to the community for participation and involvement in their work to produce a book that will tell the untold story of the Jewish colony that settled in Sandisfield over a century ago.

In the coming months, Lorraine German and other committee members will be at three special events at the Arts Center in order to allow people opportunities to learn more about the book and ways they can help.

- The Arts Center's Spring Benefit Dinner and Auction on April 29 at 6 p.m.
- The Robert Bielski lecture and film on June 3 at 4 p.m.
- And a special presentation by the book's author, Lorraine German, on August 23 at 11 a.m.

In addition, Joanne Olson, Ron Bernard, Sandy and Flora Parisky, and Lorraine German are working collaboratively with the Arts Center to apply for grant funds for the book's forthcoming publication in 2018. For further information and to support the book project email: info@sandisfieldartscenter.org.

Xiew from the Arts Center Coming This Spring

By Susie Crofut and Sandy Parisky,
Co-Presidents

The Sandisfield Arts Center kicks off its 2017 season on Saturday, April 29th, with one of the highlights of the season, our Annual Spring Dinner & Benefit Auction. This year our theme is "Berkshire Borscht Belt – Catskills in Sandisfield." A fun evening to support the Arts Center with friends old and new.

Our host for the event will be the actress and comedienne **Rachel Siegel**. She will bring her own original sketches highlighting stories from our building's unique history as a former synagogue. There will be cocktails and a delicious dinner served by our very own chef, Adam Manacher.

You'll also get a sneak preview of the Sandisfield Jewish History book project, have an opportunity to support upcoming arts center improvement projects, and take a chance to win some truly fabulous prizes in our exclusive raffle. Join the fun! Tickets for the fundraiser are \$75. Advance purchase is required, and can be ordered online at sandisfieldartscenter.org, through April 25.

OTHER SPRING EVENTS

GALLERY OPENING for Peter Ganick
Sunday, April 30, 2-4 p.m.

ANNI CROFUT'S much-loved
FAMILY CABARET
Saturday, May 6, 7 p.m.

"WHAT I FORGOT ... And why I remembered."
Saturday, May 13, 10:30 a.m.-noon
A Journey to Environmental Awareness
and Activism Through Purposeful
Memoir. Jennifer Browdy of the Berkshire
Festival of Women Writers.

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Leave My Ramps in the Ground, Please

By Tom Christopher

Sandisfield is a generous community, but one thing residents do not share is the location of their secret patches of ramps.

Ramps, or *Allium tricoccum* as they are known botanically, are wild relatives of onions, sort of a culinary cross between scallions and garlic. Ramps are among the first woodland plants to sprout in spring.

Foraging for ramps is a seasonal tradition among the residents of western Massachusetts; you can find ramps for sale in high-end markets (at fancy prices) and restaurants, but they taste much better if you gather them yourself. With their broad leaves and rich aroma, they are easily identified – you'll find them greening the forest floor when little else is out.

If you do find them, though, don't tell where. The quest, after all, is part of their mystique.

Besides, if you share the location of your patch, you are likely to return and find it gone. Over-zealous picking has caused a crash in ramp populations in many regions and has led to bans on their harvest in several national parks, as well as the whole province of Quebec.

In part, the popular means of harvesting is the problem: this involves digging and taking the whole plant, bulb and all. When the plants are treated this way, those who study ramps recommend taking no more than one-tenth of any given patch, and not returning to the same colony for ten years.

Personally, I don't dig. I have found I can secure a sufficient supply by picking just a succulent leaf or two from each clump and leaving the rest of the plants intact.


What do I do with these leaves? I fry them and mix them with scrambled eggs or blanch them and then puree them in a blender with parmesan cheese and olive oil to make a sort of spring pesto for pastas. I've also mixed their purée with arborio rice to make a savory, emerald green risotto.

Brigitte Ruthman of Joshua's Farm on Dodd Road tells me that she cooks them, bulbs and leaves, with venison to make a sort of garlicky stew. Brigitte added that if she ever has the opportunity to select a last meal, she will ask for her venison stew with ramps.

Where do you hunt for ramps? In deciduous woodlands, where they commonly grow beneath beech, yellow birch, sugar maple and black cherry trees on north to north-east facing slopes with damp, well drained, organic soils. Ramps will also grow on south or west-facing slopes as long as the soil remains moist through their spring growing season.

Look for them just after the maple-sugaring season, typically in early April; as the overhanging trees' leaves expand and block the sunlight, the ramps retreat back underground to remain dormant until the following spring.

If you don't feel like making an expedition to the woods, you can find ramps for sale, when in season, at Guido's Fresh Marketplace in Great Barrington and on the menu at John Andrews' Farmhouse Restaurant in South Egremont.

However you manage it, you shouldn't miss this special taste of spring. Just so long as you don't come picking in my patch. 



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exploring
environmental memoir
with jennifer browdy



The Librarian's Corner

By Theresa Spohnholz

No matter how chaotic it is, wildflowers will still spring up in the middle of nowhere.

Sheryl Crow

Of course, as I write this – it does not even look spring-like. It's cold, and there is lots of that white stuff hanging around with not a wildflower in sight. That could be why I've started buying fresh flowers, inhale their aroma, close my eyes, and pretend spring is here.

