

OTIS OBSERVER

Your Town, Your Neighborhood and You

September 2023 Vol IX Issue 5

Meet Tim Lee the New School Superintendent

By Sandy Balayan

Last month, the Otis Observer featured an article about the new guard at the Farmington River Regional School District. We are lucky to have two fine educators at the helm to continue the momentum begun last year by Rob Putnam and the staff. New principal Laurie Flower will be joined by Timothy Lee as part-time superintendent.

Tim grew up in a suburb of Chicago but came east in 1987 to attend graduate school in Boston. Except for a short stint in Madison, Wisconsin, he has lived and enjoyed most of his career in this area. Although retired, he decided to rethink his decision when his friend Rob Putnam told him about the job and the fantastic staff and families at this school.

“We’ve been here twenty years. This is our home. Although I enjoy running, fishing and spending time with my family, a two-day-a-week position seemed perfect for me and I hope my experience can serve the district well in the next several years,” said Tim. He continued, “I understand that Rob has really helped to stabilize the school through a challenging time and I aim to build on the trajectory he has set in motion. I look forward to working with Laurie and meeting more of the staff and families of the FRRSD community.”

When this article is published, the school year will have begun and Tim will be at his post. He is welcomed with open arms and we all wish him success during his tenure at FRRSD. ☺

Get to Know Lenny Alexander

By Sandy Balayan

The town of Otis has a new recipient of the cane awarded to the oldest citizen of our town. Leonard Alexander is officially the oldest resident of Otis at 97 years young. In a recent sit down interview it is evident what a great all around guy Lenny is. He’s so pleasant and those in his presence feel immediately comfortable. He is sharp as a tack and his mobility is excellent. His eyes sparkle as he laughs and shares his wonderful sense of humor.

Growing up in Chester, Lenny eventually moved to Pittsfield for his work. In 1953, when helping a coworker with his new property in Otis, the friend suggested he buy a lot. But Lenny wasn’t sure he should do that at the time. The lots were \$1,000 and it seemed an unnecessary extravagance. When his friend said he got it down to \$500 and he could pay it over five years, Lenny and his beloved wife, Winifred, jumped at the chance. They spent many wonderful hours on the Reservoir, a favorite place for the family, building a home with their bare hands. In those days Lenny said everyone was incredibly friendly and the neighbors were always there for one another. By 1979 Winifred and Lenny moved to the lake permanently.



Lenny overlooking his lake
Photo: Sandy Balayan

With most of the original cottages gone, replaced by mega homes and new residents, Lenny can still reminisce about the good old days and raising his five children near the reservoir. Now seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren call this their favorite place to visit. It is safe to say there will always be Alexanders on the lake.

Lenny was a welder by trade. He could put together any type of machinery and his expertise was enjoyed by many. During high school summers he was part of a program in Holyoke that taught welding.

Continued on page 4

*We Are Deeply Grateful to
All Our Supporters for
Donating to
Our Ninth Annual Appeal*

Anonymous (5)	Hilary Harley	Joanne & David Russell
Jacob Borg	Sharon Johnson	Beverly & Tony Scapin
Katrina Cardillo	Pamela Kania	Peter & Elaine Sohn
Carolyn Coco	Dianne Lynch	Toby Steinberg
Judith & Robert Deiasi	Sharon & Barry Macklin	Dennis & Anne-Marie Stempel
Sue & Jim Ebitz	Paula Mercier	William & Joyce Taylor
Walter & MaryJo Engels	Michael Merlini	Charles Towers
Judith & Robert Fiestal	Tom & Lara Mullarkey	Christa Walls
Deborah Franco	Larry & Pam Pace	Faith Weldon
Jackie & Bob Gentile	Trudy Powelson	Robert Whitaker
J. Scott Hansen	Eleanor & Walter Rodgers	Linda & Bill Whitcomb

Observer Online

By Frank Tolopko

An often-used motto in advertising is “the new, and improved...” The implication, and hopefully the inference, is that something preceded, and is the basis, for the “new” item. Such is the case regarding the *Otis Observer’s* website, **otisobserver.com**.



Until only recently the *Observer* was a strictly paper-and-pencil operation. Donations, subscriptions and advertising payments were by check. The monthly publication was a print operation with no ability to view archived editions. In fact, there was no archive. But only recently that all changed.

Through the prodding and volunteer efforts of Otis resident Peter Sohn and our compositor/graphic designer, Tina Sotis, we cobbled together a working version of a website that brought us into the age of online electronic payments and archival access. The website was periodically updated to reflect the offline intricacies of donation/subscription management and communications.

The move to electronic automation revealed another requirement for continued publication of the *Observer*: succession and how best to hand over the operation to future volunteers, avoiding any major hiccups along the way.

Continued on page 5

The Otis Observer



Beautiful morning on Gibbs Road

Photo: Evelyn Garvey



The Massachusetts Cheese Festival Is Coming to High Lawn Dairy

By Stephanie Skinner

The history of cheesemaking in Massachusetts stems from the earliest European settlers who found that their knowledge of cheese easily adapted to our New England climate. In fact, in its earliest development, climate is said to be the godfather of cheese because saving such a protein rich food as summer's milk abundance for the lean months of bitter winter is just smart. And since "Cheese is milk's leap toward immortality," (said Clifton Fadiman and every proud cheesemaker ever since) it is a noble and worthy endeavor to nurture and usher cheese to its highest form; almost a mystical calling if you will.

In farmhouses north to south, east to west and certainly right here in Otis, families in the 1700s made their own wheels which they used for both sustenance and, sometimes, trade if someone's wheels were particularly tasty. But it's lots to do ... grow and harvest the hay, feed and tend the animals, milk them, make the cheese, age the cheese with brushing and flipping and keeping an eagle eye out for mites or mice, or errant bacterium. This is hard work, and only one of the many tasks of subsistence farming!

Ultimately farmers pooled their resources, particularly their milk, and created local cheesemaking facilities (such as one in New Marlborough which collected milk from 600 cows in its day) in the

mid-1800s and cheese making became a business. In time cheesemaking businesses moved further west where land and labor were cheaper and farms grew larger and larger. Fast forward 100 years and the vast majority of cheese in the US was made in massive commodity ventures. In 1909 the enterprising Kraft brothers produced a processed cheese product that would not spoil, which fed the troops in WWI. In the 1950s Kraft engineered individually wrapped slices that would last a lifetime.

The age of local cheese was over everywhere, but especially here. Land went to developers, generational knowledge disintegrated and farming in general was relegated to the Midwest.



It seems kind of sad, doesn't it?

So imagine my surprise when Terri Lawton, President of the Massachusetts Cheese Guild and Owner/Cheesemaker/Farmer's Market staffer at Oake Knoll Farms in Foxborough MA, offered up this extraordinary and exciting thought; "Now there are lots of opportunities for people interested in going into cheesemaking - with farms in the Midwest getting larger - it's a great time for artisan cheesemakers to get in."

And now that she mentioned it, this just made sense. In addition to our very own Rock Ledge Farm (shout out to Pam!), cheesemakers are all around us, most especially including High Lawn Farm which about five years ago brought back cheesemaking with their excellent Jersey Cow milk.

And this **September 23rd, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.**, after a three year COVID inspired hiatus, you can go to the Massachusetts Cheese Festival for the first time at High Lawn Farm! You'll be able to sample (and buy) cheese from as many as a dozen

diverse cheesemakers, including Oake Knoll, Thomas Farm & Dairy, Family Farmstead, Mystic Cheese, High Lawn and more. You'll also get to try local wines, beers, charcuterie and many more local treats. You can attend pairing classes put on by the Boston Wine School every hour on the hour from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. You can make it a family fun day and enjoy a farm tour of High Lawn Farm. You can meet these local hardworking artisans and show them how much you appreciate them, their passion, and what they do for our kitchen tables, and our local economy. They, like other agricultural entrepreneurs, are the ACTUAL bright lights in rural places that consumers hope for, and politicians promise.

And best of all, it's a tiny culinary tour of the land we love. Tickets are \$30 (unless you're already a member of the guild) and are available at <https://www.macheeseguild.org/macheesefestival>.

Who's with me? ☺



Please join us!

Book:

The Beekeeper of Aleppo

by Christy Lefteri

Date:

Tues., Sept 5, from 4:00 -5:30

Location:

Roosevelt Room, Otis Library

Books and CD available at the Otis Library, on Libby and CWMARS.

