

# THE ROYALSTON COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

April 2007



Volume X, Issue III

A Publication of the Friends of the Phinehas S. Newton Library, Royalston, Massachusetts

## Calendar of Events

April 1 Sunday **All Fool's Day**  
8 a.m. - 4 p.m. **Hunter Safety Course** (3 of 3) at Royalston F&G

April 2 Monday  
10 a.m. - 8 p.m. **Polls open for Annual Town Election** Precinct 1 is located at Town Hall, Precinct 2 at Whitney Hall on School St. in South Royalston.

1:15 p.m. **Full Pink Moon**

April 3 Tuesday **Passover begins**

April 4 Wednesday  
7 p.m. **Monty Tech SchoolCom** meets

April 5 Thursday  
6:30 pm **Friends of the Library** meeting  
6:30 p.m. **Congregational Choir Practice** at The Parsonage

7 p.m. **Ecumenical Maundy Thursday Service** at the First Church of Templeton

April 6 Friday **Good Friday**  
Monty Tech Closed . ARRSD open.

**7 p.m. Ecumenical Lenten Good Friday Healing Service** at the Second Congregational Church, So. Royalston.

7 pm **5th anniversary gala Open Mic at Town Hall.** Grants from the Massachusetts and the Athol Cultural Councils, donations and the sale of beverages and baked goods at \$1 pay for the series. Admission is free.

April 7 Saturday  
10 a.m. sharp **Easter Egg Hunt and Chocolate Melting.** Meet at Town Hall. Rain or shine. Bring a basket or bag to carry eggs. Donations of plastic eggs, wrapped candy and funds to purchase items for the event can be left at the Country Store or Phinehas S Newton Library . Call Rene Lake: 978-249-4639 for info.

April 8 Sunday **Easter and Orthodox Easter**  
6:16 a.m. **Easter Sunrise Service** (Please arrive on The Common at about 6 a.m.)  
8:15 a.m. **Easter Sunday Mass** at Our Lady Queen of Heaven  
9 a.m. **Easter Sunday service** at the Second Congregational  
11 a.m. **Easter Sunday service** at the First Congregational

April 9 Monday  
6:30 pm **ARRSD Superintendent Polito meets with parents and community members to discuss moving RCS 6th grade to ARMS** in the future. PTG meeting precedes at 5:30.

7 pm **The Royalston Democratic Town Committee** holds a reorganization meeting at the Town Hall, chaired by State Sen. Brewer.

April 10 Tuesday  
8:30 am - 4 pm **Kindergarten Registration** for resident children who will be 5 years old prior to September 1, 2007. Bring a birth certificate and immunization records.

2 a.m. **5-Alone, an outstanding a-capella group** from the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School sing at Royalston Town Hall. A donation of \$5 is suggested. Students and children are free. CDs available.

April 12 Thursday  
noon **early dismissal** at RCS

**Dinner and a show at RCS.** Info: 249-2900. (Note the date change.)  
5:30 pm **Lasagne Supper** . (tix \$8/ adult and \$5/kids under 12. Benefits trip to Nature's Classroom.)  
6:30 pm **Fabulous Talent Showcase** - Song, Dance, Stomp, Gymnastics, Instrumentals, Improv Comedy, Jumprope Tricks, a homegrown band and a few surprises. Fun. Free!

April 13 Friday  
7 pm **Local Documentary Filmmakers Series features Liane Brandon** at the Library . Films, discussion, wine, cheese and desserts. 249-3572 for info.

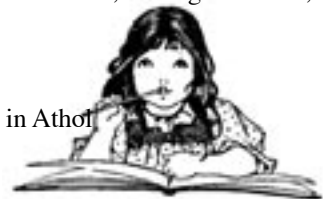
**April 14 - 22 Spring Vacation** for RCS, Village School, ARRSD, Monty Tech

April 14 Saturday  
**River Rat Parade and Canoe Race** in Athol

April 15 Sunday  
midnight **Deadline for the Royalston Poet Laureate contest.** Submit poems to the Phinehas Newton Library or zap to chasegos@gis.net. Call 978-249-3572 for more information.

April 16 Monday **Patriot's Day** Observation  
schools, post office and library closed

April 17 Tuesday **New Flower Moon**  
midnight **Mass. and Federal Income Tax Deadline.** (Is this why April is the cruelest month? Take heart. This deadline represents a 2 day reprieve; the 15th was a Sunday and the 16th a holiday.)



April 19 Thursday  
2:30 pm **Annual Kite Flying Event.** Meet at the Library.  
All ages. Bring a kite or use one of ours. Kite cake served.

April 22 Sunday **Earth Day**

April 23 Monday  
2:00 pm **Tim Van Egmond Folksinger and Storyteller**  
will perform at Royalston Town Hall. All welcome.

April 25 Wednesday  
8 a.m. 24-Hour Dispatch Committee meets at Center Fire Station

7:30 p.m. **LBS meets. Program: "A Peace Workshop in Cyprus"**  
with Jessica Guiney hosted by Kristen West at the Town Hall. All  
members of the community, regardless of gender, welcome.

April 27 Friday **National Arbor Day**  
7 pm **Local Filmmakers Series features Boyd Es-**  
**tus** at the Library . Films, discussion, wine, cheese and desserts.

7-9 pm **Father-Daughter Dance** at Athol Town Hall to  
benefit the Athol-Royalston Education Foundation. Desserts, DJ,  
photographs, door prizes and lots of fun. Bring a father or borrow  
one for the evening. Preschool - Middle School girls encouraged  
to attend. Tix available through the local public schools. (\$10/  
couple and \$2 for each additional girl). Call 249-0358 for info.

April 28 Saturday  
9 a.m. to noon- