Glad tidings from the RCN. With last month’s issue, this newsletter just passed its 7 year anniversary. That’s not bad for a free publication staffed entirely by volunteers. A community newsletter thrives on broad community input, so please don’t hesitate to share the gift of your news, events, wildlife sightings, musings and milestones through the RCN in the new year. Brevity and wit make especially thoughtful presents. Contact information is always listed on the last page of the newsletter. In this season of darkness, don’t hide your light under a bushel.

December 1 Friday
7 pm First Friday Open Mic at Town Hall

December 2 Saturday
10 a.m. – noon Open House at the Village School

December 3 Sunday
Wheat Weaving Workshops. Learn a traditional harvest art and make a cool holiday gift. Pre-registration necessary. Priority given to members of the Friends of the Library.
1:15 pm workshop begins for weavers who attended last year.
2 pm workshop starts for beginners

December 5 Tuesday Full Cold Moon

December 6 Wednesday
6 pm Live Creche on the church steps.
6:15 pm Tree Lighting Ceremony on the Royalston Common; after Santa’s arrival, hot cocoa and cookies in the Town Hall.

December 7 Thursday
3:30 pm Friends of the Library Meeting. All welcome.
6:30 p.m. Monty Tech School Council Meeting

December 10 Sunday
2 pm Our Lady Queen of Heaven 50th Anniversary Celebration. Mass with Bishop MacManus in the chapel followed by a catered meal at the Royalston Community School.

11 a.m. Royalston F&G Annual Meeting
2 p.m. F&G annual Kids’ Christmas Party (Advanced reservation required: 978-249-3004)

December 13 Wednesday
6:30 pm Holiday Concert at RCS. Community welcome.

7:30 p.m. Ladies’ Benevolent Society meeting at Theresa Quinn’s home; Holiday Basket packing; please contact Kim MacPhee 249-0946 if you know of someone who would appreciate a basket of goodies.

December 16 Saturday
Hanukkah, an 8 day celebration of light and perseverance, begins.

All Day Christmas Bird Count: Please contact Dave Small Dave@dhsmall.net or 978-413-1772 for information and/or to join a bird watching team.

Dusk – Midnight The Geminid Meteor Shower will provide a spectacular light show with a meteor a minute or more, originating in the northeastern skies. Shooting stars should also be visible through Sunday night.

December 20 Wednesday New Wolf Moon

December 21 Thursday Winter Solstice
Pilgrims landed at Plimoth in 1620

December 23 Saturday
8 - 11 am Royalston Post Office Holiday Open House.
Stop by for gingerbread with hot pear sauce and a cup of coffee.
(The pears were grown in Royalston by the Willhites.)

9 - 10 am The Real Royalston Santa will visit Post Office taking requests and posing for photos. Polaroids with Santa $5.00. Profits will be donated to the Historical Society.

December 25 Monday Christmas

December 27 Wednesday Senior Luncheon New Year’s Celebration at the Town Hall. All are invited. Free. Call Betty Woodbury at 249-9656 before Monday December 25 to reserve. Delightful, high energy performance by Dorothy Hayden on seasonal themes, music, lunch, flowers and fancy desserts by Deb Nunes and Marie Humblet. This is a collaboration of the Council on Aging and the Royalston Cultural Council.

January 1 Monday New Years Day 2007

Japanese New Year 2007
January 2 Tuesday
Public Schools Re-open following holiday break

7 p.m. Pitch Tournament Royalston F&G all welcome. Pitch tournaments continue every Tuesday in January. Call for info. 978-249-3004.

January 3 Wednesday
Earth at Perihelion, its closest pass by the sun this year: 91,399,728 miles (give or take a mile)

8:57 a.m. Full Wolf Moon

7 p.m. Monty Tech SchoolCom meeting

January 4 Thursday
TBA Coop Delivery Due
3:30 pm Friends of the Library Meeting. Discuss library support, newsletter, x-culture club, documentary series and other upcoming events. The Friends are an easy place to meet other people in Town.

January 5 Friday Twelfth Night
7 p.m. Open Mic at the Town Hall

January 6 Saturday Epiphany

January 13 Saturday
5 pm Potluck and Contradance for families. Potluck begins at 5:00. Dancing begins at 6:00. Contradances will be called by Norah Dooley, and music played by the No Name Band. Donations accepted. Hosted by the Village School Parents Group.

January 15 Monday Martin Luther King Day
Schools, libraries, post office and government offices closed

January 19 Friday Village Improvement and Historical Society Meeting, weather permitting at Peter Kraniak’s house, corner of Stone and Winchendon Rds. Everyone with an interest in town history welcome. Great desserts. Call 249-7625 for more information.