It is also why I keep hoping the two feet of snow drift on the back porch goes away by virtue of melting. Kind of like the evil witch in the "Wizard of Oz." So far it is working by inches – painstakingly slow inches. And at the library the furnace churns away and the temperature is a balmy 73 degrees – hot to some, just right for me.

Although flowers have not made their appearance yet, great new books have come through the door. They arrive via Gene English and his warm smiles as he piles them on the table and I try not to salivate too much. The fresh smell of new books can do that to me. It is an addiction – I admit it completely.

Bookstores and the books shelves of used goods stores entice me inside. There is no denying the need to finger a book, caress its covers and then attempt to put it down and walk away.

So, that being said, walk or drive to the library, come inside, and check out these gems

Aprils Book "Flowers"....

Moonglow by Michael Chabon. The keeping of secrets and the telling of lies all feature in the new novel from the author of *The Amazing Adventures*

of Kavalier & Clay and *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*.

A Twist of the Knife by Becky Masterman. Edgar-finalist Masterman presents a compassionate, clear-eyed depiction of the painful foibles of human nature in her chilling, twist-filled third novel

Vicious Circle by C. J. Box. The past comes back to haunt game warden Joe Pickett and his family with devastating consequences.

The Devil's Triangle by Catherine Coulter. Part of the Brit in the FBI series featuring special agents Nicholas Drummond and Michaela Caine in their new roles as heads of the Covert Eyes team.

The Cutthroat by Clive Cussler. Turn-of-the-century detective Isaac Bell follows a trail of bodies to a cold-blooded villain in this historical adventure thriller.

The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane by Lisa See. A powerful story of two women separated by circumstance, culture and distance – and the enduring connection between mothers and daughters.

The Revolver by Duane Swierczynski. Three generations torn about by bullets fired fifty years ago.

*For man, as for flower and beast and bird,
the supreme triumph is to be most vividly,
most perfectly alive.*

D.H. Lawrence

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My First Hijab

By Suzanne O'Connell

Wearing a hijab says in no uncertain terms that I am a Muslim woman. But I'm not.

What I am is a woman who believes that the restricting immigration and travel of people from six predominantly Muslim countries into the United States is not only unlawful, but morally wrong. I want my stance known and to bring this shameful ban to everyone's attention until it is repealed. So I've begun wearing a hijab.

I'm a geologist, not a lawyer, so I can't help with visas and other legal documents. However, I do have an incredible luxury: job security. As a tenured university professor, as long as I do my job (teaching and research) and don't break any laws, it would be tough to fire me. Today there is no law against wearing a hijab in the United States.

So how do I, an old, white, formerly Catholic, woman, the grandchild of immigrants, respond to Trump's presidential immigration order? By wearing a hijab, today and every day, until the presidential ban on arrivals to the U.S. of all refugees and citizens from seven mostly Muslim nations is repealed.

My hijab hides my beautiful white hair, a point of vanity, but as I wear it I think of all of the wonderful Muslim students I have taught and their families.

Your family might go back to the pioneer days of Sandisfield, but you still immigrated. When humans arrived in North America is controversial, but even native people immigrated to this continent. We are all immigrants.

Disliking immigrants isn't new to America. My father-in-law in New Haven was told his Irish girlfriend would never be accepted into their family. He didn't marry her. My Irish grandparents and their children, my aunts and uncles, weren't so welcome in Boston. They used to talk about NINA (No Irish Need Apply) signs in shop windows. Those signs had disappeared by the time my sisters and I sought jobs.

In my past travels in Muslim countries, especially Indonesia, I was struck by the colorful beauty and variety of hijabs. The elegant crown of color on the heads of these women made them seem taller and part of a sisterhood. But I wasn't one of them. I wore a floppy straw hat, and they tolerated, even welcomed me. On some of the less visited islands of Indonesia, men and women would approach, wanting to have a picture taken with me. I wonder if I would have been such a celebrity if I'd been wearing a beautiful hijab. Maybe they couldn't believe someone would wear something so ridiculous as my hat.


Now I am wearing a hijab. To learn how, I turned to Google, not much help. Fortunately, my university has an imam. I requested his assistance and his wife was happy to help. From her, I learned two secrets: an underscarf and safety pins.

You've probably seen the tight band near a hijab on a woman's head. I never looked closely. Somehow I thought that was part of the scarf and tying it correctly. It's not. It's a separate garment and can take many different forms. As a novice, I think it is the critical piece of attire since it keeps stray hair from crossing your face. My underscarf is a tie-back

bonnet of rough, non-slip material which holds my silk scarves in place so that I can wear most of my large ones as a head scarf.

Then there are pins. Mine are less than an inch long and gold colored. One keeps the scarf or hijab under my chin and the other keeps the whole outfit together. Depending upon what I'm wearing, I can even pin the hijab to my shirt or blouse so that it doesn't slip around. Pins can also be used on the side of the face or other locations necessary to keep the fabric in place.

I've been wearing my hijab and underscarf for days now and the only people that appear surprised and comment are my friends. At a recent party on Dodd Road, they asked if I was okay and then mentioned cancer. But at a restaurant or bar, walking down the street, no one pays attention.