Get to Know Lenny Alexander
Continued from page 1

It was from there that he launched a career and often mentored young people in his job, many of which he hired because of how well they did during their internships. They had a great teacher in Lenny.



Some of Lenny's cork creations

Photo: Sandy Balayan

A general feeling of gratitude pervades Lenny's words. He feels very fortunate to have had the opportunities he has had in his life and still follows a golden rule: If you are considerate and nice to people it will come back to you twofold. His live and let live attitude may be the secret to his longevity. He takes things in stride and looks at the glass half full, no matter what. His gentle manner is so lovely and soothing. His hobbies of tinkering around the house, fixing things, helping friends and neighbors, and his famous cork sculpting, keep him busy. Every Wednesday he drives up to Pittsfield in his new car and has breakfast with old friends.

When asked about the biggest change in his lifetime, he points to his cell phone and remembers the first computers he ever saw way back when they were first being used. The first computers would fill rooms and you had to wear a quasi-hazmat suit to get near them. He admits to not being able to use all the apps on his phone to their maximum but he can do what he needs to do.

Touring his workshop, one can see all kinds of cork animals and Christmas trees he is working on now. There are fox, Santa and his sleigh, train sets, owls and much more all carved from cork. Lenny likes a good war movie but isn't a television watcher. He will play some games of cards on his computer but is not a web surfer. Lenny is a tinkerer and spends his time doing the hobbies he loves.

A Navy veteran, Lenny spent 1943-'46 on a destroyer escort as a signal man. He enjoys going to the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum in Albany and highly recommends it. The sonar on the destroyer could pick up submarine activity up to two miles away and his boat would escort ships across the Atlantic during the war with Germany and then in the Pacific during the Japanese war. They destroyed many submarines successfully and saved the lives of the ships carrying necessary goods across the oceans. Lenny served his time proudly.

With the attitude and temperament that Lenny possesses, one can see how well it has served him. A lesson to all from a wise man, our oldest resident. Find a way to get along with everyone. If you need help, as we all do from time to time, ask for it. If you don't make mistakes along the way then you aren't trying hard enough. Stay active and happy. No regrets for Lenny. ☺

Cultural Council

Call for Grant Applications

By Jeanne Randorf

The Otis Cultural Council invites artists, artisans, educators, lecturers and performers from Massachusetts to apply for state and town funding for cultural programs to benefit Otis residents in 2024. Our mission is to provide access, education, and diversity in the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences for adults, teens, and children in our community.

The application period is September 1 through **October 17, 2023 at 11:59 p.m.** Applicants will find the online application at <http://mass-culture.org/>. Click on "Artists & Art" and scroll down to "Local Cultural Council Program." There you will find a button for the application process. All applicants must use their login and password, or create one, in order to use the system. The state is offering a webinar for applicants to learn about the program and how to apply. It will take place on Sept. 12th at 6 p.m. Contact me (see below) for the link to register.

Also please note that the Mass Cultural Council webpage lists other grant opportunities for artists and art institutions. Those funds are available directly from the state and application information is listed there.

For more information, send email inquiries to culturalco.otis@yahoo.com or call Jeanne Randorf at (413) 329-8713. ☺



Observer Online
Continued from page 2

The former system, while meeting our basic needs, did not easily lend itself to updating and expansion, especially by those not adept at computer technology.

Through the efforts of volunteer Stephanie Skinner (who has extensive experience in the publication business) we linked up with Otis resident Sam Maher and his team. The result is the first cut of a new website (same address: **otisobserver.com**). The website currently meets all of our needs but it will be expanded to reintroduce the archive search feature, pertinent and current Town information, announcements, etc. In addition, the site is more easily managed, edited and updated (drag-and-drop, in computerese) by those somewhat less than a computer nerd.

Give us a chance to flesh out the site before commenting but we do welcome suggestions for what you'd like to see on it. ☺



Letters to the Editor

To the Editor,

Thanks to the Otis residents who battled to save at least the ATM facility at the otherwise closed Berkshire Bank branch building in West Otis. Their efforts and the reporting of it in the Observer are much appreciated.

Ronald Bernard & Jean Atwater-Williams, Sandisfield



Laugh with Carolyn

Our resident joke teller, Carolyn Lawry, shares another one of her gems with us this month. Long known for sharing whatever tickles her funny bone with family and friends, Carolyn is a delight to talk to and loves to share her great sense of humor with the readers of the Otis Observer.

Hot Off The Presses - Super Granny Defender of Justice!

A Florida grandmother was doing her shopping and on her return to her car four males were in the act of stealing her car. She dropped her shopping bags and drew her handgun yelling, "I have a gun and I know how to use it. Get out of my car."

The four did not wait for a second invitation and jumped out of the car and ran like mad. She put her bags in the car, and although shaken, attempted to put her key in the ignition and it didn't fit. It dawned on her after a few minutes that her car was actually parked several spaces down. She retrieved her bags and headed to her car, and drove off directly to the police station. The police officer to whom she told the story began laughing uncontrollably. He pointed out four very scared men at the other end of the counter reporting a carjacking attempt by an elderly woman described as less than five feet tall, glasses and curly white hair, carrying a handgun. NO charges were filed. ☺



FRRSD HONOR ROLL & GRADUATES

MONUMENT MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL

FOURTH QUARTER HONOR ROLL FOR OTIS AND SANDISFIELD STUDENTS

High Honors

Avery Carr

Ashley Kopiec

Isaac Schultze

Honors

Andrew Amado

Emma Perry

Mushroom Foraging with Cecilia Ackley

By Cecilia Ackley

Walking through the forest, I scan tree trunks and the cover of leaf litter on the ground. I'm searching for a few things. Some are easier to spot, like a bright orange shelf adorning an oak, while some are camouflaged, shades of brown just popping out from the earth. Mushrooms can take many forms, and come in every hue, shape and texture you can imagine. Today though, a nice late summer day shortly after a rainfall, in a mixed deciduous forest, I know what I'm hoping to find.

Foraging is a great way to learn observational skills, find some of the tastiest cooking ingredients and discover a wonderfully complex world of organisms. During mushroom season (roughly April-November), every walk is a treasure hunt. Foraging for mushrooms is surprisingly straightforward, as long as you are willing to learn, if you start with a few easy-to-identify species. For beginner mushroom hunters, I recommend chanterelles (*Cantharellus*), chicken of the woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*) and oysters (*Pleurotus*).

Chanterelles come in a few different varieties, the most common being cinnabar chanterelles and golden chanterelles. The trick to identifying both, as well as all chanterelles, is their gills, or what appears to be a gill. They are more accurately described as forked ridges or wrinkles that run decurrent, meaning rather than stopping abruptly,



A brightly colored orange cinnabar chanterelle is easy to spot in a nearby mixed hardwood forest

Photo: Dawn Ackley

they extend down the stem for some length before tapering off. They also mature into an almost funnel shape. Cinnabar chanterelles are vivid carrot orange and small, their caps never much bigger than a quarter, while golden chanterelles are bright yellow and slightly bigger with a thicker stem. They are mycorrhizal, meaning they grow in the ground, intertwined in a symbiotic relationship with the trees around them, usually a mix of spruce and deciduous. They have a mild, almost fruity flavor that pairs wonderfully with a delicate white wine cream sauce. The only look-alike is possibly jack o'lantern (*Omphalotus illudens*), which is distinguished by growing on wood, and having true, unforked gills,

or false chanterelle (*Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*), which also has true, unforked gills. Neither of these look-alikes are fatal, but will cause some gastrointestinal distress.

Another brightly colored and easy to spot fungus is chicken of the woods, named for its poultry-like flavor and texture. This mushroom is saprotrophic, meaning it grows on decaying matter, in this instance hardwood trees. Unfortunately seeing these almost neon shelves of fungus is bad news for the tree, but great news for a forager! Its Latin name gives you clues on what to look for, *Laetiporus*, meaning "with bright pores" and *Sulphureus* meaning "the color of sulfur," although some are more coral toned. Luckily chicken of the woods has no close look-alikes. If it has pores rather than gills and is orange in hue, you can start planning a delicious meal.

Oyster mushrooms are another saprotroph, also found on hardwoods. Oysters are technically just *Pleurotus ostreatus*, but many edible relatives in the same genus are just as tasty and are often lumped in under the label of oyster. These mushrooms will have white, decurrent true gills, so they run down the stem like a chanterelle, but aren't forked or wrinkly. The caps can range from buff tawny to a cool toned gray, although some other *Pleurotus* can be golden, blueish or even bright pink! These mushrooms are also easy to grow from kits you can order online. Oysters have a classic mushroomy flavor, though slightly meatier than your average portabella. The only look-alike you have to worry about is angel wings (*Pleurocybella porrigens*), which do not have a stem, are completely white, more funnel shaped, and grow exclusively on conifers.

