

# THE ROYALSTON COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

March 2006



Volume IX, Issue II

A PUBLICATION OF THE FRIENDS OF THE PHINEHAS S. NEWTON LIBRARY, ROYALSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Calendar of Events

March 1

Wednesday

**Ash Wednesday**

March 2

Thursday

8:45 grades k-2 and 12:45 grades 3-6 **Dr Seuss' Birthday**  
RCS celebrates with **readings by student authors of original creative writing** published as hardcover books, written by every kid in the school. All welcome.

3:30 – 4:30 p.m. **Cross Culture Club.** Emma O'Connor of Laurel Lake Rd. presents on Ireland.

7:00 p.m.

**Trustees of the Phinehas Newton Library** meet

March 3

Friday

7:00 – 10:00p.m. **Open Mic** at Town Hall. Melanie and the Blue Shots, the get up and dance/ knock your socks off house band, will open and close the show. In between, you never know who will play, but this season it has all been exceptionally entertaining. Free admission. Refreshments available for a donation. To sign up for a time slot to play, show up early or call ahead to Jim Bennett at 978-575-1052.

March 5

Sunday

7:00 -11:00 a.m. Royalston Fireman and EMS Association All-You-Can-Eat **Breakfast** at the Winchendon Rod & Gun Club. Tix \$8.00.

2:00 p.m.

**Understanding the Modern Middle East lecture and discussion series** at the Phinehas Newton Library. A discussion of the *Roots of Governments and Dictatorships in the Middle East* led by Rami Khalaf, an instructor of Foreign Policy and History at Worcester State College. All welcome. 249-3572 for info.

March 7

Tuesday

**8:30 p.m. Public hearing on the Community Development Block Grant** at the Royalston Town Hall.

March 9

Thursday

7:00-10:00 a.m. **Royalston Community Coop** delivery expected.

11:00 a.m.

**Royalston Council on Aging** meets at Dorothy Newton's.

Noon

**early dismissal** ARRSD Elementary Schools

3:30 pm

**Friends of the Library Meeting:** Discuss this newsletter, Modern Middle East discussion series, library technology, "adopt-a-library" and other library support. All welcome.

7:00 p.m.

**Voices of Faith Choir** performing at 1<sup>st</sup> Cong. Church

7:30 p.m.

**Open Space Committee Meeting** at Town Hall: Discuss conservation and recreation projects in Town. Look at maps. Seeking input on Town skating rink.

March 10

7:00 p.m.

Friday

**2nd Friday Film Series** continues at the Phinehas Newton Library with *The Great Flood of 1936: The Connecticut River Story*. Good company and plentiful popcorn. Free.

March 13

1:30 p.m.

Monday

**Purim**

**The Minstrel's Revels:** Medieval Life in Song and Story at the Royalston Town Hall. Musician and storyteller Mary Jo Maichack dresses as a minstrel and presents poems, stories and music; geared to ages 8-12. Free. Everyone is welcome.

March 14

6:35 p.m.

Tuesday

**Full Worm Moon**

March 15

Wednesday

**Village School In-service training.** No classes.

March 17

Friday

Friday

**St. Patrick's Day**

March 19

2:00 p.m.

Sunday

**Understanding the Modern Middle East lecture and discussion series** at the Phinehas Newton Library. Rami Khalaf, an instructor of Foreign Policy and History at Worcester State College will discuss *The U.S. Presidency and the Middle East*. All welcome. Pls. call 978-249-0358 for info.

March 20

1:26 p.m.

Monday

**Vernal Equinox** - the first day of spring!

March 22

7:00 -7:45 pm.

Wednesday

**Indian New Year (Saka) 1928**

**Science Night** at the Village School. 4th-6th graders will present projects based on their own inquiry, and investigations. Call to double check on the time. 978 249-3505

April 2

2:00 a.m.

Sunday

**Daylight Savings Time** begins (change your clocks one hour forward; check your batteries in smoke and radon detectors)

2:00 p.m.

**Understanding the Modern Middle East lecture and discussion series** at the Phinehas Newton Library. A discussion led by Dr. David Mednicoff, J.D from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, will present *The Modern Middle East and the United States: A Brief Overview*. Call 978-249-3572 for info.

April 2 - 8

**National Library Week:** Watch for your chance to win fabulous prizes at the Phinehas S Newton Library.

April 3

Monday

**Town election**



## Town Clerk News

Melanie Mangum

### Dog Clinic - Mark The Date

The Gardner Animal Care Center will hold a **Rabies Clinic** on **Saturday, March 25** from **12:30 to 1:30 p.m.** at the Uptown Fire Department. This is the only opportunity to get both your dogs' Rabies vaccines up to date and get a Town of Royalston dog license at the same time.



The following are the fees for rabies/dog tags. If you come to the clinic, please remember to bring **exact change** or a check.

Rabies vaccines: \$10.00

Town of Royalston Dog Licenses: \$6.00 for spayed/neutered dog, \$10.00 for unaltered dog.

### Annual Town Election Update

So far, there are two contests that will be on the ballot for the Annual Town Election, which will be held Monday, April 3, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. The deadline to return nomination papers or sign the blanket form was Feb. 13. The last day for candidates to object or withdraw is March 1.

**Election Contests: Werner Bundschuh** and **Linda Alger** are running for a 3-year seat on the Board of Selectmen.

**Vyto Andreliunas** and **Gary Winitzer** are running for a 5-year seat on the Planning Board.

**No Candidates:** There are 3 positions on the ballot with no candidates so far, so write-in campaigns are possible. There is a 3-year term for Assessor, a 3-year term for Moderator and a 1-year term for the Trustees of the J.N. Bartlett Fund.

### Running Unopposed:

*(write-in campaigns possible)*

Town Clerk - 1 year - Melanie Mangum

Tree Warden - 3 years - Larry Siegel

Cemetery Commission - 3 years - John McClure

Constable - 3 years - John Chencharik

Board of Library Trustees - 3 years - Barbara Guiney

4 Positions each of 1 year for the J. N. Bartlett Fund - Mary Barclay,

Barbara Richardson, Brenda Putney.