January 22 Monday No School ARRSD; Professional Development Day

January 24 Wednesday No school Village School; in-service training

January 26 Friday TBA Storytelling performance by RCS students, who are just completing a residency with storyteller Diane Edgecomb, at RCS. Residency funded by A-REF, Royalston Academy and the RCS Parent-Teacher Group.

January 31 Wednesday No school Village School; parent teacher conferences

Department of Public Works Update
The DPW wishes residents happy holidays and safe driving in the new year. Sailing should be smoother as the recent paving work went without a hitch on Falls, North Fitzwilliam and Brown Roads. Even though November had long strings of days in the 60s and Mt Washington had its warmest November temperature ever recorded (49 degrees at midnight on 11/17), winter is knocking. Please be aware that there is a roadside parking ban in effect now until the end of April so that snow plows have room to maneuver. Violators can be towed. Also know that it is dangerous and illegal to shovel snow into a public roadway.

Board of Health News

Phil Leger. Chair
There has been an unforeseen delay in hooking up the compactor at the transfer station. The compactor needs three phase power to operate the hydraulic unit. Monadnock Disposal, the company who owns the equipment, had kept a three phase converter in stock, but it was used for another setup. The delay has been in receiving a replacement converter and the wiring for the machine. Once this is complete, the unit will be in service.

Please, when using the transfer facility, use the counter clockwise traffic pattern. This will help with traffic flow. And, please be aware of the exits so that you don’t block traffic. Once the compactor is in operation the dumpsters will be moved and there will be more space.

The BOH is looking for a small shed so that the attendant can be located at the compactor. This will facilitate operation of the unit and purchase of stickers. If anyone has something that might fit the criteria, contact Phil Leger at 617-584-9714, Chet Hall at 978-895-6326 or George Vaccari at 978-249-2155.

No change in hours of operation for the transfer station and recycling center this year due to Christmas and New Year’s Day holidays. Regular hours of operation are: Friday 1pm-4pm and Saturday 8am-2pm. Please give the attendants a break and don’t come five minutes before closing.

We have a new attendant and his name is Nicholas Mowrey from Winchendon Road. He is a student at Monty Tech and is in the Marine ROTC program there. Say hi to him next time you are there.
Election Results

During the November 7th state elections, 477 of the 910 registered voters in Royalston cast ballots. Here are the results:

- Governor: Patrick, 272; Healy, 148
- US Senate: Kennedy, 297; Chase, 158
- Attorney General: Coakley, 302; Frisoli, 141
- Secretary of State: Galvin, 339; Stein, 86
- Treasurer: Cahil, 341; O’Keefe, 82
- Auditor: DeNucci, 301; Wilson, 100
- US House 1st District: Olver, 343; Szych, 100

On the ballot questions, the state electorate said “no” to each, but Royalston was somewhat more divided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Wine Sales in Food Stores</td>
<td>870,240</td>
<td>1,119,776</td>
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<tr>
<td>Royalston</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>227</td>
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<td>2: Nominations for Candidates for Public Office</td>
<td>648,507</td>
<td>1,226,672</td>
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<td>Royalston</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>273</td>
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<td>3: Collective Bargaining for Family Child Care Providers</td>
<td>898,501</td>
<td>973,534</td>
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<tr>
<td>Royalston</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>210</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Selectmen’s News

Andy West, Chair

On November 7th, a Verizon Representative spoke to the Selectboard about the phone problems in town. She said that new equipment has been installed in South Royalston and would be fully activated any day. In the meantime, a patch is in place so that callers in the Village should not experience any more dropped calls. Thanks to those residents from other parts of town that let us know of their persistent phone problems. Verizon has now expanded trouble research to include Butterworth and Bliss Hill areas of Town. Keep the information coming. This has been a great benefit to us all!

The Board is preparing to accept bids on the reconstruction of the wood gate and posts at Riverside Cemetery. The gate, located on School Street, allows access to the upper part of the cemetery. If you are interested in bidding, contact the Selectmen’s Office for preliminary information, 978-249-9641.

Please remember that permission for all temporary signs (including political, event, fundraising, and advertising) must be requested from the Board of Selectmen. There have been a number of signs displayed recently without permission.

Royalston residents are once again eligible to receive money for home improvement through a grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development. The money is available to help low and moderate income residents make improvement to their homes. For more information, call the Selectmen’s Office at the number above.

Coming Soon! Watch for Selectboard meeting minutes to be posted on the Royalston website www.royalston-ma.gov. The Royalston Board of Selectmen wishes everyone a safe and happy Holiday Season!

Town Clerk News

Melanie Mangum

As 2007 approaches, it’s time to start thinking about the Annual Town Election. It will be held on Monday, April 2, 2007. The following are the deadlines in effect for this election season, along with a list of positions up for election:

The last day to take out nomination papers and/or submit them to the Board of Registrars is Monday, February 12, no later than 5 p.m. Nomination papers are available at the Town Clerk’s Office, Whitney Hall, 5 School St., on Mondays, 6 to 8:30 p.m. and Tuesdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The last day to object or withdraw from the election ballot is Wednesday, February 28, no later than 5 p.m.