To learn more about mushrooms I recommend finding a good guide book, and starting off just observing fungi on your next walk. Mushrooming really is a fascinating, rewarding and delicious hobby that has given me an even greater appreciation for the natural world and all its bounties. ☺

RALPH E. MORRISON

413-258-3381



A & M AUTO SERVICE

COMPLETE AUTO & TRUCK CARE
IMPORT AND DOMESTIC

24 HOUR HEAVY DUTY & LIGHT TOWING & RECOVERY
FLAT BED SERVICE

ROUTE 57/EAST

SANDISFIELD, MA 413-258-3381

Take the Massachusetts Statewide Digital Equity Survey

By Larry Gould, MLP Manager

The Otis Municipal Light Plant, MLP, has engaged with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Berkshire Regional Planning and the towns of Washington, Windsor and Becket in a Digital Planning Grant. We ask that you invest five minutes to complete the Massachusetts Broadband Institute Statewide Digital Equity Survey to help us better understand your needs when it comes to computers and internet access.

Our local responses to the statewide planning survey will help us provide equipment, training, and internet services directly to residents from action grants in the near future.

Survey link:

<https://made.civilspace.io/en/projects/ma-digital-equity/engagements/ma-sdep-public-survey/sections/1>

Or check the town website, townofotisma.com for the Digital Equity Survey link.

ALBERT M. BOUCHER

1925 - 2023



Albert "Dee Dee" Boucher, age 98, of East Otis, MA, passed away peacefully on June 26, 2023. Dee Dee, the son of the late Albert and Mary Boucher, spent much of his childhood in Barre, VT, before moving to West Springfield, MA. He was a veteran of the US Navy who served in World War II and the Korean War. Dee Dee, a skilled machinist, was a foreman for much of his career before retiring to East Otis. He was also an avid fisherman, outdoorsman and birder. He loved dogs, the Red Sox and spending time with his family. Dee Dee was a caring husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and uncle, known for his kindness, big smile and willingness to help others.

Dee Dee is now reunited with his beloved late wife Elizabeth "Betty" Boucher. He will be lovingly remembered by his daughter Rosemary Schneider (Jerry, deceased), grandchildren Eric Schneider (Jane) and Laura Costello (Jim), great-grandchildren Kai and Colin Schneider, step-great-grandchildren Sean and Tucker Costello, nephew John Farrell (Christine), cousin-in-law Adeline Radford (Dennis, deceased) and by the many others whose lives he touched. A private service was held on July 13, 2023, at Toomey O'Brien Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, the family asked that donations be sent to the Mass Wildlands fund (<https://massfishhunt.mass.gov/donations>) or Mass Audubon (<https://www.massaudubon.org/take-action/donate>).



Dee Dee was the recipient of the Boston Post Cane Award.



CHAFFEE
CONSTRUCTION INC.
Custom Building

413-429-5972 • 413-854-8028

www.chaffeeconstructioninc.com

email: Chaffeeconstruct@gmail.com

DON CHAFFEE

— Specializing In —
New Homes Remodeling

Custom
Woodworking
Framing
Roofing
Siding
Rot Repair

Kitchens
Baths
Additions
Windows
Decks

20 YEARS EXPERIENCE
LICENSED | FULLY INSURED
CSL 113610 • HIC 200076

OTIS COMMUNITY GARDEN

By Joan Katter

Late July and August were prolific times for our garden! Loads of snap peas and pea pods were harvested, as well as the second or third crop of lettuce, with more lettuce growing now. We harvested several kinds of summer squash: zucchini, yellow, pattypan, as well as colorful Swiss chard, carrots, beets, turnips and onions. Despite the hordes of beetles feasting on the eggplant leaves, lovely little eggplants are growing. And of course, tomatoes, both big and small, are ripening on the vines.

Not to waste any part of the veggies, I've been cooking the beet greens. Sauté the chopped stems in a bit of olive oil with chopped onion (garlic, too, if you like), then add the chopped leafy greens, stir a bit, cover and simmer until they're all soft. Finish with a splash of balsamic vinegar to liven up the flavor. It's

the same method as cooking Swiss chard. Here's a link to an easy recipe - <https://www.healthyseasonalrecipes.com/simple-sauteed-swiss-chard/>.

You can try sautéing the carrot greens too, or using them in place of parsley. They have a slightly stronger flavor.

A very popular dish for our summer bounty is ratatouille, a vegetable stew with Mediterranean origins. It's one of the best ways to use lots of different veggies, and is very flexible. Traditionally it's made with eggplant, zucchini,

tomatoes, onions and bell peppers, but each cook can add or subtract any vegetables. Some recipes call for roasting the veggies before stewing, but it's easy to sauté them in olive oil with salt and pepper (onions and peppers first, next eggplant, then tomatoes and zucchini last). Cover and simmer a while. Add herbs (basil, oregano, parsley), maybe a pinch of red pepper, or even parmesan cheese for a richer stew. Enjoy!



Pattypan baby

Photo: Joan Katter



Here's a link to a basic recipe - <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchen/ratatouille-5658876>. ☺

Food pantry harvest

Photo: Eve Kummel

★ DINE IN OR TAKEOUT

*HOUSE SPECIAL PRIME RIB
(thursday-saturday)

FISH & CHIPS

FIRE-GRILLED SALMON

GREAT SALADS

THE BEST BURGERS

SPECIALTY PIZZAS

PRIME TOP SIRLOIN STEAK

LOBSTER MAC & CHEESE

KNOX CHICKEN PICCATA

Great appetizers & more!

*Weekly
Specials*

★
*Book a
private
party
with us!*



Check out our full menu & event info at:

knoxtrailinn.com

Like us on Facebook

Follow us on Instagram @theknoxtrailinn

★ UPCOMING EVENTS ★

Sept 1st Scott Silvia 6pm

Sept 2nd The 413's Band 8pm

Sept 8th Jon Berman 6pm

Sept 3, 10, 24 - Musical Bingo 2pm

Knox Trail Trivia Night Thursdays @7pm

Sept 9th Generation X-Rock 8pm

Sept 15th Melissa Brinton 6pm

Sept 16th ROCK 201 8pm

Sept 17th The Hilltown Blues Jam 2pm

Sept 23rd Scott Silvia 6pm

Sept 27th Sign Painting Party 6:30pm

Sept 29th Acoustic Bandwidth 7pm

Sept 30th Cruise Control 8pm

*No Cover
Charge!*



OPEN WED & THUR 5-9PM ★ FRI & SAT 12-9PM ★ SUN 12-8PM ★ 413-269-4400 ★ 1898 EAST OTIS RD (RT 23) EAST OTIS, MA

Many Hands Make Light Work

By Christopher Whalen

"We'll be friends forever, won't we, Pooh?" asked Piglet.

"Even longer," Pooh answered.

Since moving to Otis, my father has helped Tom Soules and the veterans at the Otis Transfer Station in sorting and returning cans that go to Otis AM VETS Post 77 veterans, a non-profit local organization. Proceeds are used to provide assistance to veterans and their families. Tom is a veteran himself, and they all perform the task with pride. It is a thankless task that not many people care for or get to see firsthand. It is also an elaborate operation that Tom has set up.



The team that set the new bar! Left to right: M. Whalen, B. Gargone (Monster), J.R. Littleton (Bad Wolf), George from TOMRA, Tom Soules, C. Whalen (Mayor), Steven Petersen (Free Rider), Devin McGil (Angel Sticks)

To Tom, Monster, Bad Wolf and Free Rider, thank you for your service.

Photo: Carol Whalen

light work, and we got it done in a record 15 minutes. Some days off the trail are just as meaningful as the ones on it. Memories over miles.

Commander Tom Soules thanks Mike and Chris Whalen for setting this up and thanks to new friends and veterans for your help. God bless and thank you for your service. ☺

My dad asked The Hiker Hunks, who are doing the Appalachian Trail and staying in Otis on their way to Mt. Katahdin in Maine, if we could help out with the cans because they were backed up six weeks and had their biggest haul ever, 173 bags, which was an entire shipping container full of cans.

Being veterans themselves, Free Rider, Monster and JR were eager to help. It was also a rainy day and since we don't hike in the rain, it was an easy "yes." Many hands make

Election Workers Wanted Needed for the 2024 busy election year.