Board of Public Welfare - Mary Barclay

Sewer Commission - 3 years - Gary Winitzer

Sewer Commission - 2 years - Gary Winslow

ARRSD School Committee-3 years- Roberta Newman

### Rice Wins State Rep Race

Royalston's new State Representative is Bob Rice. Here are the results from the recent State Representative from the 2nd Worcester District special election:

Total for Rice, 3,020; total for Dennehy, 2,289

Town by town results:

Gardner: Rice 2,013; Dennehy 920

Royalston: Rice 71; Dennehy 54

Ashby: Rice 415; Dennehy 665

Ashburnham: Rice 415; Dennehy 665

Winchendon: Rice 359; Dennehy 406

## Royalston Fire Department News:

### Carbon Monoxide Alarms. Required by Law

Kelly Newton

On November 4, 2005 Governor Mitt Romney signed legislation to protect the public from the dangers of carbon monoxide, a potentially lethal odorless gas. This places certain requirements on owners of residential properties to install and maintain Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarms. The Board of Fire Prevention Regulations (527 CMR 31.00) establish the specific requirements of the law including the type, location, maintenance and inspection requirements of the alarm. The bill is named for Nicole Garofalo, a 7-year-old Plymouth girl who died last January after a snow-blocked heating vent trapped toxic carbon monoxide fumes in the family home. In 2003, there were nearly 3,000 carbon monoxide cases reported statewide, most of which occurred in residences during the winter months. State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan said, "Just as we have been reaping the rewards of smoke alarm technology through fewer fire deaths, requiring carbon monoxide detectors will also prevent deaths by giving families early warning of a silent killer."

**Who is impacted by this law?** Generally speaking anyone who owns a residential property regardless of size (1-2 family dwelling, multi-family apartments, condominiums, townhouses, etc) that contains fossil burning fuel (i.e., oil, wood, gas, coal, etc.) or contains enclosed parking (i.e., attached or enclosed garage) in Massachusetts is required to install CO alarms by March 31, 2006. In certain limited instances, the requirements are deferred to Jan. 1, 2007

**Where do I have to put these CO alarms?** In most residences, carbon monoxide alarms are required to be placed on every level of a home or dwelling unit including habitable portions of basements and attics. On levels with sleeping areas, the alarms must be placed within ten (10) feet of the bedroom doors. CO alarms do not go inside garages, but in the adjacent living area.

**When do I have to install CO alarms?** Most residences are required to install CO alarms by March 31, 2006. After that date, anyone who sells their property will be required to have an inspection by the Fire Department prior to the sale or transfer of their property.

**What are the requirements for a landlord?** Landlords must inspect, test and maintain the CO alarms at least once a year or at the beginning of any rental period (such as lease renewal) in each dwelling unit. Batteries are required to be replaced once a year. Tenants should report any problems with alarms to landlord immediately and learn to recognize the difference between the Smoke Detector and the CO alarm.

**What kinds of CO Alarms are allowed?** Types allowed include: Battery powered with battery monitoring, Plug-in (AC powered) units with battery backup, AC primary power (hard-wired, usually involves hiring an electrician) with battery backup, Low-voltage or wireless alarms; and Qualified combination Smoke Detectors and Smoke Alarms. ( **Qualified combination detectors** have a simulated voice and tone alarms that clearly distinguish between the two types of emergencies. )

To learn more, join us with the North Quabbin Area Fire Departments April 1 & 2, 2006 at the Home Show in Athol, MA

## Board of Health News

*Phil Leger*

Did you know that you can flatten milk jugs, juice containers, metal cans etc. and still recycle them? After you rinse out your recyclable containers, step on them. This helps to make more room in the roll off container. Because plastic containers are so light, we can only get 2-2.5 tons in a container. Flattening plastic, juice, and metal containers help conserve space and thus fuel. Metal containers easily flatten once both top and bottom lids are removed. Stick the lids inside the can once flattened.

Also, a reminder that all trash bags need a bag sticker on them. Our goal is to break even so there is no tax impact from the transfer station operation. Remember recycling is free, trash is not free. There are some not so honest folks who are using the facility at times. If you see illegal dumping, mention it to the attendants or Board of Health members. Remember we had 69% recycling rate in 2004; second highest in the state. Keep up the good work. Reduce, reuse, and then recycle.

## Fire Department Breakfast

For \$8.00 you can enjoy a hearty, all-you-can-eat buffet, breakfast on Sunday, March 5th from 7:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. at the Winchendon Rod and Gun Club on Winchendon Road. Proceeds benefit the Royalston Fire and EMS Association and your support is appreciated. Tickets will be available in advance from any Royalston Fire Department member or at the door.



*Helen Williams, Nancy Newton, Arline Vining and Jean LeRay, had many choices on what foods they could take home from the Royalston Luncheon Club, at no cost, for future meals.*

## Royalston Luncheon Club

Council on Aging Chairman **Betty Woodbury** says a great way to pass time during these cold and glumpy winter days is to join her and several others each week at the toasty-warm Town Hall for food, fun and fellowship. A hot, balanced meal is served each Wednesday at 11:30 a.m.. There's a little entertainment, some announcements, lots of gabbing, and regularly scheduled Chinese Auctions (first Wednesdays of each month), Blood Pressure and specialty health clinics (second Wednesdays of each month), and distribution of "Brown Bags" of nutritious foods provided by the Western Massachusetts Food Bank (fourth Wednesdays of each month). Local grocery stores have also been providing a broad selection of baked goods and produce for Luncheon Club members can take at no cost, for later use at home. The group, now 20 years old, also plans occasional bus trips. Seniors are welcome to dine for \$2; future seniors who have Wednesdays available are also encouraged to attend, and may dine for \$2.50. Call **Dorothy Newton** at 978-249-8882 by the Monday prior to each dinner for reservations.

## Open Space Committee News

**Town Skating Rink?** An important goal of the Open Space Committee is to work to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for Royalston residents. A skating rink has been suggested. What do residents think about turning Bullock Field, the baseball field behind the Post Office, into a low tech skating rink during the winter? It could be a nice local spot for pick-up hockey, family time together, romantic moonlit glides and/or safely hanging out with friends. Very preliminary ideas are being batted around involving big tarps, planks, water from the fire department, fairy lights and snow plows. Of course, all aspects of this tentative plan are open for debate and reality checks. For this skating rink idea to get off the ground, the committee needs community input and lots of resident help. If you've got an opinion and/or would be willing to work to bring a skating rink to Royalston, please let us know. Attend our meeting on March 9 at 7:30 p.m at the Town Hall or email us at [info@royalstonopenspace.org](mailto:info@royalstonopenspace.org)

## Tree Department

*Larry Siegel*

The easy part of the tree warden job is to be awakened in the middle of the night by a call from dispatch (during a snow storm) with the news that a tree has fallen across the road and requires immediate attention. The difficult part is to knock on a door and advise the homeowner, sometimes a friend, that the tree he or she has recently cut down is, was, a town tree. The town's (that's us folks, all of us) right of way generally extends fifty feet, and sometimes it's more; rarely its less. This is a sizable swath. Make the difficult part of this tree warden job easier by contacting me at 978-249-4260 to review any tree reasonably within that swath before, not after, cutting. The permit process is without pain and without charge. The tree (or trees) will be posted, a hearing to provide opportunity for the landowner, neighbors and other interested townspeople to express their opinions held, and a decision rendered. Democracy at work.