The last day to register to vote in this election will be Tuesday, March 13, 2007. Special Voter Registration hours will be held this day from 2-4 p.m. and 7-8 p.m. in the Town Clerk’s Office. All Mail-In registrations must be postmarked no later than March 13, 2007.

List of positions on this year’s ballot:
- Selectman - 3 years; Town Clerk - 3 years; Assessor - 3 years; Cemetery Commissioner - 3 years; Board of Health - 3 years; Library Trustee - 3 years; Constable - 3 years; Planning Board - 5 years; Sewer Commissioner - 3 years; Trustees of John N. Bartlett Fund - 4 positions each of 1 year; Board of Public Welfare - 3 years; ARSD School Comm. - Royalston member - 3 years. Athol positions on the school committee will also appear on the ballot.

Royalston Luncheon Club

The Royalston Luncheon Club has a rather flexible format during the winter months since lunch plans are canceled if the roads are bad. There are two special holiday events planned: the pre-Christmas dinner on December 20th and the New Year’s Celebration, Wednesday, December 27th. Weather permitting, Chinese auctions are planned for December 6th and January 3rd; Blood pressure clinics (open to the general public) are slated for December 13th and January 10th; and Brown Bag distribution dates include December 27th and December 31st. For additional information, contact Betty Woodbury at 978-249-9656.

Royalston Community Newsletter Dec-Jan 2007 Page 3
Phinehas S. Newton Library News
Kathy Morris, Library Director
Trustees: Polly Longsworth, Lisa Freden, Barbara Guiney
Mondays: 10:00am - 8:30pm. Thursdays 1:00pm - 5:00pm and 6:30 - 8:30pm
Saturdays: 9:00am - 12:noon
979-249-3572 www.royalstonlibrary.org

Thank you:
Lorraine Casinginho for movie donations
Ashley Berquist for help processing books and lots of other things
Amber McCassie for help processing books
Janet Bettey for audiobook donations
Emma Finocchio for help around the library
Yolanda Brousseau for donations of books and DVDs

Need Computer Help?
Don’t know how to send e-mail or set up an e-mail account? Do you download things and they disappear? Do you know what download means? If you would like help, from the basics to the advanced, you can get one-on-one help at the library with your laptop or one of our computers. Just call the library to set up an appointment.

Download Music, Video, and Audiobooks and Gain Access to 140 Databases
Boston Public Library is offering an eCard to all residents of Massachusetts over 13 years of age from communities whose libraries are certified; Royalston is certified. What this means is that you can sign up for an eCard and download music, movies, and books to your computer, ipod, or mp3 player plus use the extensive databases to search for information, all for free. The eCard is valid for 6 months after which time you have to go to the Boston Public Library or Metro Boston Library Network location, show valid ID and upgrade to a permanent library card. To obtain a card go to www.royalstonlibrary.org and click on the link to Boston Public Library eCard or go to http://www.bpl.org/general/circulation/wherocard.htm

Shop at the Library this Holiday
Looking for something local to give this season? Pre-registered participants can come to the library’s wheat weaving workshop and learn to braid a traditional love knot or fertility symbol, a perfect gift for a Royalston romantic. For the literary on your list, how about the Royalston Shakespeare Company’s Hamlet t-shirt or DVD? Rockers (and Robt. Altman fans) may enjoy the “Born in a Small Town” DVDs, featuring cameos of 100s of Royalston residents backed with a 80s soundtrack. A new crop of sheep mugs has arrived, adorned with original artwork by Patience Bundshuh. Finally, don’t forget the fabulous poster of local nature photographs by Noah Siegel. All items are very reasonably priced and benefit the Friends of the Library.

Documentary Series Upcoming
Looking ahead to the winter, we are planning to have a series of three documentaries shown and narrated by the producers: Werner Bundshuh, Liane Brandon, and Boyd Estus. Each will discuss the production details of his and her work before the screening. This series will take place during late February into March. Look for details in the February newsletter and on the library’s website.

Artist Exhibit at the Library
During the months of January and February, paintings done by the late Royalston resident, John Burton, will be on display at the library. Several people from town will loan us pictures for this exhibit. John was a resident of Royalston for 18 years and a long time member of the Cultural Council. He organized the first Royalston Dinner Theater (Royalston Follies).

Holiday Reading (and snacking)
We have displayed many holiday books so that you can cook that perfect meal, create that perfect gift, escape from the stress, or just browse for ideas. Don’t forget that we also have over 45 magazine subscriptions, lots of holiday music on CDs (other music for all ages too), and books-on-tape and CD to get you to your destination or soothe you while you work around the house. And remember, on Saturdays during the month of December, we offer light refreshments for your enjoyment.