And no one should pay attention. But I am surprised and pleased. My choice of religion or my desire to support someone else's religion is something every American should also support. In solidarity with Muslim women and their families, I hope we can all drape our heads with beautiful scarfs and underscarfs starting today and continue wearing them until the ban is rightfully lifted. 

Out on a Limb: an op-ed

Subject should be interesting to most of us and have a strong link to Sandisfield, written by and for Town residents. The Times does not accept Out on a Limb contributions submitted anonymously, but if the author identifies him or herself to the editor and asks not to be named in the article we may agree to withhold the author's name on a case-by-case basis.

Send to Editor, Sandisfield Times, P.O. Box 584, Sandisfield, MA 01255 or by email to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org.

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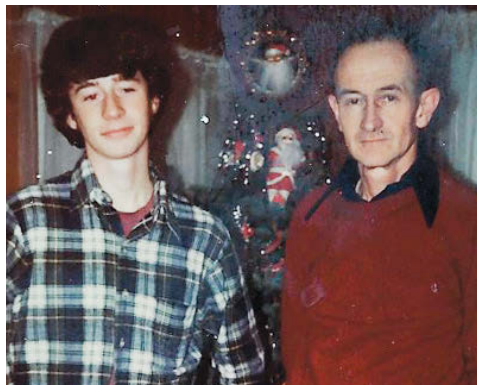
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A Clarification: From David Wilber, Life Saver

The Times recently received a letter offering a different recollection of a near drowning at Spectacle Pond from a story we published last month. A retired Marine living in North Carolina, David Wilber is a native son of Sandisfield, having been born here and attending school at the former "New School," now the Town Hall Annex. Wilber Park in New Boston is named for David's father, Sam Wilber, Jr., a long-time police chief, selectman, and town booster. A profile of Sam will appear in the May issue of The Times. David wrote:



David Wilber with his father, Sam, Christmas 1974, the week David left for Marine boot camp.

Photos: David Wilber

I get *The Sandisfield Times* e-mailed to me monthly, and I enjoy reading it. In the March issue, I came across the article about Spectacle Pond which stated there was a near drowning in 1973 and how "Thelma Esteves, long-time resident of Beech Plain Road, was passing by and noticed a young man, a visitor from New York, in some distress. She helped him out of the water averting a possible tragedy."

Yes, there was a near drowning in July of 1973, and yes, the man was from New York, but Thelma didn't quite help him out of the water. Instead, she may have been the lady who tried to throw something out to us or the one who called the Otis rescue squad to report a possible double drowning in progress.

If she was, I for one am eternally grateful because I was there at the time in the water saving that man from New York.

The man in question was named Phillip Patterson. Most of the kids in town at the time knew him as "Fungas." Ask Ralph or Mike Morrison; they will remember him. He stayed in "The Old Stone House" next to the bridge in New Boston that summer. Fungas said he could swim and wanted to go someplace to cool off so I said let's go up to Spectacle Pond, it's got a raft and it's fun to jump off of and so I drove us both up there. I swam out to the raft and waited for him to make it out there. Now at the time I was a strapping 5'6" and 120 pounds soaking wet, and Fungas was all of 6'3" and 175-180.

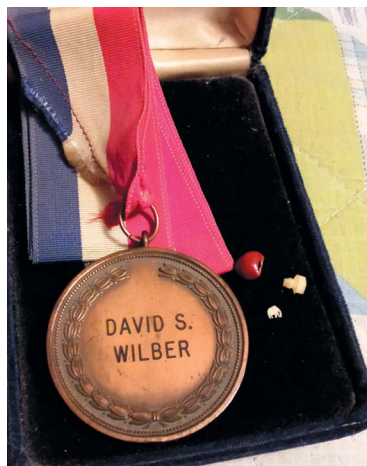
Well, things didn't go as planned. Fungas's idea of "I can swim" amounted to "I can swim in the shallow end of a pool where I can put my feet on the bottom when I get tired," and not "I can swim in 15 feet of water."

That's where the panic set in, half-way to the raft. I'm sure anyone old enough will remember the raft about 50 or 60 foot off-shore in the cove.

Well, Fungas panics. He later told me he didn't know what scared him more, drowning or the look on my face when I realized he was in real trouble.

I guess the lady on shore could have been Miss Esteves, I don't know cause I never met her, said she tried to throw something out to us but I never saw it, I was too busy trying not to drown myself.

What I do remember is this: Fungas was swimming out to the raft, he then realized he couldn't swim as well as he thought he could, he panics, looks at me, I get this Oh God No this is not happening look and he panics even more,



Front and back of the medal David Wilber was awarded in 1974 by the Town of Sandisfield.

and then goes under. I immediately God knows why jump in to save him.

I could barely swim myself, nevertheless try to save someone twice my size, but he was there and needed saving so I went for it. I can't remember how many times he took me under before I managed to get him to the raft but it was a lot.

I managed to hold on to the raft with my arms and still keep his head above water while I held on to him with my legs. I don't know how long we were there before the Otis rescue squad made it out to the raft and pulled us both onto it. I know it's several miles from Otis so it must have been a while.

All I remember after jumping in and Fungas taking me down over and over is someone grabbing my arms and pulling us both up at the same time. I kind of had a death grip on the raft and Fungas both so we came up together.