Areas Needed:

- Early Voting for the Presidential Primary in February/March
- Presidential Primary March
- Local Election May
- Early Voting State Primary August/September
- State Primary September
- Early Voting Presidential and State Election October/November
- Presidential Election and State Election November
- Miscellaneous Election Administration as needed

Please consider adding your name to the list of potential poll workers. Shifts are usually four hours or more. Hourly Rate \$15.00-\$17.00.



What are the benefits to being an election worker?

A sense of pride! You are an important piece in the election process by upholding State and Federal election laws! You get paid! You meet new people! On Election Day meals are included!

Paid training will be provided.

If interested, please call or email Lyn, (413) 269-0100, x 112 or clerk@townofotisma.com. ☺



sandisfield
ARTS CENTER

★ 5 HAMMERTOWN ROAD, SANDISFIELD, MA ★

SAT., SEPTEMBER 9, 6 PM

GALA ANNUAL DINNER

Scrumptious dinner followed by a showing of the PBS film, "Two Gentlemen Folk," (Bill Crofut and Ben Luxon) in a performance of British and American music at Jacob's Pillow.

Director Bill Cosel will speak. \$75

SAT., SEPTEMBER 16, 7 PM

AN EVENING OF DANCE WITH OLIVIA IDELLA MARTIN

A collective of work created by local dance artists showcasing a variety of styles. Wine and dessert to follow. \$35

SEPTEMBER 23 — OCTOBER 22

ANDRE LAMBERSTON DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY

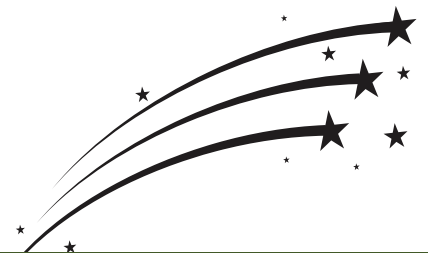
Opening reception 4-6 pm and talk 5 pm

GALLERY

SAT., SEPTEMBER 23, 7 PM

FILM: "VOW FROM HIROSHIMA"

Showing of a spectacular, tragic film marking the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. An intimate portrait of Setsuko Thurlow, a survivor, who has devoted her life to ridding the world of nuclear weapons. **FREE.**



FOR DETAILS VISIT SANDISFIELDARTSCENTER.ORG



OTIS LIBRARY NEWS

By Brad Havill

Thank you to those who took the time to complete the library's two surveys, one for adults and one for children. It was clear from the responses that this column is a valuable way in which the Otis Library's patrons learn about developments and library programming and that our social media presence, as well as other outreach methods, communicate what is happening. We appreciate the feedback on how the library staff works with patrons and creates a community space. I would also like to thank those respondents who do not normally use the Otis Library, those stating they buy their books and those who do not have a library card. Your responses were helpful, and I invite you to come speak with me about how we might be able to provide services for you.

As many likely already know, responses to these surveys help to guide the library's next five-year strategic plan. The current strategic plan is coming to an end, and we are looking to build on the momentum of

this last plan. Each ten question survey revealed that patron's observations and wants are shared by the library staff and the trustees. We have a common vision for the future of the Otis Library.

Many responses highlighted patrons' observations that the library requires more space to grow and maintain a diverse collection and to implement programs we currently provide and others we would like to present in the future. Space constraints impact how the library functions since we must constantly assess what the collection holds and how it is made accessible to patrons. Additional space could be used for various applications mentioned in the survey responses, such as exhibitions. We work hard to create programs appealing to our wide-ranging community and know expanded programming would benefit more patrons, something we look to accommodate in our planning.



There are a lot of great ideas in the children's survey as well. As director, I try to get to as many of the line items as possible and will in time. Your patience is appreciated, and please come by frequently to see what has been updated. For example, there is now more fantasy and science fiction in the collection. Fantasy is one of my favorite genres and has been ever since I read *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* before high school. We also added

more graphic novels and manga to the collection. As popular types of media, they are valuable for the library to have available and especially for ages that can relate to them.

I invite you to come into the library and let me know what you think of the library, especially if you did not have the opportunity to respond to these two surveys. Frequent constructive feedback is encouraged, and the surveys were intended to be short, and therefore not comprehensive. I cannot address every issue but will take the time to listen to ideas and work with the Otis Library patrons to continue to improve the collection and ensure varied programming.

Since the surveys were initially released to the public, I have been asked several times if libraries remain a viable public service. The answer is unequivocally "yes." Books and the other forms of media will continue to be important for as far as anyone can see in the future, but libraries serve many different community needs. This was noted in the survey in which internet accessibility proved an important service for our patrons. We also still provide printing, copying, scanning and faxing services and are a community reference service. Survey responses acknowledged the many functions our library provides, for which we are most grateful. The library staff and trustees look forward to further creating a dynamic space for Otis Library patrons, particularly with your guidance and assistance. ☺



HAIR IN OTIS
SINCE 2002

For All Your Hair Care Needs

New Contact info:
413 427-2656
(text or call & leave message)
or email: hairinotis@gmail.com

Corner of 1 B Dr. & 129 Ridge Ave.
East Otis, MA 01029

Appointments Only Donna Argiro

**Hypnosis for
Parkinson's Disease**

**Remotely or in person. No fee.
Call 347-743-9507 to discuss.**

Konkapot Angling Club

By Dave Modzelewski

The Konkapot Angling Club is a group originally composed of 8 western Mass friends who get together to fly fish for trout on a weekend in May each year. We stay at my family's place on the Reservoir, fish the lake a little and then hit our favorite spots on the Farmington River, the Westfield River and the Konkapot.

We have been doing this since 1985 and no one ever misses. We lost one of our original guys to ALS a few years ago but we have increased our ranks with the addition of sons and sons-in-law. This year we will be adding a grandson.

We annually prepare a Friday night meal at the cottage: Trout in caper sauce, Hadley fresh asparagus, wild rice and a green salad ... all washed down by a brew or two. Wally serves as our master chef. The trout (we always have enough) are perfectly filleted and grilled. Three or four guys serve as sous chefs and bar keeps and certain fellows are regularly relegated to scullery maid duties. Our desert is homemade strawberry rhubarb pie (my wife prepares the pie, rhubarb right out of the garden).

After the meal we sit outside by the fire and tell stories of fish caught and fish lost. We love this weekend. We call this season, the Sweet of the Year. ☺



The Konkapot Angling Club dines at The Dream Away Lodge, May 2023

Photo: David Modzelewski



Michael Linden

917.796.6002



I've Joined

WILLIAM PITT SOTHEBY'S
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

williampitt.com

Great Barrington Brokerage | 306 & 308 Main Street | 413.528.4192
Lenox Brokerage | 34 Church Street | 413.637.4402

© MMXIX WPS Holdings, LLC and Sotheby's International Realty Affiliates LLC. All Rights Reserved. Sotheby's International Realty® is a registered trademark licensed to Sotheby's International Realty Affiliates LLC. An Equal Opportunity Company. Equal Housing Opportunity. Each office is independently owned and operated. 🏠

The Rural ETHICIST

Precious Moments

By Katharine Adams

We waited out a recent southwestern heat wave to touch down in Vegas and see my dear big brother Chip, who is ailing. I had kept my eye on the weather report in Nevada. With the late July forecast dipping into the low 100s, I seized the window of opportunity to safely fly our mother out to his desert oasis.

Within a 17-hour turnaround, we booked plane tickets, caught a nap, packed a grip and ripped out of town to Hartford for a 7 a.m. flight.

I got to remembering my 1990s days in Northern California. Wildly hot 108°-115° wine country heat waves were somewhat tolerable because of their relatively short duration, compared to our current climactic era. We had an ancient, cracked, '60s concrete swimming pool, whose drink was always bracing, due to our routinely topping it off with the hose. Night was a cool break. The contrast makes for happy grapes.

I understood the contrast between aridity and humid heat, and aridity seemed to edge out a white-sky steam bath.

During that time, in the mid-90s, I bought my first Honda Civic. Living in a state that often sees 100+ degrees in summer, I displayed brain power when I opted to save money by choosing a model with no A/C (thankfully for fools like me, this is no longer an option). Instead, I funneled the saved A/C funds into upgrading the car's speakers, like any sensible audiophile. I got lucky their plastic covers didn't melt off.

One time, we drove across the Central Valley with the windows down. The air, blowing through the car at 65 mph, had the cooling effect of a warm blow dryer.