## Memorial Day Committee

Members of the Memorial Day Committee are already turning their thoughts to the May 29 Memorial Day Exercises, which will center around the Riverside and Hillside Cemeteries in the South Village this year. If you know of a recently-buried veteran who has not yet had a marker placed by his or her grave, or if you're aware of a damaged or missing marker from the grave of any veteran, please inform Brenda Putney at 978-249-7787 or [bputney@crystal-mtn.com](mailto:bputney@crystal-mtn.com), and she will see that one is in place with a fresh flag for Memorial Day.

## Free Composting Toilet at Post Office

Should anyone be interested in fixing an "Envirolet" composting toilet (it does not require water), it's yours for the taking. This was purchased years ago for the Post Office, but went into disrepair several years ago. It would be great for a camp. We have the paperwork and are told that parts are still available. Stop in at the Post Office any morning or call Pamela 978-249-9126 at home. Thanks.

Also, thanks to 3rd grader John Knight, who maintains a recycling bin for junk mail in the post office lobby to earn a Cub Scout merit badge.

## Phinehas S. Newton Library News

Kathy Morris, Library Director

Trustees: Polly Longworth, Lisa Freden, Barbara Guiney

Mondays: 10:00am - 8:30pm. Thursdays: 1:00pm - 5:00pm and 6:30 - 8:30pm

Saturdays: 9:00am - 12:00noon

978-249-3572 [www.royalstonlibrary.org](http://www.royalstonlibrary.org)

### Thank You

Ferron Dooley Fairchild for weekly volunteer work

Ben West for volunteer work

Tom Musco and Jim Kelley for donations of books, movies, and books-on-CD.

Royalston Academy and the Judith Jenkins Musco Scholarship Fund for funding the incredible Boston Museum of Science Starlab planetarium program for children during the recent school vacation

### New Information on the Library Website

**New Databases Available:** With increased funding to the Central Massachusetts Regional Library System through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners Resource Sharing and Technology Fund, three new databases have been added to those already available. The new products are Encyclopedia Americana, Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia and Facts on File Science Online. These join InfoTrac, NewsBank, Facts on File Issues and Controversies and netLibrary. All of these databases can be accessed from the library and your home computer. For home access, you will need to have a valid library card and come to the library to gain our access code. Once you have that number, you can go to the library's website: <http://www.royalstonlibrary.org>, click on the databases link and then type in your access number and library card number and search any of the databases.

**New Informative Links:** Jeff Mangum has been adding new links on the website. Very soon there will be links to Massachusetts and Federal Tax Forms, links to cool (and educational) websites for kids and teens, genealogy research information, a local artwork gallery, and a location map and driving instructions. Also, check out the events calendar. We owe a giant thank you to Jeff for all his work in creating such an incredible, informative, and cool website.



Emily Mangum, a bellissima participant in the recent cross culture club about Italy, models her new Carneval mask.

### Viva Cross Culture Club

Cross Culture Club at the library continues March 2 at 3:30 at the library with a presentation on Ireland. Recent presentations have been a blast. To learn about Italy, kids heard traditional stories, pressed pasta, made Carneval masks and ate gooey pastry. For Lesotho, the bo-ausi practiced a dance to learn how to carry water on their heads and ate traditional mealie meal pap and greens. Thanks to Mary Carnie, Beth Gospodarek and Emma O'Connor for organizing presentations that included great food, lots of information, and fun crafts.

### Donations to the Friends

Thank you to these generous supporters, who recently renewed their memberships to the Friends of the Library:

**Marie Claire and Pierre Humbolt**

**Tom Freudenheim**

**Christine Beckett Long**

**Bill and Lian Cutting**

**George H. Bodman**

**Frank B. and Patricia B. Stearns**

**Sharon and Bill Hood**

*If you've made a contribution lately in response to our recent membership letter, many thanks; we're currently processing the donations and your name should appear in the next newsletter.*

### Lecture and Discussion Series:

#### Understanding the Modern Middle East

On Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> and April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2:00 p.m. at the library there will be an informative reading, lecture, and discussion series exploring the past and future of the Middle East entitled *Understanding the Modern Middle East*. Background information is provided by R. Stephen Humphreys' book *Between Memory and Desire: The Middle East in a Troubled Age*. Copies of the book may be borrowed from the library or purchased for \$10. It is not necessary to read the book to attend the lectures and discussions. This series was developed and is partially funded by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities with donations from Polly Longworth and the Friends of the Phinehas S Newton Library. The first two lectures will be led by Rami Khalaf, an Instructor of Foreign Policy and History at Worcester State College. His first topic on March 5<sup>th</sup> will be "The Roots of Governments and Dictatorships in the Middle East" and his second topic on March 19<sup>th</sup> will be "The U.S. Presidency and the Middle East." On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Dr. David Mednicoff, J.D., Assistant Professor of Legal Studies and Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Judaic and Near Eastern Studies and the Program in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, will present "The Modern Middle East and the United States: A Brief Overview." For more information and to sign up for any or all of the programs, please call the library.

### Documentary Film Series Conclusion

On Friday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the library, the final documentary, *The Great Flood of 1936: The Connecticut River Story*, will be shown. Actual film footage of the great ice dam and resulting flooding along with interviews with people who were there, add to the drama of the greatest flood to roar down the Connecticut River in over 300 years. Enjoy this film on our "big screen" while munching on popcorn and other refreshments. It's all free. Contact the library with questions or for more information.

**NEW BOOKS AT THE LIBRARY  
ADULT AND YOUNG ADULT FICTION**

Auster, Paul *The Brooklyn Follies: A Novel*  
 Barnes, Julian *Arthur & George*  
 Blissett, Luther *Q*  
 Braun, Lilian Jackson *The Cat Who Dropped a Bombshell*  
 Cabot, Meg *Avalon High*  
 Cabot, Meg *Size 12 is Not Fat*  
 Cohn, Rachel *Gingerbread*  
 Corder, Zizou *Lion Boy: The Truth*  
 Cornwell, Bernard *The Pale Horseman*  
 DiCamillo, Kate *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*  
 DiTerlizzi, Tony *Arthur Spiderwick's Field Guide to the Fantastical World Around You*  
 Enoch, Suzanne *Don't Look Down*  
 Fairstein, Linda *Death Dance*  
 Feather, Jane *Almost A Lady*  
 Gantoss, Jack *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*  
 Gibbons, Kaye *The Life All Around Me by Ellen Foster*  
 Harrison, Lisi *Best Friends for Never*  
 Hautman, Pete *Godless*  
 Hawke, Richard *Speak of the Devil: A Novel*  
 Higgins, Jack *Season in Hell*  
 Higgins, Jack *The Eagle Has Flown*  
 Iles, Greg *Turning Angel*  
 Jellen, Michelle *Spain or Shine*  
 Johansen, Iris *On The Run*  
 Kaminsky, Staurt *M. Terror Town*  
 Karon, Jan *These High, Green Hills*  
 Kerr, M.E. *Your Eyes in Stars: A Novel*  
 Kerr, P.B. *The Blue Djinn of Babylon*  
 King, Stephen *Cell: A Novel*  
 Klinkenborg, Verlyn *Timothy; or, Notes of an Ab-  
ject Reptile*  
 Krentz, Jayne Ann *All Night Long*

**From the Childrens' Room**

*Jen Barkus*

Do you know exactly what is tucked away in the nooks and crannies of the PS Newton Library Children's room? New books, old books, books on tape, music, magazines, board games and puppets, just to name a few attractions. Grab *The Tale of Jeremy Fisher* on CD or the soundtrack to *Piglet's Big Movie* (featuring songs by Carly Simon) for rides in the car or relaxing before bed. Learn how to make Bunny Rabbit Pancakes and Silly Snake Dogs from the *Pillsbury Kids Cookbook*. Get children's movie reviews and insight into the latest and greatest toys by reading *Family Fun* magazine.

This month we welcome a host of new books by Laura Numeroff, whose classic, *If You Give a Pig a Pancake*, is fun for all ages. Also, don't forget, our web site lists all of the new children's books as they arrive each month. So take a look around the Children's Room and see what you can find.

Pre-school Story Hour, held on Mondays at 11:00 am, will feature art projects and stories about shapes and textures in March:

- |            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| March 6th  | Snowflakes    |
| March 13th | Shamrocks     |
| March 20th | Pasta jewelry |
| March 27th | Playdough     |

Leigh, Ana *The Lawman Said "I Do": The Frasers*  
 Lescroate, John *The Hunt Club: A Novel*  
 Lessing, Doris *The Story of General Dann and Mara's Daughter,*  
 Maguire, Gregory *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*  
 McDermid, Val *A Place of Execution*  
 McNaught, Judith *Every Breath You Take*  
 Moehringer, J.R. *The Tender Bar*  
 Ostow, Micol *Westminster Abby*  
 Oxenbury, Helen *AlicethroughtheLookingGlass*  
 Parker, Barbara *Suspicion of Rage*  
 Parker, Robert B. *Sea Change*  
 Pierce, Meridith Ann *Dark Moon*  
 Pierce, Tamora *Wild Magic*  
 Reiner, Carl *NNNNN: A Novel*  
 Rennison, Louise *ThenHeAteMyBoyEntrancers*  
 Robb, J.D. *Memory In Death*  
 Sachar, Louis *Small Steps*  
 Shapero, Rich *Wild Animus*  
 Strauss, Peggy Guthart *Getting the Boot*  
 Stroud, Jonathan *Ptolemy's Gate*  
 Stroud, Jonathan *The Golem's Eye*  
 Szilagy, Steve *Photographing Fairies*  
 Turtledove, Harry *In High Places*  
 Whytock, Cherry *My Saucy Stuffed Ravioli: The Life of Angelica Cookson Potts*  
 Woodson, Jacqueline *Hush*



**ADULT AND YOUNG ADULT  
NONFICTION**

Bendavid-Val, Leah *National Geographic: The Photographs*  
 Barry, Dave *Dave Barry's Money Secrets: Like: Why is There a Giant Eyeball on the Dollar?*  
 Bausum, Ann *Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement*  
 Better Homes and Gardens *101 full-size Quilt Blocks and Borders*  
 Cohen, Gene D. *The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging Brain*  
 Dossey, Larry *The Extraordinary Healing Power of Ordinary Things*  
 Eisenberg, Arlene *What To Expect in the Toddler Years*  
 Fradin, Dennis Brindell *With a Little Luck*  
 Godwin, Gail *The Making of a Writer: Journals, 1961-1963*  
 Grogan, John *Marley & Me*  
 Klindlon, Dan *Raising Cain Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*  
 Mumm, Debbie *Debbie Mumm's Quick Country Quilts for Every Room*  
 Okey, Shannon *Knit Girl*  
 Perrin, Steve *Acadia, The Soul of a National Park*  
 Reece, Erik *Lost Mountain A Year in the Vanishing Wilderness*  
 Scheeres, Julia *Jesus Land: A Memoir*  
 Sheehy, Gail *Sex and the Seasoned Woman*  
 Thomas, Elizabeth Marshall *The Hidden Life of Dogs*  
 Well, Andrew *Healthy Aging: A Lifelong Guide to Your Physical and Spiritual Well-Being*  
 Welsch, Roger *From Tinkering to Torquing: A Beginner's Guide to Tractors and Tools*

**BOOKS-ON-CD**

**ADULT FICTION AND NONFICTION**  
 Braun, Lilian Jackson *The Cat Who Dropped Talked Turkey*  
 Christie, Agatha *Death on the Nile*  
 Corder, Zizou *Lion Boy: The Truth*  
 Funke, Cornelia *Inkspell*  
 Funke, Cornelia *The Thief Lord*  
 Gaiman, Neil *Anasi Boys*  
 Krentz, Jayne *All Night Long*  
 Maguire, Gregory *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*  
 Shapero, Rich *Wild Animus*  
 Carter, Jimmy *Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis*

**National Library Week**

Mark your calendars. National Library Week is April 2-8 this year. Each time you visit the library during that week, you are eligible to enter you name in a drawing that will be held on April 10<sup>th</sup> for a \$25 gift certificate from Bruce's Browser.

## Tax Office News

*Rebecca Krause-Hardie*

### On-line Tax Bill Payments coming soon:

Property owners will now be able to pay their Real Estate taxes online. This new online system should be set up in time for the 2006 Real Estate tax bills. Payments can be made either by a transfer from a bank account or with a credit card. There are no transaction fees charged for Bank transfers, however there are additional charges when paying by credit card. Businesses that accept credit card payments are normally charged a fee by the credit card company. This does not apply to Cities and Towns and the fees are passed along directly to the card holder.

Initially we will be taking online payments for just the 2006 Real Estate Taxes. Over time we will add Excise and Sewer Taxes as well. Watch for information about how to access to the online payment site.