I remember saying to the guys who pulled me up that I was going to swim back to shore and being told in no uncertain terms that that was not going to happen and they put both of us in the boat and rowed us back to shore.

They had to take Phillip in the ambulance to Dr. Erby's to get checked out. He was totally out cold, still breathing but out cold. Dr. Erby said he would be OK, just overwhelmed. They transported him back to "The Old Stone House" and put him to bed.

I have enclosed a picture of the front and back of the award I was given at a Sandisfield block party down at Campetti flats in the summer of 1974 for saving Philip Patterson, "Fungas."

The little seed in the picture is what Philip sent me for saving his life. It is one of my most cherished possessions. It's an Elephant seed. Legend has it that if you plant it in the ground 100 years later an elephant will emerge. I never was much on farming so I never planted it and I have had it for going on 42 years now.

If Ms. Esteves was the lady who called the rescue squad, by all accounts yes she is a hero too, my hero, and deserves recognition, because I really don't know how much longer I could have held on to that raft. If she was the one who called, she did save a man from New York in a big way, but she also saved a native son of Sandisfield, me.

So from me – and I know Fungas would feel the same way – she deserves a thank you from the bottom of my heart and I hope you can pass that along to her, as well as my phone number so I can thank her myself. Never got to do that years ago. You don't think to do things when you're young. 🇺🇸

*David Wilber
CWO3 USMC Ret
Jacksonville, NC
910-347-7277*



A New Heart for Our Town?

By Simon Winchester

We need to begin a conversation about the Silverbrook Café. Or store. Or bar. Or whatever we want it to be.

For it sits there, silent and empty, slowly decaying at the lower junction of Silverbrook and Sandisfield Roads, echoing with memories – when it should by rights be bright and vibrant and noisy, the social center of our town.

And it could be that social center if only we, together, make the effort to make it so

That is the conversation I'd like us to have. How to bring the old place back to life, and give our town a heart, once again.

The Silverbrook, with its bar and kitchen and two small apartments on its upper floors, is owned today by the institution that once held its mortgage, TD Bank; and like most banks encumbered by the brick and mortar (or in this case, lath and plaster) legacies of financial misfortune, Toronto Dominion doesn't much want it.

Chapin Fish, our town's best-informed realtor, reckons that with good haggling skills someone could take possession of it for the price of a decent car, a five-figure sum.

Merely buying the property would only be the start of a pretty major cash cascade, however. The bones of the building are in reasonably fair shape; the septic system is up to standard and the kitchen is in surprisingly good condition. A new well might have to be drilled though; and the cosmetics are going to have to be lavishly and comprehensively reapplied to turn one of the less-attractive building in town into a place of charm and history, someplace we'd like to visit and show off to visitors. The total spending of quarter of a million dollars, those in the know suggest, could hand us a structure we'd be proud of, and in which a trinity of tenants would be happy to live.

Absent a fairy godfather who might sweep up from Some Big City and take the very significant risk of owning the Silverbrook personally – and there are candidates in town who could do this



Photo: Bill Price

and, if you happen to be reading this, you know who you are (and so do we) – we have only one realistic option.

We could start a cooperative.


So please here Behold! in theory, The Sandisfield Cooperative Food, Beverage & Supply Company.

This Co-op, easy to establish and incorporate, could own, operate, pay taxes on, and perhaps in time even reap the profits from the general store and bakery I have in mind for this oh-so-central and oh-so-very Sandisfield site. Among us early subscribing members of the Co-op, we could surely raise the price-of- a-small-car sum that Chapin Fish believes would persuade TD to let the property go; and we could then surely raise the additionally needed funds by way of a bank loan – at still affordable rates, remember – to bring the old building up to snuff.

After which we could employ the one or two people who would work behind the counter – dispensing the morning coffee and the baked goods and selling the milk and newspapers and aspirin that we currently drive down to Winsted or over to Barrington to buy. We have ideas already for a

pair of ladies who very much want the job – and now that it seems more likely that we soon will have broadband here – hurrah!, maybe – one of the pair who runs an evening mail-order business will be able to do so once the store has closed, so is very happy with the prospect.

It was Karen Allen's wondrous short black-and-white film – *A Tree. A Rock. A Cloud* – that first prompted this thought that we ought at the very least to begin a conversation. That so amiable and eloquent a little movie, based on the Carson McCullers short story, should have been filmed in summertime Sandisfield, and at the empty and echoing Silverbrook Café no less, reminded me what a treasure of a place we have here. And of how the Café could still become a lively, noisy, useful, and fun place, a new beating heart of our community.

So if you think a cooperative is a good idea – write to the paper, please, or call me (I'm in the book). If we all pull together it could very well happen. The Silverbrook Café could open for business – and all of us, and most of all our town, with luck and fair winds, would benefit enormously for many years to come. 



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News From the PTA

At Farmington River Elementary School, we celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday and Read Across America on March 2.

Kathy Couch and Aimee Magovern worked with 4th-grade teacher Bethany Mielke to arrange reading buddies between the upper and lower grades. Students received a Dr. Seuss goody bag from the PTA with pens, pencils, and notepads, and teachers enjoyed special Dr. Seuss treats.