Our breathing was labored. It was like dry lake swimming in a slow-motion movie.

That experience taught me to never, ever buy a car without an A/C, ever again.

Another time, while stopping at a service station in Bakersfield, the asphalt heat rushed at us like an open oven door. How do people live this way, I remember wondering? Since, I've read descriptions about hearty souls who do so with pride, having none of our New England frostbite, thank you very much.



Painting credit: North Vegas Mountain,
by Chip Lampro

When I began to research and plan our trip, I kicked back with some relaxing reading material detailing any stretch of hazards inherent in a remote situation—in this case, that of encountering a desert scorpion.

I waded through property pest control ads, plus a treatise on scorpion lethality. I scoured Google for reassurance they'd all be six feet under (the scorching heat) in July—but nope, our fearsome friends like a good midsummer outing.

That nugget of info had me fretting over what shoes to wear to stay cool, while still protecting my feet from the venomous stingers waiting for me around every corner, all chanting my name.

I worried about little claw-armed hitchhikers surprising me on a taxi cab floor. I wondered if they could hike up the bed sheets. I cautioned my companions to place their bags and shoes up high—without explaining why, for fear of inciting the same riot I was experiencing inside.

In the end, we were comfortable, and saw not one stinging critter. The significance of our trip came into immediate focus: that of spending precious time with loved ones.

We tried to stretch every single moment together, exquisitely aware of each hug and little joke, hanging onto the charms of my quick and funny, coulda-been standup comic brother.

A treasured printout hangs on his and his wife's fridge. It stopped me in my tracks as a perfect portrait of his enduring wit. It's been posted there since last year, back before health troubles made other plans, back when he was up to his eyeballs with a stream of events, back when he was looking for a little downtime to make another painting of the mountains behind his house, or a moment in the driveway to whistle with his wild birds, or enjoy some garage time to polish his bike.

"Dear World: NO. Love, Chip."

No wonder we saw no scorp; they respect his loving request. He lives his life exactly as he wants: with intention. What more can you ask for? ☹



SunBug Solar

Ned Wilson - Otis, MA

NABCEP PV Technical Sales

TS-102415-004308

NABCEP PV Installation

PV-041115-004308

• 413 854 1453 •

ned.wilson@sunbugsolar.com

www.sunbugsolar.com

Local Experts. *Global Reach.*



Celebrating over
20 years as your local
real estate experts.

Thank you!

GREAT BARRINGTON 413-528-6011 | LENOX 413-637-0006 | LANCEREALESTATE.COM



POWERS LAW GROUP LLC

**BE PREPARED.
BE EDUCATED.
BE OUR CLIENT.**

**Elder Law & Estate Planning | Personal Injury
Real Estate Law | & More**



Sean T Powers | Mary Paier Powers | Dennis P. Powers

The Powers Law Group LLC possesses over 65 years of legal experience in the fields of elder law & estate planning, long-term care planning, real estate and personal injury. PLG serves all of Western Massachusetts and Northern Connecticut.

mary@powerslawgrp.com
www.powerslawgrp.com

West Springfield Location
680 Westfield Street,
West Springfield, MA 01089
Phone: 413-781-9659

Springfield Location
1391 Main Street, Suite 806
Springfield, MA 01103
Phone: 413-363-2269

Ceremony of the Golden Cane at the Otis COA on August 14.



Standing left to right: Else D'Voti, Evelyn Loring, Janice Hawley, Carol Raymond, Jane Gleason, Diane Dyer, and Patricia Ann Loucks.

Seated left to right: Bill O'Brien, Leonard Alexander, and Jeff Privis.

Photo: Eila Bell



**OTIS
FOOD PANTRY
UPDATE**

By Terry Gould

It is amazing that we are closing in on fall. The summer flew by for everyone. Back to school ads and even Halloween decorations seem to be appearing in all the stores. At the Otis Food Pantry we are looking to neaten the shelves and make room for cooler weather foods. Back to school snacks and baking supplies, as well as easy to prepare foods for busy families, will be the order of the days ahead. Peanut butter and jelly, cereals, toaster pastries and on-the-go foods are needed to keep lunch boxes filled and families on schedules. We will benefit from late season vegetables as mother nature pushes us to harvest season.

September can still be steamy, so we plan to keep our fresh foods outside on Wednesdays for as long we can.

Our safe box continues to yield the most wonderful donations from all of you and we thank you so very much.

A plant sale at Otis Ridge Garden Shop became a food drive for the pantry and everybody benefited. Thank you to the Garden Shop and Otis Ridge for always thinking of us.

Our periodic reminder to everyone about how it all works: **The Otis Food Pantry is open on Wednesdays from 9 to 11 a.m.** for anyone who wishes to visit. Donations of non-expired, non-perishable foods may be left in the lovely blue safe box at the back door of the Otis Town Hall. Monetary donations may be sent to Otis Food Pantry c/o Mary Kay Pinkham, PO Box 271, Otis, MA 01253.

You can reach us via the Otis Food Pantry Facebook page. We post shopping lists and reminders often. Email is also available at **otisfoodpantry@gmail.com**.

Enjoy the last of this wonderful summer and thank you to everyone who keeps us always on their shopping lists. ☺

BEER ★ WINE ★ LIQUOR

Domaney's 

Fine Wine ★ Unique Beer ★ Discount Liquors
Temperature Controlled Wine Room ★ Cigar Humidor

66 Main St. Great Barrington, MA 01230
p. (413) 528-0024 ★ f. (413) 528-6093

www.domaney.com

FARMINGTON



RIVER DINER

119 South Main Road
Otis, Massachusetts 01253

413-269-6874


AREA EXPERT

CONNECTING BUYERS AND SELLERS
IN EVERY PRICE RANGE



Jeff Wilkinson

413-269-4500

Jeff@

StoneHouseProperties.com

I have been a real-estate agent since 1986, specializing in residential real estate and land in southeastern Berkshire County and adjacent Hampden and Hampshire Counties. We reside in beautiful Becket, MA where I am a long time member of the Zoning Board of Appeals and just finished serving on the Town Administrator search committee.

Prior to entering real estate sales, my profession was building, a profession I continued for many years in conjunction with being a real-estate agent. Many clients have found that background very helpful, whether preparing a house for sale, or discussing the possibilities of a potential purchase or repairs that might be needed.

It is my philosophy that the path to success is through helping clients to the best of my ability. In doing so, I have made many wonderful friends over the years. If you have questions about buying or selling real-estate, please feel free to call anytime to discuss them.



OUR TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

What We Do For You

Matching Buyers And Sellers For 40 Years

When we began in 1984, our goals were quite simple: Provide the very best professional service to our buyers and sellers, and treat each transaction as if it were our own.



PROPERTIES

STONEHOUSEPROPERTIES.COM

(413) 528-4211 35 RAILROAD STREET, GREAT BARRINGTON, MA 01230

(413) 232-4253 38 MAIN STREET, WEST STOCKBRIDGE, MA 01266

(518) 392-0332 6 MAIN STREET, CHATHAM, NY 12037

Leading REAL ESTATE COMPANIES OF THE WORLD®

LUXURY PORTFOLIO INTERNATIONAL

KWIK^{Color} PRINT INCORPORATED

EXPERIENCE • SPEED • QUALITY

- Full Color Digital Printing
- Full Color Envelope Printing
- Large Format Printing
- High Speed Copying
- Laminating
- Inline Bookletmaking
- Perfect Binding
- Folding
- Perforating
- Mailing Services
- Graphic Design Services

35 Bridge Street
Great Barrington, MA 01230

Ph: 413.528.2885 Fx: 413.528.9220

typesetting@kwikprintinc.com
www.kwikprintinc.com

NAME THAT OTISITE



Can you solve this month's contest mystery? If you are the first to identify the family name of the woman in this photo, you will be the winner of the contest and win a prize!

Try your luck with this picture. Remember, if there is more than one winner, first in gets the prize. Good luck!

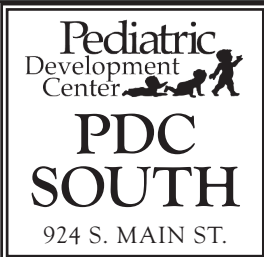
Please send your name, phone and email address to lynnegeane@gmail.com. Open to Otis residents only. Members of the *Otis Observer* staff are not eligible to enter.

If you have a picture you'd like featured in a future contest, please email the above address. ☺

There was no winner in last month's contest. The correct answer was: Mrs. John Merritt.



Concerned about your infant or toddler's development?