### Tax Title - What is that all about?

You may have seen the legal notice in the last issue of the newsletter about properties being taken into tax title. Here's a little bit about how that works.

Each year the town sends out Real Estate Tax Bills. These bills represent a lien on the property. If the taxes go unpaid, then the property is put into "Tax Title". This means that the lien is "perfected" and the town's right to that tax revenue is protected. This is the first step towards the town actually "taking" the property. In addition to the taxes, the property owner is liable for all the interest to date, fees, advertising and legal costs associated with this process. The whole lump sum is charged interest at 16% per year.

Tax payers in this situation might want to opt for a transfer of deed in lieu of foreclosure. This means that the tax payer may be able to reach an agreement with the town where they transfer their deed to the town and then are freed of their obligation to pay the taxes.

Otherwise, the case goes to the state's Land Court and the property is finally foreclosed on and goes to the town. The town can then decide how it will dispose of this property. Parcels might be kept by the town and others might be offered up for sale in an auction process. The town might put certain restrictions on properties before they are resold – such as zoning or conservation restrictions.

Please Note: Most towns place properties in tax title immediately if the bill is unpaid for just a few months. In Royalston, some taxes have gone unpaid for years. This will no longer be the case. Over the past two years, we have cleaned up uncollectible back taxes, we have repeatedly notified folks of taxes in arrears, we have had a tax amnesty in which many folks took advantage of the waiving of interest to pay their back taxes, and we have arranged payment plans with a number of people. Those few remaining properties where arrangements have not been made to pay the taxes and those who have defaulted on their payment plans will soon be receiving final notices prior to tax title.

In short, we are doing everything we can do to help folks clear up their back taxes. When all else fails, when folks don't pay their back taxes, or make their payments, as a last resort ... we go into tax title. We want to help and we also need to protect the interests of the town. Please call if you have any questions.

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## Zoning Task Force

*Vyto Andreliunas*

Here is a warm-up set of questions that will be addressed as the Zoning Task Force begins its review with its contractor. Among others, the following issues, raised by Town planning reports, will be queried:

Should Town Zoning include:

- \*Senior Housing provisions, if so, how?
- \*Accessory apartment options, "in-law" or similar accessory structures?
- \*Expansion of our "cluster" provisions?
- \*Expansion of Home Occupation, how?
- \*Provision for a "Village District" section to allow mixed use development under certain conditions?

Consider these in the context of our Town needs in years to come, and how they fit into your own vision. The Zoning Task Force will ask for public comment starting next month.



## Selectmen's Office Update

**Town Website?** The selectmen's office is looking into the possibilities of creating public access to the town information via the internet. Creating a website with links to Town boards, standardizing Town computing costs and e-mail, overseeing cyber-security, and networking Town computers are some of its information technology goals. As a first step, the selectmen want to start a dialogue with residents interested in IT management to see what people are willing/capable of doing and for how little money.

### **Community Development Block Grant - Housing Rehabilitation:**

A public hearing will be held on Tues. March 7 at 8:30 p.m at the Royalston Town Hall to discuss and solicit public response to the Towns' Community Development block grant for up to \$1M application to the state Dept. of Housing and Community Development. It is a regional application including the Towns of Royalston, Phillipston and Athol. Past years' grant activities will be discussed as well as the Town community development strategy for 2006. The proposed activities for the regional application will include a joint housing rehabilitation deferred loan program for eligible homeowners and a Public Social Service project designed to support economic self sufficiency. Pls. attend the hearing or contact the selectmens' office for eligibility information.

**The Minstrel's Revels:  
Medieval Life in Song and Story**

Monday, March 13 at 1:30 pm at the Royalston Town Hall, join the Village School as musician and storyteller Mary Jo Maichack dresses as a minstrel and presents poems, stories and music authentic to, and representative of the time. Plenty of audience participation, geared to ages 8-12. Free. Everyone is welcome. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Royalston Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. This program is also supported by the Village School.

**Royalston Community School News**

*Principal Mitchell R. Grosky*

RCS students are still reliving the fun and excitement of our recent Hip Hop Dance Program. The students from kindergarten through grade six eagerly participated in this program, funded by the Royalston Academy. The instructor was Ms. Danielle LaTulippe of "Get Up and Dance Productions." Profits from the bake sale were donated to the Kriss Hall Fund, helping the family of the 8 year old boy who was recently runover and killed while walking home from school on the sidewalk in Worcester.

Right after a well-deserved vacation, students come back to a few special events. On Thursday, March 2, we will be observing Dr. Seuss' birthday as schools across America celebrate Read Across America Day. At RCS we will also be celebrating our RCS authors. Students will share with classmates and interested parents the stories that each student has written. K-2 students will share in the morning from 8:45 to 9:00, while grades 3-6 students will be reading from 12:45-1:30 in the afternoon. All families are invited.

Then, on the following day, Friday 3/3, Mrs. Carnie's second grade class will be presenting their play, *By George*, about the life of George Washington.

Athol-Royalston teachers continue to work to fully implement the District's new curriculum guide for mathematics and language arts. The guide is tied directly to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the individual standards within. As they administer benchmark assessments, elementary teachers gather after school each month with Anna Garbiel, Director of Operations and their building principals to discuss teaching strategies and the results of these assessments.

**Love is like the sweet smell of roses**

Love is like the sweet smell of roses  
 Love is a warm puppy\*  
 Love is doing my brother's chores  
 Love is lending your dad money for gas  
 Love warms your heart right up  
 Love doesn't mind cold feet

\*credit to Charles Shultz

*a quick poem written by RCS poetry group 2: Katelyn Robinson  
 Tobey Rose Chase, Austin Kinsman, and Michele Thompson*

**Monty Tech News**

All are invited to Monty Tech's annual **Open House**. Families of sixth, seventh and eighth graders who are considering applying for one of the very hard-to-come-by freshman seats are encouraged to attend. Enjoy a family-friendly (\$3/person last year!) 5-6:30 p.m. **Spaghetti Supper**, then check out some of the **20 trades and professions** offered, and stop by the Automotive/Auto Body Shop to check out the fabulous vehicles in the **Antique Auto and Classic Car Show**. Visitors will have a chance to speak to academic and vocational faculty and staff members, administrators and school committee members about what hopeful students can do to improve their chances at one of Royalston's three guaranteed seats or one of the at-large seats.