Our Cash Calendar drawings will continue until April 3. We are awarding a total of \$4,675 over 36 days and are pleased to report that, for the second year in a row, we have reached a new high in sales of Cash Calendars – \$14,120. Thanks to all of the families, students, and staff who helped us fill our bank account for next year. Top sellers were:

Cole Kennedy - \$1,810
Connor Lewis - \$1,600
Landon Havens - \$830
Megan DeCelle - \$830

The classroom with the highest average sales per student: Mrs. Martin's 2nd grade – \$4,860 in sales with an average of \$304 per student. Mrs. Hamill and Mrs. Martin were the staff members with the highest sales at \$330 and \$250.

A special thank you to Sherry DeCelle and Dawn Lemon for leading the charge on the Cash Calendars, to Mrs. Packie for facilitating distribution and collection, and to KwikPrint in Great Barrington for producing the calendars cost effectively. We appreciate the generosity and support of all, especially our more than 35 commercial donors.

Fifth-grader Avery Carr buddied with Madison Nelson, a kindergartner, in reading "The Cat in the Hat."

Photo: Aimee Magovern

College Scholarship Applications Open

**DEADLINE:
POSTMARK OF APRIL 20**

By Laura Rogers-Castro

The Sandisfield Scholarship Fund Committee is accepting applications for this year's student awards.

Scholarship funds are a form of financial aid to help students pay for their education. Unlike student loans, scholarships do not have to be repaid. The amount of scholarship aid ranges from \$350 to \$500, depending on the amount the committee has raised through fundraising events and donations.

The requirements for the scholarship include at least one year residency in Sandisfield. Preferred applicants are students who have conducted some type of community service activity in Sandisfield. Activities can include assisting with the Fireman's Steak Roast, helping out at the Sandisfield Christmas Fair, providing volunteer service during a Sandisfield Historical Society event, or any other activity of involvement in town.

The Committee is also seeking donations for sponsorships for scholarships. Any amount is appreciated.

If you would like a scholarship application (applications must be postmarked by April 20) or would like to make a donation, please contact Laura Rogers-Castro, 258-4688 or PO Box 372, Sandisfield 01255. Checks should be written to the "Sandisfield Scholarship Fund."

A New View of Easter

Everyone is welcome to celebrate Easter Sunday on April 16 at 10:00 at the historic New Boston Congregational Church ("The Little Brown Church" on Sandisfield Road near the New Boston Inn).

Pastor Toby Quirk's message, "A New View of Easter," will be a personal retelling of the classic story of this holiday. An author, speaker, and ordained minister in the Assemblies of God, Pastor Quirk is also a retired U.S. Army infantry officer and fire chaplain.

Easter is a celebration of new life. The trees will be budding, bulbs will be popping up from the soil, and our days longer than our nights. Pastor Quirk urges all to join in "this marvelous opportunity to open the eyes of our hearts to the spiritual reality of new life."



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Fire/EMS/Police Logs

Fire:

February, 2017

Smoke detector activation,
no fire, unintentional. 1



EMS:

February, 2017

EMS calls, excluding vehicle
accident with injury. 4



Police:

911 Calls by Sandisfield Residents

Submitted by Michael Morrison, Chief

February 2017

Feb 2 Citizen assist, Sandisfield Road
Feb 5 Burglar alarm, Gremler Road
Feb 5 Noise complaint/loud explosion,
West Street



Feb 5 Animal call, York Lake
Feb 7 Medical assist, Section 12,
Sandisfield Road
Feb 7 Road conditions, Sandisfield Road
Feb 7 Road conditions, Cold Spring Road
Feb 7 Well-being check, West Street
Feb 7 Medical call, Sandisfield Road
Feb 7 Well-being check, West Street
Feb 10 Citizen assist/medical, Dodd Road
Feb 14 Medical call, Sandybrook Turnpike
Feb 15 Medical call, Tolland
Feb 16 Erratic motor vehicle operation,
Sandisfield Road
Feb 18 Medical call, Tolland
Feb 18 Noise complaint,
South Beech Plain Road
Feb 25 House alarm, New Hartford Road
Feb 25 Well-being check,
South Beech Plain Road
Feb 26 Fire alarm, South Beech Plain Road

Winter Snowfall and Extreme Temperature 2016-2017



Snow, as measured/estimated in inches at a
Beech Plain back-yard weather station

Oct 2016. 5.0 inches
Nov 2016 19.5 inches
Dec 2016 22.0 inches
-4F low temp
Jan 2017 18.0 inches
2F low temp
Feb 2017 18.0 inches
2F low temp
Mar 4 0.5 inches
Mar 5 -1F low temp
Mar 10 1.5 inches
Mar 14 16.5 blizzard
Mar 18 0.5 inches
Mar 2017 19.0 inches
Total Season 101.5 inches

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OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

The film shot here last summer, **A Tree. A Rock. A Cloud.**, won first place as the Best International Short Film at the Manchester Film Festival, England.

On March 25, **Settsuko Sato Winchester** of Silverbrook Road made a presentation about her "Yellow Bowl Project" at the Norman Rockwell Museum. The project honors the 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry who were forced into camps across the U.S. during World War II.