Give us a call and we can set up an appointment to talk with you about any concerns you may have.

Certified Therapists offering evaluations & visits at your home, in our center, or through telehealth.

Dept. of Public Health Certified Early Intervention Program.

924 S. Main Street
Great Barrington
413-717-4083

pediatricdevelopmentcenter.org

PHOTOS NEEDED!

Care to join in on the fun? Do you have a family photo you would share with the *Otis Observer*?

Scan a photo and send to Lynne Geane at lynnegeane@gmail.com with identifying information, your name, phone and email address. Or we'd be glad to pick up your photo, scan it and return it to you.

You could be in on our contest. Who will guess the identity of your photo?

The Historic 1737 New Boston Inn Restaurant, Tavern and B&B

Six Guest Rooms, All Private Baths

Restaurant open THURS 12-8,
FRI & SAT 12-9, SUN 12-8, MONDAY HOLIDAYS 12-6

*Pets
Welcome!*

101 North Main St., Sandisfield, MA (Corner of Rtes 8 & 57)
413-258-4477 • Events at www.NewBostonInn.com

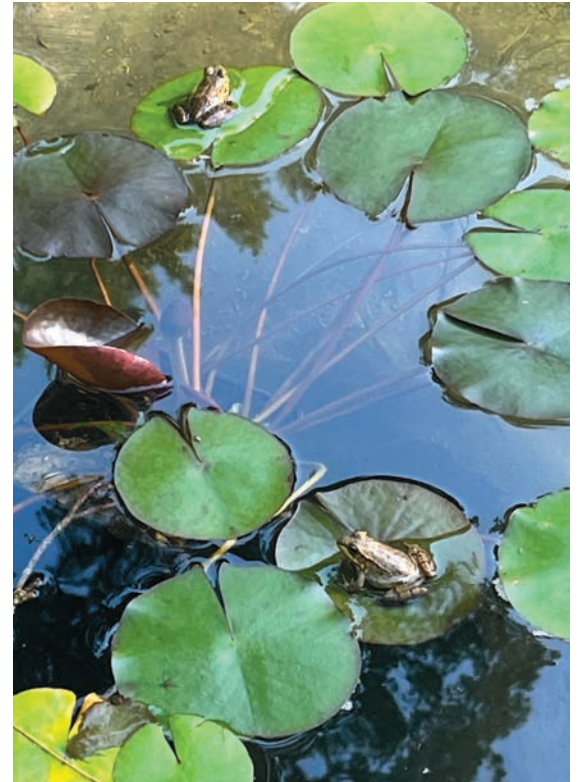
CHECK OUR
WEBSITE FOR
DINING AND
WEEKEND
SPECIALS!



Most of us travel on or at least know of Ed Jones Road here in Otis. The road was named after E. D. Jones whose family finds its roots right here in Otis. Son Dwight Euerrle Jones was born in Otis in 1904 before moving to Pittsfield in 1919. He joined the E. D. Jones Corporation in Dalton and is known for his civic work in addition to being an industrialist and executive. On the 150th anniversary of Otis in 1960, Dwight was the keynote speaker of the celebration and spoke of his family's three generations here in Otis. "You are far more

fortunate than many communities, at least you have your hills and your lakes. You do attract a very substantial number who come to enjoy a peaceful retreat or to take part in recreational activities both summer and winter," is a quote from his address. Little did he know that what he spoke about over sixty years ago is still the character of our beloved community. We are indeed lucky to carry on the fortune he spoke of. ☺

"Otis Memories" is an ongoing way to share your Otis memories with the community. If you have an idea for an article or think one of these memories would be a good feature, let us know. We also welcome old photographs. Send memories and ideas to otismemories@gmail.com. Looking forward to hearing from you!



Frogs on lily pads in Harrington Woods

Photo: Tony Rigillo



Just out of curiosity...

If I could sell my house for \$_____, I would list my home this spring.

Text your answer to, or call 413.528.4859

**THE MARKET IS CHANGING
THE TIME TO LIST IS
NOW**

The Brockman Group

Jared Kelly
413.854.1504

Chapin Fish
413.528.4859

448 Main Road, Monterey
413.528.4859
brockmanrealestate.com



William Pitt

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

williampitt.com

Great Barrington Brokerage | 306 & 308 Main Street | 413.528.4192
Lenox Brokerage | 34 Church Street | 413.637.4402
Each office is independently owned and operated ☑

ASTROLOGY ✨

Trust the Process

By Hilary Harley

Initially the cosmic energy of September is like molasses, an energetic quagmire with six out of ten planets cycling retrograde. How to manage this energy when the calendar calls us to swing back into action with school and work? Patience. By mid-September life will shift forward motion again. In the meantime, here's what to expect:

On September 1st, the Aries Moon has us eager to get a move on. Not so fast. The Labor Day holiday weekend is tricky. Watch for communication snafus with people and devices. Avoid making assumptions about other people now. Instead focus on your own lane and give others the benefit of the doubt.

Using the RE words helps: research, review, rest, restore, reclaim, to navigate the first half of September. Hold off on any big purchases or signing major documents until September 15th if possible. Of course, if essentials need to be replaced, such as electronic equipment or appliances, *buy the extra warranty*. You will be very glad you did.

On Sunday, September 3rd, Valuable Venus turns direct motion. Venus rules love, money and relationships. In Leo, Venus has tempted us to take risks, especially with our heart or wallet.

The fires within have been stoked since mid-July, ideally, returning us to creative projects, perhaps prompting more existential questions like, *where to go from here?*

Timely reflections now are no accident. While we want to get going, there is yet more to uncover and sort through. *Trust the process and keep the faith*. After Labor Day it's as if we are back in elementary school with the teacher asking, *what did you learn this summer?* That we are all more alike than not; that each of us brings unique parts to complete the whole puzzle of life.



Pushing forward again, Venus invites us to share our special qualities. However, we may be reticent with Mercury still retrograde and Jupiter shifting into reverse on September 4th. There is time. Like getting our wheels under us, we slowly emerge from the depths of summer days/daze. Journalizing, meditating, being

in nature are helpful to integrate our experiences.

Sturdy earth energies ground us into autumn routines between Tuesday, September 5th and the New Moon on the 14th. Whatever you are seeking to build, grow or harvest, now is the time! The strong earth alliance is key to the potent New Moon. On Thursday, September 14th, the New Moon in useful Virgo occurs just as *Messenger Mercury turns direct motion* affording us a choice opportunity to set intentions. Hand write your goals, the more specific the better.

With the inner planets now cycling forward, *we feel the forward thrust of life again*. IT IS GO TIME! Proceed with travel plans, big ticket purchases or signing major documents. As Jupiter and Venus square off at mid-month, you may be pulled in many directions and face multiple opportunities. Watch over-spending, wayward romances and foolhardy risks as Jupiter offers a treasure trove of abundance while Venus is ready to shop till she drops.

The Sun enters Libra on Saturday, September 23rd, marking the Autumnal Equinox as we head into the Full Moon at month's end. Our creativity soars as Mars and Venus align to the north node in Aries. Endless connections, ideas, projects and products pour out of us. We feel unstoppable, heightened and expanded by the courageous Aries Full Moon on Friday, September 29th. It asks us, "What do you want your life to look like?" ☯



Hilltown Storage

OUTDOOR STORAGE
CARS • BOATS
CAMPERS
INDOOR STORAGE

STORAGE UNITS
10' X 12'
AND
10' X 20'

413/854-8028 42 EAST OTIS RD.
OTIS, MA 01253



Otis resident Hilary Harley is a counseling astrologer and hosts *Mystical Messages* podcast. She is an art aficionado, a community volunteer, the mother of two daughters and owner of an elderly Tibetan Terrier.



PICKLEBALL FOR OTIS

By Joe Doboszynski

Pickleball has become the most popular participation sport in the country and is now the fastest growing sport around the world. People of all ages, sizes and shapes are playing it. The first time they try playing they become immediately hooked on the game. It is extremely inexpensive to get started with the cost of two paddles and a few balls in the \$20 range.

Pickleball was invented in 1965 on Bainbridge Island in Washington State by three dads trying to come up with a boredom buster for their kids. Legend has it that the dog owned by one of the group was named Pickles; thusly this name was given to the game.