Give Royalston’s Kids the World: Presenters Needed at Cross Culture Club
Calling all residents with experience of other cultures. The Friends of the Library need you to informally present during Cross-Culture Club, an afterschool gathering for children on Thursdays at the library in February. Presentations last about one hour and the group size is rarely larger than 12. A mixture of methods, including showing artifacts, sharing food and/or teaching simple language, music or crafts fill the time. Help in planning or extra adult assistance is available from members of the Friends of the Library. There is a small stipend and all material costs are reimbursed. Cross culture club helps bring a touch of global perspective to our small New England town. To get involved, please call the library 249-3572.
Some of the New Books at your Library

New Adult Fiction

Allende, Isabel  
Ines of My Soul

Barron, T.A.  
The Great Tree of Avalon: The Eternal Flame

Bass, Rick  
The Lives of Rocks: Stories

Berg, Elizabeth  
The Handmaid and the Carpenter: A Novel

Bradbury, Ray  
Farewell Summer

Braver, Gary  
Elixir

Braver, Gary  
Flashback

Braver, Gary  
Gray Matter

Britton, Pamela  
On the Edge

Brockway, Connie  
Hot Dish

Cabot, Meg  
How To Be Popular

DeMille, Nelson  
Wild Fire

Evanovich, Janet  
Thanksgiving

Evans, Richard Paul  
Finding Noel

Francis, Dick  
Under Orders

Gerritsen, Tess  
The Mephisto Club

King, Stephen  
Lisey's Story

Klein, Lisa  
Dancing With Mr. D

Kleinholz, Lisa  
Exiles on Main Street

Krahn, Betina  
The Book of True Desires

Lindsey, Johanna  
Captive of My Desires

Linz, Cathie  
Bad Girl's Don't

MacHale, D.J.  
Black Water

McGoverm, Cammie  
Eye Contact

McCall-McCall, Alexander  
Dream Angus: The Celtic God of Dreams

McCall-Smith, Alexander  
The Right Attitude to Rain

D.I. MacHale  
The Rivers of Zadax

Meyer, L.A.  
In the Belly of the Bloodhound: Being an Account of a Particularly Peculiar Adventure in the Life of Jacky Faber

Michaels, Fern  
Lethal Justice

Murro, Alice  
The View From Castle Rock: Stories

Oates, Joyce Carol  
Black Girl/White Girl: A Novel

Patterson, James  
Cross

Pierce, Tamora  
Terrier

Randisi, Robert J.,  
Everybody Kills Somebody Sometime

Roberts, Nora  
First Impressions

Schwartz, Ellen  
Stealing Home

New Adult Nonfiction

Briggs, Janet  
The Taste of Home Cookbook

Danforth, John  
Faith and Politics: How the "Moral values" Debate Divides America and How to Move Forward Together

DK  
Weapon: A Visual History of Arms and Armor

Greenfield, Robert  
Exile on Main St.: A Season in Hell with the Rolling Stones

Guiliano, Mireille  
French Women For All Seasons

Mitchell, Stacy  
Big-box Swindle: The True Cost of Mega-retailers and the Fight for America's Independent Businesses

Peterson, Dale  
BiO Jane Goodall: The Woman Who Redefined Man

Poundstone, Paula  
There's Nothing in This Book I Meant to Say

Roe, Sue  
The Private Lives of the Impressionists

Schou, Nick  
Kill the Messenger: How the CIA's Crack-Cocaine Controversy Destroyed Journalist Gary Webb

Stewart, Martha  
Martha Stewart's Homekeeping Handbook

The Onion  
The Onion Presents Homeland Security Complete News Archives Vol. 17

Pillsbury  
Family Christmas Cookbook

The Source: A Guidebook to American Genealogy (Reference)

Traver, Tim  
Sippewissett: Or, Life on a Salt Marsh

Vidal, Gore  
Point to Point Navigation: A Memoir 1964 to 2006

Wagner, Marsden  
Born in the USA: How a Broken Maternity System Must Be Fixed to Put Women and Children First

New Members for the Friends

Thank you to Rhona A. Shoul, who recently made a donation to honor the marriage of Maile Suyenaga Shoul and Sean Nolan and to Janet Willhite for renewing her membership to the Friends of the Library. You can be a Friend too:

The Friends of the Phinehas S. Newton Library publish this newsletter and sponsor many other activities throughout the year.