Miriam Karmel of River Road won Holy Cow! Press's First Fiction award for a collection of short stories. Her book, *Subtle Variations and Other Stories*, will be published in October.

Two properties recently changed ownership. **William Stoltz** sold 29 Dodd Road to **Trenton Zanow** and **Linda Destefano** sold 12 Tannery Road to **Robert A. Maryks**.

Welcome to our new advertisers – **New Boston Inn** and **Farmington River Diner** – and welcome back to **Snow Farm** for its 2017 season. 🍷

Wanted: Hero Carpenters

By Dawn Lemon

Say you're working at a computer at the Town Hall Annex one spring day and the sun is beaming through the big windows. Or you're tightening bolts inside the Highway Department breathing the rich odors of diesel fuel – and just outside the garage doors the air is fresh and spring busting out all over.

Wouldn't it be nice to be able to go outside on a break or at lunchtime and have a coffee or break open your lunchbox?

The Town of Sandisfield is asking for a donation of picnic tables, maybe two of them, where Town employees could do just that. At least one at the Town Hall Annex and a second, just to be generous, at the Highway Department.

Are there two or three volunteer carpenters ready and willing to cut and assemble a couple picnic tables? Call me at 258-4711 to make sure we don't get too many. Right now we don't have any and could sure use them as winter turns into spring. 🍷

Sandisfield Historical Society



Ann Wald to be New President

By John Kuzmecz

Although the Sandisfield Historical Society is officially in an inactive status, the three-member decision board has continued to discuss the future of the organization. The board consists of Treasurer Barry Freedman, Secretary Viki Bakunis, and myself as President.

We're pleased to announce that long-time Sandisfield resident, Ann Wald, has volunteered to serve as President. Ann has spoken to a lot of our regular members and knows what it means to accept the responsibility. She stepped forward she said because she hated the idea of this local 50-year-old group closing its doors.

All interested people are invited to a meeting Saturday, April 8, at 11 a.m., at the Historical Society building on Sandy Brook Turnpike at South Sandisfield Road, to vote on Ann as president, six advisory board members, plus a new vice president and historian. The treasurer and secretary are staying in place.

The Society leadership consists of six Advisors at Large who, with five officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Historian), constitute the advisory board. The advisory board makes recommendations for action to the membership. Elections to these eleven positions ideally should be every August, but we need the help now and will vote as many people in as we can at our April 8 meeting.

The advisors are particularly important with a new president. Ann cannot do this alone. While we are eager to install her as President, new members will be the lifeblood of the institution. We welcome all others who would like to help rebuild this group. Fresh ideas are welcome. The Society doesn't have to do things the way they've always been done.

Thus our community meeting in April. Suggestions and questions are welcome. You can reach me at 258-4906.

After the meeting, we'll share a potluck lunch at the building. 🍷

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Fire on Purpose

By Bill Price

Photos: Dawn Lemon and Ron Bernard

As a training exercise, the combined Fire and EMT Departments of Sandisfield, Otis, and Tolland recently set fire to and burned down the former Joe Zeller place on New Hartford Road. Nearly forty members of the three departments took part in the controlled burn, learning new things about how fires start, spread, and eventually consume a 60-year-old building.

Fire Chief Ralph Morrison is still looking for a few more volunteers for the Sandisfield Fire Department and the EMT team. "You don't have to be able to pull a firehose or lift people," he said. "We've got jobs for everyone, and all residents are potential volunteers."

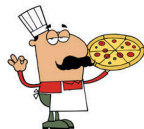
He also asks for additional donations to continue work on the former American Legion building in New Boston that his teams are rehabbing as a training center and community space. With the interior nearly finished, Ralph said he could use another \$10,000 to complete the work. To make tax-deductible contributions, please call Chief Morrison at 258-4742 or send to Sandisfield Fire Department, PO Box 22, Sandisfield MA 01255.



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Comings



AMOS DAVID BROWN

Amos David Brown of Sandisfield was born February 23 at 1:18 p.m. at Berkshire Medical Center, Pittsfield. He weighed at birth 8 lbs., 6 oz. Amos lives with his mother and father, Hannah Fries and Adam Brown, on Stump Road.



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STELLA

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Beautiful heifer at Joshua's Farm, Dodd Road.
"Stella" is Latin for star," also named for a Sandisfield blizzard.

and Goings



A CLASS ACT KIT GILL 1939-2017

A typical obituary might begin, “Katherine “Kit” Gill, born 1939 in Long Island, NY, beloved sister of Nancy McShea and Jane Gill, aunt to Justin, Jeremy, and Colette McShea, loving mother of Robert, passed away Monday, March 21 at her home in New York City with her dear nephew Jeremy McShea by her side after a determined two and a half year fight against cancer.”

It might continue, “Kit was a former top model for Bill Blass; lived part of the year in her cherished home of more than 40 years in Sandisfield, and was Vice President of the New York Wagner Society where she was devoted to helping young musicians with scholarships. She was in her own unique way a political activist and a lifelong rescuer of shelter dogs.”