It took over 55 years, but pickleball is now the fastest growing sport in the world. Efforts are underway to make pickleball an Olympic sport. Pickleball combines different features from tennis, ping pong and badminton. It is played on a badminton sized court, 20'x44', using paddles approximately twice the size of a ping pong paddle with a plastic ball similar to a softball sized whiffle ball. The seven feet in front of the net is the non-volley zone referred to as the kitchen (who knows why?) where the ball may not be hit on the fly, meaning the player must let the ball bounce first. This prevents the ball from being smashed back at the opposing player who could be at the net. Scoring is similar to tennis and badminton.

My concern is Otis does not have a pickleball court. An outdoor court would be amazing during the good weather, but an indoor court would provide year round access to those wanting to play. The game is not as strenuous as tennis, but still provides a great workout. At 79.5, I am able to play competitively with younger people and often it is with people older than myself who are equally competitive. It is also great family fun.

Prior to COVID, I reached out to the Otis recreation coordinator about the



Pickleball court at Herberg Middle School

Photo: Joe Doboszynski

possibility of setting up a pickleball program. I was told that at one time, Otis tried to set up pickleball in the town hall with lines taped to the floor with one of the participants providing the net. Apparently back then there wasn't enough interest and the program was discontinued. Being the start of COVID, a hold was put on the initiative and it was never revisited.

The game has since skyrocketed and a trip to the web site for Berkshire Mountain Pickleball, www.berkshireremountainpickleball.com, will give you an idea of how much it has expanded. In October 2015, I made a presentation to the Pittsfield Parks Commission in an attempt to have pickleball court lines painted over a tennis court or a basketball court. They approved painting two pickleball courts on one tennis court at Reid Middle School. At the present time there are four courts at Reid Middle School and eight courts at Herberg Middle School (see photo) open to the public when school is not in session. In addition, Pittsfield will be breaking ground for a six court pickleball complex before this article is published. The towns of Lenox and Stockbridge both have pickleball courts. It would be nice if the town could arrange to have pickleball courts lined on the basketball courts at the Farmington River School similarly to how they are painted over tennis court lines, and perhaps in the future find the funding to have a couple of pickleball courts put in behind the town hall or at the town beach. I would

be willing to try to set up a pickleball program next summer if a lined court could be provided.

Are you interested? Contact me, Joe Doboszynski, at dojoj@aol.com I am either at my cottage on the Otis Reservoir or at my home in Pittsfield, but I will contact you as soon as possible. Looking forward to seeing you all on the Otis Pickleball Court(s), virtual at the present time! ☺

JODY'S Floor Sanding

When Quality Counts ...
Call For Free Estimate

- SANDING
- REFINISHING

Environmentally
Safe Finishes
Available

30 Years
Experience
Fully Insured

JODY MARGRAF
PO Box 390
Otis, MA 01253
413-269-7141

OTIS HISTORY

The Story of the Founding of Our Constitution

Part Two

By Peter Cameron

Last month's column revealed that after the Revolutionary War the states instituted the Articles of Confederation to govern the new nation. Unfortunately, these quickly showed their weaknesses. The Confederation Congress called for a convention in May of 1787 to revisit the Articles. We pick up the story from that point.

Seventy-four delegates were appointed to the convention. Fifty-five attended. Rhode Island leaders refused to send anyone, citing a conspiracy to steal States' rights. Patrick Henry, the famous orator from Virginia, railed against the convention. His suspicion was that Madison wanted to create a powerful central government, robbing the states of power. He was correct. Leaders from each state, mostly the wealthy and influential, came to Philadelphia. Lawyers, philosophers, politicians and orators would decide what type of government the nation would have.

The convention opened with a speech from the Governor of Virginia. He pointed out the failures and evils that the Articles of Confederation created, stressing the need for a strong central

government. He proposed a plan which Madison had been working on for years. The plan broke the government down into three divisions: legislative, executive and judicial. This was shrewd politicking. By introducing their plan first, they forced the focus of debate into their arena. This proposal was debated for ten days, and then tabled.

The nationalist position was unacceptable to many, especially those from smaller states. They feared they would lose equal representation versus the larger states and thus their power. Delegates from New Jersey proposed a new plan. Keep the Articles of Confederation, but grant more powers to the heretofore weak Confederation Congress. Namely power to raise revenue and regulate commerce. This plan was debated for three days and then rejected.

Alexander Hamilton then proposed a government based on England's system of Parliamentary Government, absent a monarch, substituting an executive. He stated the British system was, up to that time, the best in the world. The convention, citing the strong possibility that the executive might assume ultimate power, making them akin to a monarch, quickly rejected this plan.

Near the end of June attention returned to the Virginia Plan. The sticking point was over the representation between large and small states. Large states wanted representation by population. Small states wanted the one vote for each state that the Articles of Confederation had provided.

On June 20th the small states lost the first battle. The convention approved a resolution establishing population as the basis for the House of Representatives. The small states countered with a proposal that the states have equal representation in the Senate. That vote ended in a tie, with the large states refusing to compromise. It looked like the convention would collapse.

Another thorny issue arose, slavery: How to count the slaves toward the number of representatives in the House. The north south division over this issue was heated. On July 12th Oliver Ellsworth proposed slaves be counted as "three-fifths of all other persons." This "Great Compromise" was sadly acceptable to all parties and was passed. Seeing compromise was necessary for the success of the convention, the big states gave in to the small state's Senate proposal. The Senate would have equal representation for each state. With these issues settled the convention appointed a committee to write a rough draft of the document and adjourned for 10 days of rest.

There was still a lot of discord and animosity among some and outright disgust in others regarding the document's proposals. In next month's column we will see what happened next. ☹



Peter Cameron is an Otis, MA resident and a retired policeman. He is a graduate of Central Connecticut State University with a B.S. in History with a concentration in U.S. Colonial History.

Klondike Camping Resort

Private Camping Community • Sites for Sale
www.KlondikeCampResort.com
Rt. 8 North, Otis MA

Check out our
website

OtisObserver.com

for back issues,
donations, renewals,
and subscriptions!