Friends of the Phinehas S. Newton Library

2007 Membership & Contribution Form

Name:_______________________________  
Address:_____________________________  
_____________________________  
Phone:_______________________________  
E-mail:_______________________________

Memberships:  
Single  $2.00 __________  
Family  $5.00 __________  
Supporting  $25.00 __________  
Donation  $__________

I would also like to buy a Newsletter sponsorship ad: $25.00/month or $200.00/year$__________ (we will contact you for display information)

Total enclosed: $____________ Tax deductable. Make checks payable to:  
Friends of the Phinehas S. Newton Library. PO Box 133 Royalston MA 01368

I would like to help with Friends projects  

Thank You!
**Recipe of the Month:**

**Bundt Cake with Almonds (or Walnuts)**

*ed note: This recipe comes from our talented and dry humored tax collector, Rebecca Kraus-Hardie of N. Fitzwilliam Rd. Along with keeping records of tax payments, she is an award winning web-site designer, french hornist and throat singer. She recently donated a warm and gooey bundt cake to the election day bake sale in precinct 1. Many voters bought one slice and came back to buy another. (Remember, the tax collector sets neither the tax rate nor the times when tax bills go out.)*

Becky says, “This is actually a Martha Stewart recipe that was attached to the bundt pan. The original recipe called for seriously more sugar. I never seem to have almonds in the house so I use walnuts. (I don’t really know how its possible to slice almonds anyway.)”

1) Preheat Oven to 350. Generously butter the bundt pan; set aside. Spread the sliced nuts over a baking pan, and bake until golden brown. Transfer to a bowl to cool.

2) In a medium bowl, combine the chopped nuts, brown sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg; set aside. In another medium bowl sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; set aside.

3) In the bowl of an electric mixer, combine 1 1/2 sticks of butter 3/4 cup milk 1 1/2 cups plain yogurt (or sour cream) 2 large eggs 1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg 1 tablespoon plus 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract (1 T for cake and 1 1/2 teaspoons for the glaze)

4) Pour half the batter into the prepared pan, and spread evenly with the toasted nuts. (Remember, the tax collector sets neither the tax rate nor the times when tax bills go out.)

5) Bake until cake is golden brown and a cake tester inserted into the center comes out clean, about 45-50 minutes. Place on wire rack to cool completely. (Unmold cake after about 10 minutes. Place cake, flat side down, on a wire to finish cooling.)

6) Melt the remaining 1/2 stick of butter over medium-high heat until color turns nut-brown, about 5 minutes. Pour the butter into a medium bowl, leaving behind any dark sediment. Stir in the confectioner’s sugar, the remaining vanilla, and the milk until smooth; (add additional tablespoon of milk if necessary) so glaze is pourable.

7) Place cake on serving dish, drizzle glaze over cake and sprinkle with the toasted nuts.
CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD NEWS

Got something to crow about? Send it along to the RCN. Zap to chasegos@gis.net or drop at library.

Many happy returns to Eliina “Tati” Karjalainen. Royalston’s oldest resident, who celebrated her 102 birthday on November 4th at Foxwoods Casino accompanied by Bruce, Liisa and Linda Alger as well as Pam Casper, Cheryl Milas, and Nancy Skowronski. She came home a little richer after her encounter with the one armed bandits. Tati Karjalainen spurns the Boston Post Cane. She rightly observes, “It’s the cane of death. Everyone who receives it dies.” Reportedly the secret to her longevity is “eat and sleep well, no men and always honor your mother and father.”

Five Consecutive Strikes: Donna Smith of South Royalston recently scored 5 consecutive strikes in women’s league play at the Playaway Lanes in Winchendon. Her score for the game was 232. Her team is called the Katz. Other cool Katz from Royalston include: Peg Langlois, Karen Leblanc, Tracy Smith and Ginny Gingras.

Memorial
Our thoughts are with Rev. Ginger Asel, Pastor of Royalston’s Congregational Churches, whose mother, Lillian Varnot, died peacefully on November 16 as family gathered around and read devotions at the Parsonage. Mrs. Varnot was a co-founder of the Community Nursery and Kindergarten at the Barre Congregational Church, which she ran for 33 years. She also enjoyed art, travel, and church fellowship. In lieu of flowers, gifts of memorial may be given to either the First or Second Congregational Church of Royalston (P.O. Box 73, Royalston, MA 01368) or The Covenant Evangelical Church of Barre, (611 South St., P. O. 213, Barre, MA 01005).

1st term academic honor rolls
RCS, grades 4 - 6: straight As: Katie Robinson, Tobey Chase, and Michael Campos. All As and Bs: Emily Mangum, Beau Guimond, Kadasia LaJoie, Felicia Tourigny, Cody Nolette, John Divoll, Eric Duffin, McKenzie Spear, Lainey Wright, Allynna Baker, Caleb Chase, Andrew Demboske, Keith Gelinas, Darien James, Alexis Javier, Ashley Javier, Timothy Norman, Michael Persson, Amber Simmington, and Michele Thompson

A-R Middle School: Straight As: Cady Boucher, Allison Bergquist and Megan Degnan. All As and Bs: Tasey Chartier, Asher Chase, Krista Erikson, Ashley Guyer, Dylan Hall, Samantha Huthchins, Nick Krasowski, Joseph Riddell, Ashley Sawyer, Derek Wheeler, Coleen Boutell, and Francisco Carra. All As and Bs except one measly C: Ashley Butterworth, Kelly Frazier, Tyler Tisdale and Alisha Linnus.