In the class of 2010, 85% of the 347 freshmen received their first choice placement in a trade or profession, and 90.5% received either their first or second choice. Ten shops filled with students who selected that shop as their first choice, and the \*d ones took in (X) extra students in an attempt to provide the most students possible with their first choice: Auto Body; Auto Technology; Cabinet Making; Cosmetology; Culinary Arts\* (1); Drafting; Early Childhood\* (1); Graphic Communications\* (1); House Carpentry\* (1); and Plumbing. Other shops that allowed additional students so more could have their second choice included Dental Assisting (2); Health Occupations (2); and Masonry (1). Monty Tech is actively exploring ways to expand shops that have waiting lists (most of the first choice shops listed above) as well as investigating the possible addition of new trades and professions that will answer the future needs of employers.

**ARRSD School Lunch Price Increasing**

The price for school lunch in all the local public schools goes up by a quarter beginning March 1. This is not due to the budgeting problems in the district, but rather due to recent increases in the costs of providing food.



**Scholarships For Royalston Students**

Students residing in Royalston are eligible for a number **Greater Worcester Community Foundation Scholarships**. Amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000, depending upon how well the criteria are met, and the amount available in the fund. A single scholarship application is filed, and applicants are automatically considered for any grants for which they meet the minimum criteria. Be sure to check for opportunities in time to meet the March 27, 2006 Application Deadline. Call 508-755-0980; write to 370 Main St.; Suite 650; Worcester, MA 01608; go to [www.greaterworcester.org](http://www.greaterworcester.org).

Be sure to check out **Credit Union Scholarships and Grants** at any credit unions you or your family are members. Most offer a number of generous scholarships for members or children of members.



## Congratulations and Good News

*Got something to crow about? Drop the news by the library or e-mail chasegos@gis.net .*

**Ryan and Jenn Basso** would like to announce the birth of their beautiful daughter, **Savannah Rose Basso**. She was born on February 8, 2006, and weighed 8 lbs, 14 ozs and was 22 inches long.

Proud grandparents are **Todd and Karla Basso** of Royalston and **Mark and Sandra Fredette** of Gardner.

Royalston Police Chief **Curtis and Lori (Clark) Deveneau** are tickled pink (blue?) to announce the arrival of their first grandchild, **Colden William Deveneau**, born to their eldest son, **William Curtis Deveneau** and his love, **Stefanie Cote**, of Bennington Vermont. Colden arrived January 17, 2006 at 11:19 p.m., weighing 7 lbs 13 oz, and measuring in at 19 inches long. First time great-grandparents **Bill and Phyllis Clark** are thrilled, as is Stefanie's mom, **Jolene Rice** of Winchendon.

**Brenda and Jeff Hopkins** of North Fitzwilliam Rd also have a new granddaughter. Brenda is beaming and toting around an album to show off the beautiful photos .

Former Royalston elementary student **Lindsay D. Nevala**, now a high school senior at Washington Academy in Machias, Maine, is representing that State in the Veteran's of Foreign Wars' annual "Voice of Democracy" audio essay contest. She will compete with other state finalists March 4-8 in Washington, D.C. For her state win, she received a \$2,500 college scholarship and may win up to an additional \$25,000 at the national level.

Congratulations to these Royalston winners in the Skills USA competition held recently at Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School. **Amber McCassie** earned gold in Commercial Baking, and **Slade Lewis** took the gold medal in Precision Machine.

**Cotey Basso** has been accepted at the University of Colorado at Boulder in the College of Engineering and Applied Science; he will begin classes this fall.

**Jessica Guiney**, daughter of library trustee **Barbara Guiney**, made the President's List last semester at Fitchburg State College. She has a 3.9 overall GPA and finished 24th in the USA in the National Moot Court.. Also, **Nathan Melbourne** was named to the Dean's List at Boston University for the fall 05 semester.

### Academic Honor Roll s for the 2nd quarter:

*The Royalston Community School* : Grade 4: **Michael Campos, Alexis Geyster** and **Mckenzie Spear**; Grade 5: **Allyna Baker, Caleb Chase, Garrett Hall, Jacob Lajoie, Michael Persson, Joshua Roberts** and **Michele Thompson**; Grade 6: **Allison Bergquist, Ashley Butterworth, Megan Degnan, Kelly Frazier** and **Alisha Linnus**.

*Athol High School*: Straight As: **Marissa Kellner** and **Ashley Bergquist**. All As and Bs: Grade 9: **Chet Hall, Blue Otto** and **Kimberlee Thompson**; Grade 10: **Rhett Guimond, Brian Hartin, Andrew Martioski, and Mieka Melbourne**; Grade 11: **Stephanie Campos**; Grade 12: **David Coflesky, Brendon Kellner, and Sara Martioski**

**"Beyond Boundaries"** is the title of a series of 40 new colorful paintings by Butterworth Road artist Kathleen Lovenbury, on exhibit Feb. 13-Mar. 10 at Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) in Gardner. The show is open to the public free of charge at the East Wing Gallery in the Raymond M. LaFontaine Fine Arts Center at the Mount, 444 Green St., Monday -Thursday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lovenbury describes her work as based on the divide between her desire for order and the variable, fluid, and capricious reality that surrounds her. . All of the paintings are on sheets of paper 22 by 30 inches. The acrylic paint was applied by silk screen squeegies , block printing rollers, and palette knives. The artist emphasizes spontaneity in creating her work, and hopes the viewer will do the same. Lovenbury is the chief executive officer at the Stetson School in Barre. She received a bachelor of arts degree in art therapy at Emmanuel College, Boston; and a master of arts degree in the same field at Vermont College of Norwich University in Montpelier, Vt.

**Music for a Cause** : Royalston's own **Phil Rabinowitz**, of Open Mic fame, and his band Work in Progress will be performing on St. Paddy's Day (March 17) at a coffeehouse run by the Ashburnham Conservation Trust. An open mic will warm the stage from 7:30 – 8:30 p.m., after which Work in Progress will offer a set of Irish Music. Phil says, "Let me tell you, you haven't lived 'til you've heard me sing 'Danny Boy.' Well, yes, you have, but come anyway!"

## Scraps for and from the Town Scrapbook

The Town Scrapbook is a giant book of photos, oral histories, creative writing and newspaper articles documenting the 20th Century in town. It sits in the library reference room. The Friends of the Library are still welcoming submissions to the 20th Century album and a collection of 21st Century memorabilia has begun. If you have something to share, please let the library know. Originals are not required; copies are fine. Thanks to Allen Young, who recently submitted two wonderful photos of town figures: one of Harold Newton and one of Millie French. He also gave an interesting 1981 article from the Evening Gazette about Phinehas Newton and his palm hat cottage industry.