OPEN EVERY DAY
 7AM - 9PM
 ~~~~~  
 152 S. Main Rd. (Rte. 8)  
 Otis

# SOAP & SUDS LAUNDRY



**BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY**  
 HomeServices  
 Barnbrook Realty

SHANNON MARGRAF

413-212-1107  
 shannon@barnbrookrealty.com



MOVE IN READY! 2261 N. Main Road  
 4 Bed/2 Bath. 1976 sq. feet on 1.82 ACRES with a 3-car garage  
 \$530,000.00

ALL PROPANE IS THE SAME  
**OURS IS CHEAPER!!**



**HL Propane**  
**Co. Inc.**

100 GALLONS OF PROPANE FREE to new heating customers\*

\* Using 750 gallons per year. Call for details.

Call Toll Free M-F 8am to 4pm

[www.hlfuel.com](http://www.hlfuel.com)

**518-794-9066**

Route 20, West Lebanon, NY 12195



The *Otis Observer*, staffed by volunteers and funded by individuals and businesses, is published 11 times a year with a combined January–February issue. **Donations are needed to continue publication, and can be sent to Otis Observer, PO Box 533, Otis, MA 01253. Donations are tax-deductible as this newspaper has 501(c)(3) status.**

The *Observer* is available in **Otis** in outdoor boxes at Katie's Country Store, the Transfer Station, and the Otis Library as well as indoors at Papa's Healthy Food & Fuel, Knox Trail Inn, Bruce's Hardware, Farmington River Diner, Grouse House, the Otis Poultry Farm, Soap & Suds Laundry, Berkshire Bank and Town Hall. **Sandisfield:** Town Hall, the Library, and New Boston Inn; **Lee:** Lee Library; **Monterey:** Library. **Mailed and Gift Subscriptions**—complete form on the inside of the back cover or online at [otisobserver.com](http://otisobserver.com).

We reserve the right to edit for space, style and clarity. No portion of the *Observer* may be reproduced without the express permission of the publisher. The *Observer* is not responsible for errors and omissions.

The *Observer* provides news and opinion articles as a service to our readers. Many articles come from sources outside of our organization. Where possible, the author and the source are documented within each article. Statements and opinions in these articles are solely those of the author(s).

The *Otis Observer* and its principals, officers, staff and volunteers disclaim any liability whatsoever for inaccuracies found in its content.

We invite submissions, news tips, photos, comments and suggestions including letters to the editor. For consideration they must be received by the **15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.**

## CONTACT US:

Submissions [otisobserver@yahoo.com](mailto:otisobserver@yahoo.com)

Advertising [ooobserverads@yahoo.com](mailto:ooobserverads@yahoo.com)  
Calendar listings

[ooobservercalendar@yahoo.com](mailto:ooobservercalendar@yahoo.com)

Inquiries [ooobserverinfo@yahoo.com](mailto:ooobserverinfo@yahoo.com)

Letters to the Editor

[ooobserverletters@yahoo.com](mailto:ooobserverletters@yahoo.com)

Memories [otismemories@gmail.com](mailto:otismemories@gmail.com)



**Prepared by Sue Brofman**

*For inclusion in the Calendar,  
please send notices to*

**ooobservercalendar@yahoo.com**

**Note: Check events calendar  
townofotisma.com for up-to-date  
notifications/cancellations.**

## SEPTEMBER

- 1. Otis Town Hall is open from 8 am – 3 pm, Monday - Thursday. (CLOSED Sept. 4 for Labor Day)**
- 2. Otis Library Summer Hours**
  - Monday – 10 am – 4 pm
  - Tuesday – 12 noon – 6 pm
  - Wednesday – 10 am – 5 pm
  - Thursday – 1 pm – 7 pm
  - Friday – 10 am – 5 pm
  - Saturday – 9 am – 1 pm
  - Closed Sunday
- 3. Otis Food Pantry open every Wednesday 9 – 11 am**
- 4. Rec Center - Temporarily Closed**
- 5. StoryWalk, children and adults will enjoy a reading of “Different, A Great Thing to Be” by Heater Avis, while taking a walk along the Farmington River Trail.**
- 6. Farmington River School Closed September 4 for Labor Day.**

Sat., Sept. 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30, 9:30 – 10:45 am, **Mat Yoga, Connie Wilson**, Ages 16+, Kripalu Yoga, all levels, Otis Town Hall, call or email Otis Rec Center for more information **(413) 269-4541, otisrec@verizon.net**

Tues., Sept. 5, 12, 19 and 26, 10 am, **Otis Play**, parent/child playgroup best for children birth – 5 years of age, this is a free program, no registration required, Otis Town Hall

Tues., Sept. 5, 4:30 – 6 pm, **Historical Commission**, Otis Town Hall

Tues., Sept. 5, 7 – 8 pm, **Zoning Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Wed., Sept. 6, 13, 20 and 27, 9 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging Open**, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at [eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)

Wed., Sept. 6, 9 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging, Foot Nurse** will be at the center, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at [eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)

Thurs Sept. 7, 14, 21 and 28, 10 - 11 am, **Chair Yoga, Connie Wilson**, Ages 12+, Otis Town Hall, call or email Otis Rec Center for more information **(413) 269-4541, otisrec@verizon.net**

Thurs., Sept. 7, 11:30, **Council on Aging, Out to Lunch** at Ozzie's Restaurant at Main Street, Hinsdale, MA, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at [eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)

Sat., Sept. 9, 1 – 3 pm, **Self Defense Course**, For ages 8+, wear loose or workout clothing and bring a water bottle. Free for Otis Residents; \$25/person for Non-Otis Residents. Space is limited. To sign up email [townofotisrec@gmail.com](mailto:townofotisrec@gmail.com) by Friday September 1, Otis Town Hall

Mon., Sept. 11, 18 and 25, 10 am – 2 pm, **Council on Aging Open**, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email at [eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)

Mon., Sept. 11, 18 and 25, 12:30 – 1:30 pm, **Council on Aging Fitness Class** with Michelle from Soules Fitness, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at **(413) 269-0103** or email Eila at [eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)

Mon., Sept. 11, 2 - 4 pm, **Board of Assessors Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Mon., Sept. 11, 6 – 7:30 pm, **Recreation Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Mon., Sept. 11, 7 - 8 pm, **School Committee Meeting**, Farmington River Regional Elementary School

Mon., Sept. 11, 7 - 9 pm, **Planning Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Tues., Sept. 12, 6:30 - 8 pm, Town of Otis **Select Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Thurs., Sept. 14, 6 pm, **Otis Library Meeting (In person and Zoom)**, inquire at [info@otislibraryma.org](mailto:info@otislibraryma.org) for more information, Otis Library

Thurs., Sept. 14, 7 pm, **PTA Meeting (Zoom)**, Farmington River Regional Elementary School

Fri., Sept. 15, 11 am - 12 noon, **Council on Aging Brown Bag Program**, Otis Town Hall, for information call Eila at (413) 269-0103 or email at [eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)

Tues., Sept. 19, 6 - 9 pm, **Conservation Commission Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Wed., Sept. 20, 12 noon - 2pm, **Council on Aging Potluck Lunch** - Bingo in the Gym, Otis Town Hall, please call Eila at (413) 269-0103 or email Eila at [eilabell2@aol.com](mailto:eilabell2@aol.com)

Wed., Sept. 20, 6 - 7:30 pm, **Cultural Council Meeting**, Otis Town Hall

Tues., Sept. 26, 6:30 - 8 pm, Town of Otis **Select Board Meeting**, Otis Town Hall



Otis Recreation Committee will be sponsoring a

# SELF DEFENSE COURSE

BY ZENQUEST MARTIAL ARTS CENTER

For ages 8+

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup>**  
**1PM - 3PM**

Otis Town Hall  
(1 North Main Rd, Otis)

*Free for Otis Residents*  
*\$25/person for Non-Otis Residents*

Participants should plan on wearing loose or workout clothing and bring a water bottle for the breaks.

To sign up, please email [townofotisrec@gmail.com](mailto:townofotisrec@gmail.com) with your name and address and number of participants by Friday, September 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Space is limited.*




# Ransom & Daughter Home

Custom Window Treatments  
2nd Home Services  
House Cleaning  
Upholstery



[www.ransomanddaughter.com](http://www.ransomanddaughter.com) ★ [ransomanddaughter@icloud.com](mailto:ransomanddaughter@icloud.com)  
413.717.2639 ★ 413.717.2521

## Crandall Self Storage

1735 East Otis Road  
East Otis, MA  
413-269-7200

Storage Units from 5x5 to 12x30  
Convenient Location  
Well Lit / Fenced  
Gated Keypad entrance

By appointment 413-269-7200  
or visit [CrandallStorage.com](http://CrandallStorage.com)

### Mail? Email?

*Don't miss your copy of the Otis Observer!*

Seasonal residents who wish to continue getting the 00 monthly should let us know if they would prefer the online version (in color) or the paper copy mailed.

Please fill out the subscription form BELOW and return it as soon as possible or online at [otisobserver.com](http://otisobserver.com). For more information contact us at [oobserverinfo@yahoo.com](mailto:oobserverinfo@yahoo.com).

### Want to Renew or Subscribe to the Otis Observer?

To have the Otis Observer mailed to your home, complete the form below and make your check payable to the Otis Observer, for \$15 (annual subscription fee for 11 issues) and mail to **PO Box 533, Otis, MA 01253**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Delivery Street Address/PO Box: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Winter Address \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Check either one or both boxes:**

Mail printed edition to me

Email the electronic (PDF) version

Renew my subscription



P. O. Box 533  
Otis, MA 01253

**STAFF:**

*Arlene Tolopko, Publisher*  
*Linda Rocke, Editor*  
*Tina Sotis, Graphic Designer*  
*Sue Brofman, Calendar and eSubscriptions*  
*Leslie Morris, Proofreader, Circulation*  
*Frank Tolopko, Treasurer and Proofreader*  
*Ellen Dilts, Circulation, Subscriptions*  
*Deb Fogel, Circulation*  
*Katharine Adams, Contributing Writer*  
*Sandy Balayan, Contributing Writer*  
*Peter Cameron, Contributing Writer*  
*Eileen Cohen, Contributing Writer*  
*Lynne Geane, Contributing Writer*  
*Jackie Gentile, Contributing Writer, Donations*  
*Hilary Harley, Contributing Writer*  
*Diane Provenz, Contributing Writer*  
*Stephanie Skinner, Contributing Writer*  
*Celeste Watman, Contributing Writer*  
*Carol Lombardo, Recording Secretary*  
*Howard Basis, Cartoonist*  
*Karen Amanti, Masthead Artist*  
*Sam Maher, Website Consultant*  
*Slade Sohmer, Website Consultant*  
*Peter Sohn, Webmaster Emeritus*

LOCAL OTIS  
EXPERT

THOM  
GARVEY

Service that's as elevated as  
YOUR STANDARDS.



tgarvey@williampitt.com  
508.371.8219

**williampitt.com**



William  
Pitt

**Sotheby's**  
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

Great Barrington Brokerage | 306 & 308 Main Street | 413.528.4192  
Lenox Brokerage | 34 Church Street | 413.637.4402