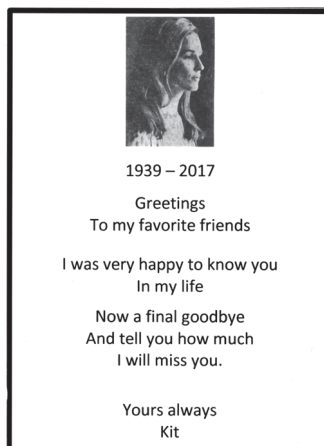
True as this is, none of it begins to capture the soaring, loving spirit that was Kit Gill.

She was a woman who lived her life, without self-pity but with kindness and generosity no matter what, even when “no matter what” was the sudden, tragic loss of her only child a few years ago, shortly to be followed by a diagnosis of very aggressive cancer. As her dear friend Steven Mitchell says, “[even though] the chemo was killing her ... it never lessened her zest for life ... she approached it like she approached everything else –as a challenge.”

Kit’s older sister Nancy recalls her Irish twin (born in the same month but a year apart): “Kath (Kit) was an independent soul, strong and eternally unique ... [who] left her imprint on the

world.” Nancy goes on to describe what shows the wonderful, quirky uniqueness of Kit: “She recently fed the Occupy Wall Street multitude with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches!”

Those of us who were her friends and neighbors in Sandisfield watched her single-handedly taking care of her c.1840 farmhouse (perched on her huge tractor, cutting the grass, coping with frozen pipes in the dirt-floor basement), just as naturally as she would serve one of her candlelit dinners to well-known artists and musicians, friends and neighbors discussing opera, politics, and literature into the night. She loved to bring her friends from the New York music world up here to show off Sandisfield.



Nine months ago, in between four-day infusions of chemo, Kit stood on the stage of the Sandisfield Arts Center to introduce longtime friends Anna

Marie Holmes (Director of the Ballet School at Jacob’s Pillow and a former prima ballerina) and Ramona Pansegrau (Music Director of the Kansas City Ballet), then afterward served dinner for them and some of the audience back at her house. No one would have suspected how sick she was.

We (with Steven) are “holding on to some amazing memories” and “hearing her voice ring in our head” and most of all cherishing the words she often spoke at the end of a conversation: “You are such a good friend!”

We see her speeding up Hammertown Road in her little red Audi to pick up *The New York Times* at Papa’s, dogs Happy and Nicki in the passenger seat, their ears flying in the breeze.

As Steven has pointed out, Kit was a private person. Although she has had a house and a hundred-plus acres here since the late 1960s – and often said she considered that place her real home – many people here may not have known her.

For those who did, Kit, to whom you meant so much, as well as for the little dogs and creatures you rescued and loved, do not go gentle into that dark night. Instead, whirl, fly, carve out your space in the universe doing what only you can do: Take the heavens by storm. 🌩️

– Barbara Penn
Hammertown Road

Gratitude to Jeremy McShea for some of the details here, and for his compassion and soul, so cherished by his aunt.



To the Editor:

I have e-mailed Town Hall with no response. I have contacted the Environmental Police, no help there either. I am wondering who takes care of Abby/West Lake off West Road?

The sign entering clearly states "Canoe/kayak only," but I see motorboats on the lake often, and it upsets me. With no cell-phone service there it is nearly impossible to call it in.

I was wondering who to contact to have big boulders placed at the boat ramp to prevent large boats from backing down into the lake. I absolutely love that lake and drive all the way from West Springfield for the peace and quiet there – often seeing moose, coyotes, deer, and hearing the hoots of owls first thing in the morning.


I really do dislike the fact that large boats with motors disturb such a quiet tranquil place designated for paddlers only

With summer coming soon, I would love to see a change there. Any help you could provide would be greatly appreciated.

*Fran Lewis
West Springfield*



Rabies Shots for Pets

The Sandisfield Board of Health and Animal Control is sponsoring a Rabies Clinic on April 8, Saturday, at Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road from 10 a.m. until noon. The cost of each shot is \$18. Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko will be available to issue dog licenses. 

*– Kim Spring
Animal Warden*

To the Editor:

We are long-time second-home owners in Sandisfield – coming up on 50 years in 2018. Hard to believe.

What is amazing and wonderful is how the Town has developed into a vibrant community over time. It may always have been vibrant, but because of no local newspaper, other than short-lived attempts at one, no arts center, and no "center" to the Town, it was hard to keep in touch and know about what was going on. *The Sandisfield Times* has changed all that, with its monthly news and articles.

Additionally, the transparency of the Selectmen about Town finances and issues is exemplary. The fact that the Town seems now to be well on its way to solvency after some chaotic moments is a great tribute to its leadership. And, despite the current controversy, it appears that the 4-town solution may bring much needed broadband to Sandisfield.

We know a small town on Cape Cod which has major issues on a variety of local matters. When asked how the town had managed these issues in the past, a local town official responded that the town had had the assistance of a very competent consultant who was none other than our own Alice Boyd, and he commented on how lucky Sandisfield is to have her.

*Antonia Grumbach
Sage Road*

Preschool Registration and Screening

NEW STUDENTS ONLY


On Thursday, April 13 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., the Farmington River Regional School District will accept registrations and schedule screenings for 3- and 4-year-old children for the public preschool program for the 2017-2018 school year.