Athol High: Straight As: Christine Sawyer, MacKenzie Bennett and Patrick Scribner. All As and Bs: Ashley Bergquist, Dan Vaccari, Ellee Bronnes, Ashley Campose, Rhetta Guimond, Andrew Martioski, Mieka Melbourne, Nicole Tourigny, Sofia Brighenti, Justin Cascone, Chet Hall, Mairissa Kellner, Kim Thompson, Alyssa Bergquist, Catie Brighenti, and Hillary Whitcomb

AHS John and Abigail Adams Scholarship Recipients: Congratulations to Stephanie Campos, Dan Vaccari, Dustin Short, Brett Jeffery, and Ashley Bergquist. Based on their scores on the 10th grade MCAS exams they are eligible for 8 semesters of free tuition at Massachusetts state universities and colleges.

Allen Young of Butterworth Road, author of “North of Quabbin Revisited,” recently accepted two speaking engagements. At the Nov. 4 alternative energy fair at Athol Town Hall, organized by a local energy task force, he gave a presentation on the use of the Millers River to generate electric power, past, present and future. On Nov. 6, at a Holyoke Community College class on the 1960s, he spoke about the counter-culture and communal living, focusing on his personal experiences.

Heather Lively has committed to attend the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware, which is a Division I school in volleyball. She will be playing volleyball for the Fightin’ Blue Hens in the competitive Colonial Athletic Association (CAA). Heather plans to major in health sciences. She is the daughter of Ken and Andrea Lively and will graduate from Pioneer Valley Regional School in 2007
Village School Open House
The Village School is holding an Open House on Saturday, December 2 from 10:00 to noon. This is an opportunity to see classrooms, meet teachers and talk to current parents and students. From 10 to 11:30 a.m. there will be arts and crafts projects and science activities for children in all the classrooms. At 11:45, everyone will gather together to meet with school director Risa Richardson. Refreshments will be served.

The Village School is an independent school serving preschool, kindergarten, and grades 1-6. The school has a unique curriculum based on direct contact with the natural world, kindness, and attention to the individual. Children collaborate, excitedly share new ideas, and support each other’s learning. The Village School is located on the Common in Royalston, off Route 68, in the old brick Raymond School building. For more information, call (978) 249-3505, or go to www.villageschool.to

Director Risa Richardson says, “The school is a grass roots response to the need for variety in education in the North Quabbin area. We started in 1989 as a small preschool, and now we have 56 children spanning preschool through the 6th grade. We do not use textbooks; we are a hands on school where learning is exciting. Students work with scientists and experts in their fields to gain direct experience. Above all, we are a learning community where students are treasured for their unique contribution to the class.”

Community Welcome at Village School Contra Dance
Come to the Royalston Town Hall on Saturday evening, January 13 for a Potluck and Contradance for families. Potluck begins at 5:00. Bring Italian food in a casserole. Dancing begins at 6:00. Contradances will be called by Norah Dooley, and music will be played by the No Name Band. Donations are accepted to pay the band. Let’s dance those winter blahs away. Hosted by the Village School Parents Group.

Scholarships for Royalston Students
Graduating high school seniors should, prior to the holiday break, obtain a list of scholarships from their schools’ guidance offices. Many of these applications require essays that are best written during the holiday break, and without the added pressure of classes, and quite a few will have deadlines early in the New Year.

Anyone who knows of a good resource for scholarships for Royalston’s graduating seniors, home schoolers and adults returning to college, is asked to inform the RCN. Resources will be posted over the next few months so all eligible students can apply.

Royalston Community School Update
The season of giving: RCS is collecting international phone cards to distribute to US soldiers in Iraq, who are very far from home this holiday. The cards will be sent to Nicholas Hains, currently serving in the Air Force in southern Iraq and the son of RCS 3rd grade teacher, Mr. Frank Hains. Nick will distribute the cards to soldiers stationed at this location. Donated cards will be sent out Dec. 12. Call 249-2900 with questions.

Upcoming important RCS dates:
After School Basketball Program --- 12/7, 12/21, 11/18, 1/25
Progress reports ---12/8
Toy Bingo ------12/8
PTG meeting ----- 12/12
Holiday Concert -------12/13
Christmas Break ------ 12/25 - 12/29
Noon dismissal ----- 1/12
Martin Luther King’s Birthday---1/15
Story-telling Night ---- 1/26

RCS Poetry Club
GOODY GOODY   BAD GIRL
TWO SHOES
I am a good girl. I am a bad girl.
Teacher’s delight I’ll put up a fight.
I don’t misbehave.
Misbehave is not in my vocabulary.
I’m as quiet as a mouse.
Hey, can I borrow your slingshot?
I can hardly behave.
Misbehave is my middle name.
I’m as loud as a haunted house.
Can I borrow your dolls?