*Millie French wrote a newspaper column about goings on in Royalston for many years. Her photo was recently submitted to the Town Scrapbook*

Frank Stearns has suggested a collection of *My Favorite Elsie Jewett stories* since she had "quite an effect on many of us" over the 43 years she was the Town librarian. Here is Franks' recollection: "'To me, she was always quick to encourage my expanding appreciation of books. She'd say, 'Here's something I think you'd enjoy Frank. It's about...'", or when she had just bought *Amos Fortune, Free Man*, "Did you know he lived just up in Peterborough?" I was hooked.'" If other readers have a favorite memory about Mrs. Jewett, or any other important Town figure or event, pls submit it to the library . It could be used in the scrapbook, newsletter, web-site and/or upcoming Centennial celebrations .

## Royalston Community Coop

A limited number of new families (Royalston residents only) are being accepted into the Royalston Community Coop. Members who will order at least three or four times a year are preferred, as they help stabilize monthly amounts. There is no minimum monthly order for individuals - someone who orders \$20 worth every month is as welcome as someone who places quarterly orders of \$75 or \$80, and welcome to join those who order \$400 each and every month.

Potential members may obtain and order one time from a guest catalogue - if they decide to join after that, it's a one-time \$20 which covers a year's subscription at \$12.00, with the remaining \$8 going towards the costs of paper and ink for invoices, checks, deposit stamp, and at least for now, helps with temporary \$10/month fuel surcharge. Coop members often have produce for sale or trade (hens, duck & goose eggs; fresh turkeys; goats' milk; fire wood; hay; vegetables; fruit; syrup) and the group is often used as a resource on where to find various equipment, help, products and services. Interested Royalston residents can contact Mary Barclay at [royalston\\_community\\_news@yahoo.com](mailto:royalston_community_news@yahoo.com) or 978-249-2598.

## Recipe of the Month:

### Irish Comfort Food

*Emma O'Connor of Laurel Lake Rd is giving a presentation for kids about Ireland on March 2 at 3:30 at the Town library on the Common. Even though she is a native of Dublin, when she was asked for an Irish recipe, she quickly e-mailed her aunt to get something authentic. She is planning to make these flapjacks and/or oatcakes for her gig at the library Cross Culture Club because they bring back fond memories. When she was in school, her friend's mother made flapjacks every week and she loved them. Emma thinks its funny that Americans use the same word "flapjacks" for pancakes.*

### FLAP JACKS

4ozs oat flakes  
3ozs soft brown sugar  
3ozs butter  
1 dessertspoon golden syrup or treacle  
pinch of salt  
First cream butter and sugar. Add golden syrup; then work in oatflakes. When well blended, turn onto a greased 8" rectangular baking sheet and flatten with a palette knife. Bake for 17mins approx @ 375. While still warm, mark into sections and break apart when cold.

### OAT CAKES

8 ozs oat flakes  
4 ozs brown sugar  
4ozs butter  
1.5 tablespoons golden syrup  
Melt sugar, butter and syrup in a pan; add the oat flakes. Mix well. Put into a greased tin (10x8 approx). Bake at 400 for 25mins approx. When cooked, mark into circles or fingers. Leave in tin until cold; then break apart.



### POTATOES CAKES

8oz cooked potatoes  
2oz plain flour  
salt  
1oz butter  
2 teaspoons milk  
Mash potatoes, melt butter, and mix all ingredients. Turn onto a pastry board and knead. Roll out, cut into shapes and prick. Cook in frying pan or on a griddle until brown on both sides. Serve with a little butter.



## Local Lenten Observances

March 1 marks the beginning of Lent, a period of fasting and repentance for Christians. Royalston's First and Second Congregational Churches, and Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Chapel will all participate in special services and masses.

**Ecumenical Wednesday services** are planned for area churches at 7 p.m. Non-perishable canned goods will be accepted at each of the ecumenical services for donation to neighborhood food pantries.

March 1 United Parish (Winchendon)

March 8 area-wide World Day of Prayer Service 2<sup>nd</sup> Congregational Church; monetary offerings will be accepted at the World Day of Prayer service for Church Women United to be used for grants for the women of South Africa.

March 15 St. Vincent de Paul (Baldwinville)

March 22 Congregational Church of Phillipston

March 29 Our Lady Queen of Heaven

April 5 Memorial Congregational Church (Baldwinville)

In addition, Lenten services will be held on Sundays at regular hours each week: 8:15 a.m. - **Mass** at Our Lady Queen of Heaven, 9 a.m. - **Services** at 2<sup>nd</sup> Congregational and 11 a.m. - **Services** at 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational. Also, at Our Lady Queen of Heaven there will be a **Communion Mass and Ashes** at 7 p.m. on March 1 (Ash Wednesday), as well as a **Simple Supper** on Friday, March 31 at 6 p.m.

Please note a **change of date** to Thursday, March 9 for the **Voices of Faith** concert being held at 7 p.m. in the First Congregational Church.

## LBS Begins 181<sup>st</sup> Year

The Ladies' Benevolent Society of Royalston recently elected officers for 2006: : President Kim MacPhee; Vice President Brenda L. Putney; Secretary Maureen Blasco, and Treasurer Nancy W. Newton. Mildred Clement Poor and Helen Feliciano were named to the Remembrance Committee. Marguerite Langlois was elected to the Devotions position. Andrea Lively, Kristen A. West, and Rebecca Krause-Hardie make up the Program Committee. Nancy S. Bolton, Beth Gospodarek, and Theresa Quinn were elected to the scholarship committee.

Upcoming programs: April 26, "Women in Black," with Marcia Gagliardi, at the home of Pat Jackson; May 31, "Town Zoning Project," with Kim MacPhee and Vyto Andreliunas presenting and answering questions, at the home of Rebecca Krause-Hardie; August 30, "Picnic Party" at Packard Pond with hostess Beth Gospodarek; September 27, "Memorial Piano Concert," with local performers in the ballroom at The Maples, with hostess Patience Bundschuh; October 25, "New Programs at Monty Tech," with Royalston School Committee representative Mary C. Barclay, at the home of Arline E. Vining; November 11, "Annual Braised Beef Dinner" at the Town Hall, followed by a program on weather by Jon Hardie; December 13, "Christmas Basket Packing, Annual Meeting, and Election of Officers" at the home of Theresa A. Quinn. Watch for the 11th annual blood drive in June.

Members of the community are invited to attend any meeting or join at any time of the year. Call any officer for more information.