Children who are residents of Otis or Sandisfield and who will be 3 years old before October 1, 2017 may be eligible for this program. Residents of neighboring communities are also invited to apply.

For the upcoming school year, our tuition-based program will offer families the following options:


- 5 half days a week 8:30-11:30 for all 3 and 4 year olds (minimum of 3 days required – Monday, Wednesday, Friday)
- 5 full days a week 8:30-2:30 for 4 year olds only (must turn 4 by October 1, 2017) (minimum of 3 days required – Monday, Wednesday, Friday)

The screening will be conducted in the areas of speech and language, fine and gross motor development, and learning skills. Screening is required for all newly enrolling children – children currently enrolled in our program do not need to be screened.


Interested families should call Teresa DellaGiustina at the school (413-269-4466) to schedule an appointment for screening and to pick up a registration packet. 

Deal Me In

WANTED: A FEW MORE PLAYERS

Almost there. A few sports answered our call in March for Poker Players, but not quite enough for a good game. If you're interested, call John Skrip at 258-4788 or email at johnskripjr@gmail.com. All welcome. 

Community Painting Social

On Thursday, April 13, from 1:30-3:30 p.m., the Berkshire Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center at 7 Sandisfield Road in New Boston will host its second Annual Community Painting Social. Sip on tea or coffee in the lower-level dining room while working with painting instructor Laurie McArthur. Members of the community as well as residents are invited. Interested potential painters please RSVP to Cindy Faggioni at 258-4731. 

NOW HEAR THIS!

Edited by Laura Rogers-Castro.

Please send notices for Now Hear This! to editor@sandisfieldtimes.org.

MARCH

Arts & Crafts for Children Ages 2-102! on Saturday, April 1, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Sandisfield Library. Lynn Rubinstein will host a fun arts and crafts activity for all!

Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser and Raffle on Sunday, April 2, from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the Sandisfield Fire Station #2 on Route 57. The fundraiser is to benefit the Andros Family who lost their home to a fire. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under.

Town Caucus on Wednesday, April 5, at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road.

Conservation Commission, Special Meeting on Friday, April 7 at 7 p.m., downstairs at Town Hall Annex.

Rabies Clinic on Saturday, April 8, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at Old Town Hall on Silverbrook Road. \$18 per shot. For more information, contact Kim Spring at 258-4450. Dog licensing available on-site with Town Clerk Dolores Harasyko.

Sandisfield Historical Society Meeting on Saturday, April 8, at 11:00 a.m. at the Historical Society Meeting House on Sandy Brook Turnpike at South Sandisfield Road. During the meeting, officers will be elected, including Ann Wald as President, and others as advisors. A potluck lunch will follow the meeting.

Flower-Arranging Workshop on Monday, April 10, at 2:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging Meeting Room, downstairs at the Town Hall Annex, Route 57. \$10 fee.

Community Painting Social on Thursday, April 13, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Berkshire Rehabilitation & Skilled Care Center, located at 7 Sandisfield Road (Route 57). This is a free event but RSVP is appreciated to reserve a spot. Please call Cindy Faggioni at 258-4731.

Broadband Information Session on Saturday, April 15, at 10:00 a.m. at the Old Town Hall. The session will include an update on town-wide broadband services with time allowed for questions and answers. The Session will be hosted by the Sandisfield Broadband Committee and the Sandisfield Board of Selectmen.

Easter Service on Sunday, April 16, at 10:00 a.m. at the New Boston Church, Route 57. All are welcome.

Blood Pressure Clinic on Wednesday, April 26, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Council on Aging Meeting Room, downstairs at the Town Hall Annex, Route 57.

Meet & Greet Town Candidates on Wednesday, April 26, at 12:30 p.m., following the Blood Pressure Clinic at the Council on Aging Meeting Room, downstairs at the Town Hall Annex, Route 57.

Spring Fundraising Event on Saturday, April 29, at 6:00 p.m. Fundraiser for the Sandisfield Arts Center. "Berkshire Borscht Belt – Catskills in Sandisfield." An evening of comedy, cocktails, dinner served by Adam Manacher. Tickets are available at www.sandisfieldartscenter.org. A fun evening to support the Arts Center with friends old and new. \$75.

SAVE THE DATES

Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, May 13, at 10 a.m., at Fire Station #2, Rt. 57. Only registered voters can vote, but all residents are welcome to attend.

Annual Town Election on Monday, May 15, from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m., at Old Town Hall, Silverbrook Road at Rt. 57. Last day for registration to vote is April 24.

Town-wide Tag Sale on August 12-13, at the New Boston Inn. To support the Jewish History Book Project. For space, contact Joanne Lazerowitz Olson 917-686-1985.



Wanted: Poker Players

Let's talk about setting something up!!

Call John at 413-258-4788

or email at johnskripjr@gmail.com.

All welcome. 

HELP WANTED

TOLLAND COUNCIL ON AGING

Seeking an outreach worker to meet with, assist, advocate for, develop plans with and help obtain needed services for seniors to remain independent as long as possible.



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The Times is grateful to donors who responded to our annual appeal and to these individuals who have donated so far in 2017. Thank you.

Lorraine Greenwell

Jane Hason

Richard Ellis Hand



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 all sizes 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.

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