Michele Thompson / Darion James

The Word of the Month
The Ladies’ Benevolent Society of Royalston has been providing collations after funerals for 182 years, but just what is a “collation”? This month we’re trying out a new column here at the Royalston Community Newsletter. If readers know of an uncommon word in current use with a Royalston connection, sent it along and we’ll try to define it in the newsletter.

Collation (ko-la’shen) (n.) A light meal. Entered Middle English from Latin collatio, a bringing together and from the tradition in Benedictine Monasteries of reading from Cassian’s Collationes Patrum (Lives of Our Fathers) before taking a light meal on fast days.
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**Chapel of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Turns 50**

*Peter Kraniaik*

On December 10th at 2PM, Bishop Robert J. McManus of the Diocese of Worcester will concelebrate at Mass in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the dedication of the Chapel of Our Lady Queen of Heaven in South Royalston. In 1956 Bishop, later Cardinal, Wright granted permission for a small church to be built in South Royalston. Richard and Frances Lawrence donated the land the Chapel occupies and construction was completed in time for the dedication which took place on December 8, 1956.

The Chapel has served the community of Royalston since that beginning 50 years ago. After the Mass, a catered buffet supper will be held at the Royalston Community School.

**Congregational Churches News**

Second Congregational Church members report this was their best mini fair ever, with many new faces, and rave reviews about the quantity and quality of items up for grabs. The baked goods table and all those Swedish meatballs sold out. Banner sales were recorded at the white elephant and Chinese auction tables. The profit exceeded last year’s income by a considerable amount, a handy cushion to help celebrate the hundredth year the church has been in operation.

**Royalston Fish & Game Club News**

Members are reminded that the Annual Meeting and Children’s Christmas Party are being held on Sunday, December 10 at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., respectively. So that every child receives a present, reservations must be made in advance.

Those who wish to support the F&G might like to buy a $10 ticket for the 42” HD Plasma TV Superbowl Raffle. Tickets are available at the Club or the general store.

The Club will host one of their ever-popular Roast Beef Dinners in January, on a date to be announced. Tickets sell out in a heartbeat, so reserve your seat now. January also sees the annual Pitch Tournaments. Call 978-249-3004 for more info on these events.

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**Holiday Plans at the Post Office:**

**Mail Letters to Santa at Royalston Post Office:** Epistles to the elves, missives to Mrs. Claus, recommendations to Rudolph, and salutations (and solicitations) to Santa can be sent via the Royalston Community Post Office. Just deliver them during office hours or put in the box outside. Include a return address and mail by Weds, 12/20 so Santa has time to write back. See postmistress Pam Caranfa at the Post Office for more information.

**Santa to visit PO during holiday open house:** Also, if a letter won’t do and/or the deadline has passed, Santa will be at the Post Office on Saturday, Dec. 23 from 9 - 10 am to lean his ear your way and pose for polaroids. (The photos cost $5 with profits benefitting the Village Improvement and Historical Society.)

All Saturday morning, from 8 - 11 am, on Dec. 23, stop by the PO to pick up some good cheer and a slice of gingerbread during the annual holiday open house. (The post office is located at the head of the common on the way to the transfer station.)

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**Monster Mash**

The recent annual Town Halloween Party, sponsored by the Police Department, was a graveyard smash; even the weather cooperated by offering ominous gloom and pouring rain. Many hands (and other body parts) were essential to the event’s success. Thanks go to the police, the omnipotent sisters Laurie Deveneau and Nancy Melbourne, as well as Tinkerbell and all the other kindly sprites who ran the games. The haunted spook walk owes its soul to the hard work of Noah Siegel as well as the Favereau, Robinson, Hall and Chase-Gospodarek families. The spooks, members of the ARMS soccer and football teams, Ryan and Meredith Carrier, Abby Stowell, Rene Lake, Samantha Hutchins and many others, were wonderously frightful.
Reminder: It’s shotgun deer hunting season through December 9th. Wear orange and use caution in the woods. No hunting on Sunday. Licensed hunting permitted an hour before sunrise and an hour after sunset.

IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD
Beth Gospodarek
Thinking about holiday stuff: the presents, ribbons, wrappings, tags, tinsel, trimmings and trappings, likely to enter my small, already crowded house this month makes me grateful for fungi. I need all the decomposers I can get.

Walk in the winter woods and thank fungi that you don’t have to scramble over every tree that ever fell in the forest (whether anyone heard it or not). Notice the hard fungi in shapes like turkey tails, horse hooves, artists pallets or varnished shelves growing on toppled trees. These are important decomposers in local ecosystems because they break down and recycle the dead tree’s nutrients over long periods of time, usually decades.