*ed note: We've all got backyards. This month's column comes from a 3rd grader at the Royalston Community School. Even though they are unlikely to grow in March, four leaf clovers are a fine way to mark the March celebration of St Patrick's Day. If you've noticed something interesting in the local outdoors and would like to submit a "backyard" column, send it along to the RCN in time for publication in the appropriate month. Make sure the information is accurate and try to keep the whole column to around 250 words.*

## In Your Own Backyard

Tobey Chase

Scientists are still trying to figure out what causes four leaf clovers. They think that genes of regular three leaf clovers are stressed into making four leaves because of situations like harsh soil type, poor growing conditions or poisons from pollution. Often four leaf clovers grow in patches or on the same plant, so if you find one, keep looking because there are likely to be more in the same place. A prisoner in Alabama has found more than 10,000 four leaf clovers while in the same jail. He holds the Guinness World Record for "most four leaf clovers."



There are a lot of superstitions about four leaf clovers. In Ireland, they were thought to be good luck because the leaves point to north, south, east and west and because the leaves form the shape of a Christian cross. Irish custom says that each leaf represents something. The first leaf is for hope. The second is for faith. The third leaf is for love and the fourth is for luck. A long time ago, people believed that Sorceresses collected four leaf clovers at night to mix in potions. Little girls used to believe four leaf clovers could bring happiness, so they would search for them during daylight.



Sources: (All of this information is available at the Phinehas S Newton Library.)

<http://www.cropsoil.ugs.edu/parrott/clover>,

[http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/four leaf clover](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/four%20leaf%20clover)

Nevens, Ann. Super Stitches: A Book of Superstitions. Holiday House. 1983

## Outdoor Expo Has Something For All Seasons

On Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup> 2006, The Appalachian Mountain Club's North Quabbin Outdoor Expo will return for it's third year to the Millers River Environmental Center. The event will be held from 10am to 4pm. The Millers River Environmental Center is located at 100 Main St. in Athol, MA. This is an opportunity to gear up for your favorite outdoor sport. Take your pick of biking, hiking, skiing, wildlife viewing, orienteering, fishing, and camping gear. Programs and speakers will be occurring throughout the day covering many outdoor related topics. Learn about using a GPS unit, basic map and compass skills, local trails, appropriate gear for the season, local bike trails, and more! Come meet other people excited about outdoor exploration in the North Quabbin region.

Meet the many organizations working to maintain open space and trails for recreation. Local food vendors will also be present selling baked goods, sandwiches, and drinks. Call about the Sunday programs happening between 10am and 4pm. This program is sponsored by the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Millers River Environmental Center and North Quabbin Woods. For more information please call Don Flye at (978)724-3318.

## Wildlife Sightings

**Pussy willows** were blooming near Little Pond on February 5, 2006. Is that a record for early blooming?

**Red Wing Blackbirds** were spotted on Prospect Hill in mid February. These Red Wings are usually some of the first migrants back, but this is especially early.

## Garden Notes

Larry Siegel

What's going on here? It is February 7. The ponds are swollen; streams are overrunning their banks and lawns are green. Break through the surface crust and there is no frost in the ground. None. Zero. Zilch. I'm raking leaves for gosh sakes. To describe the weather as quirky understates the case. I dug parsnips at the end of December. I dug parsnips at the end of January. Unless something dramatic occurs (like the beginning of winter), I fully expect to dig parsnips at the end of February.

Sap is running, but mapling has always been a March thing for me and I hesitate to get started. It is a bit of a stretch to describe syrup making as a garden activity though it is a harvest of sorts and provides food for the table. My approach is a bit primitive. Sap is collected from twenty taps and temporarily stored in sixty-gallon buckets. The "sugar house" is an outdoor pit surrounded by stones. Atop the stones is a large grate and atop to grate is a stainless steel restaurant pan. The grate was found on the streets of Boston and the pan obtained in a trade for syrup. The stones were but a stone's throw away. The process begins and ends on the kitchen woodstove; the former to pre-heat the sap before adding it to the outdoor pan and the latter to assure we do not boil away what little syrup we have made. The fuel of choice is whatever has accumulated over the year: dropped branches, scraps from construction projects, broken furniture... Mapling is perhaps the year's least stressful undertaking. Keeping the pot a-boiling requires little effort; most of my time is spent reading. Since the pit is in a pasture, cows provide company. Yields vary wildly. Twenty taps have provided as few as two gallons of syrup and as many as seven.

Every time the snow melts away, there is a new crop of fallen branches; my kindling pile is reaching monstrous proportions. I also seem to be micro-managing manure. The cows tend to congregate where they are fed and watered, and their uneaten hay and manure tend to congregate as well. In the past, it was a spring chore to deal with the winter's accumulation. Now I'm out at every opportunity, rake in hand, creating piles and getting a jump start on the process of compost making.

I used to engage in an occupation that obliged me to clothe myself in a tie and jacket, but my responsibilities did not extend much beyond the addition and subtraction of numbers. I was supposed to experience satisfaction and pride when I correctly added a column of numbers. Give me a break; what I experienced was tedium. Fortunately, I discovered gardening, and it has been gardening that has provided me with satisfaction and pride. I am as much looking forward to this gardening season, my 29<sup>th</sup> in Royalston, as I did before my first.



**Classifieds:** (*Buy, sell, offer services, etc via the RCN. Free, but no businesses pls. See contact info in the adjacent box.* )

**Ring Found:** Did anyone lose a well-worn ring (possibly a wedding band) in the reference room of the Phinehas Newton Library? Call the library for more information or to identify it.

**Babysitter Needed:** Looking for mature teenage girl in the Bliss Hill area to babysit for 1 yr and 3 yr old little girls. Must have references. Call John or Susan Fortwengler at 978-249-8636.

**Need Diesel Car or Truck.** Good running order & passing inspection. To \$3,000 (preferably less). Please call 978-249-8970

**Bagged Sawdust Available:** (\$3/bag, deals on larger quantities) available from enterprising twins who are earning money to buy a horse trailer. Great for stalls, as mulch for blueberries, and as a way to keep weeds down around stone walls. Call **Amy and Amanda Putney**, 978-249-7787.

**Scrap Yarn Wanted:** for afghans. Especially interested in 100% acrylic, 4-ply, worsted weight. All colors are useful, even the so-called "ugly" ones! Call **Mary Barclay** at 978-249-2598 or e-mail: mbarclay@juno.com.

The Royalston Community Newsletter  
Friends of the Phinehas S. Newton Library  
PO Box 133  
Royalston MA 01368

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In person: Drop off at library

RCN reserves the right to edit and restrict all submissions. This Newsletter is provided free of charge to all residents of Royalston as a public service provided by the Friends of the Phinehas S. Newton Library with support from the Royalston Cultural Council and the entire community.

## OUT OF TOWN SUBSCRIPTIONS

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