Biotechnologists are very interested in the ways fungi help rot wood. Some fungi break down the white part of the wood (cellulose) and others break down the brown (lignin). Cellulose forms the primary cell wall in all plants. Lignin is a second reinforcing wall inside the primary wall on woody plants. Enzymes from lignin-degrading fungi have the potential to be used instead of polluting bleaches in the commercial paper making process to dissolve the brown parts of wood pulp. Similarly, lignin degrading bacteria could possibly be used to degrade some toxic wastes, such as PCBs, PCPs and TNT. Both paper processing and toxic clean up using fungi have worked very well in laboratories, but so far, there have been problems scaling up. (Compare this to sailing in the bathtub and then, in the ocean.) Nonetheless, there is enormous potential.

Make a resolution to be more like a fungus in the new year.... a patient part of the community, recycling and reusing resources for the common long-term good.

Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count
Early on Saturday December 16, teams meet at Cinnamon’s Restaurant (491 Main Street in Athol); they leave by 7 am, so arrive by 6:30 if you plan to eat. Later, help tally the species and enjoy a pot luck supper at 4:30 pm at Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street Athol. Please contact Dave Small Dave@dhsmall.net or 978-413-1772 in advance and so that teams can set up. For those who’d like to participate by looking out their windows, feeder watchers may call in their day’s sightings anytime on Saturday December 17th to 978-249-9491. Please leave a message including address where birds were observed and return phone #.

Garden Notes
Larry Siegel
Yeah, we’ve had a couple of readings in the low to mid 20s, but none of the day-in-day-out stuff that chills the bones, hardens the ground, puts an end to the use of hoses to water the animals, and obliges us to fire up the wood furnace. Spots of garden green remain, in spite of our first deer incursion in as long as I can remember. None of what they are eating is critical to our well-being, but none of it is critical to their well-being either, so I just as soon they’d move on.

I have been harvesting the fall crops at my leisure, a marked departure from prior years when it was a frenetic, last minute undertaking, digging up and hauling in many hundreds of pounds of vegetables at one time. Most of the cabbage is in the root cellar but there are many more in the ground still growing. Remember those cabbage seedlings retrieved from a dumpster in early August? Two more weeks of moderate temperatures and I’ll have a couple dozen more two pound heads. Celery, of all things, is hanging in as well. I cut individual stalks from plants and they continue to send up new ones from the base. I fully intend to harvest fresh celery for Thanksgiving stuffing, the first time I have accomplished this feat. The deer are leaving the leeks alone and so am I. Leeks vary in their resistance to frost and I’m growing a fairly hardy one. When those weather people start talking about high teens, I’ll bring them in (though those left behind invariably survive the winter). I had notions to leave the beets and last bed of carrots in the ground ’til more dire forecasts, but the deer put an end to them. The carrots and beets are dug. The spinach, parsley, and kale are shared with the deer.

Composting. There are entire books written on the subject. I’m from the let-nature-perform-the-task school of composting. It takes nature two years. I’ve recently started my fall pile. Overwhelmingly it is composed of garden residue (all those stalks and roots from all those plants) supplemented with generous amounts of the weeds which have begun to creep in from the edges of the garden. I’ll top it all off with cleanings from the stalls and hen house, barn sweepings, and some of my unending supply of wood ashes and pay it no mind till next fall. Last year’s pile is churned a bit, but just a bit, the coarsest stuff removed and thrown onto the just-created pile. The pile from two autumns ago is ready for use. Leaf piles abound, again in varying states of completion. I suspect a few more will develop before rake season comes to an end. Each is situated right close to a garden site, minimizing the length the wheelbarrow must wheel.

My wheelbarrow is a wonderful tool. It is a rare day that does not find me bonding with it. Me and my wheelbarrow, we remove garden wastes and return with finished compost. We haul green leafy stuff to the cows, transport rocks and stones to holes in the pig-rooted pastures, and perform a variety of other tasks. Maybe, just maybe, we’ll rest a bit in December.

Wildlife Sightings
Mice, and lots of them, are reported entering kitchens and scampering through walls in unusually brazen and populous platoons this fall.
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The Friends would like to acknowledge the continued generosity of the Fieldstone Press in donating the printing costs of this newsletter. Recently, Fieldstone has begun to donate labeling and sorting services as well. The money saved in these printing costs is earmarked for “Beyond the Box”, technology purchases. In November, the Friends purchased a sorely needed new photocopy machine and digital camera thanks to this Beyond the Box funding. Copies are still 10 cents a piece for the public, but now they won’t constantly jam up in the machine. The camera will be used for publicity and documentation. Check out the web-site: www.royalstonlibrary.org for examples of the new camera’s efficacy.

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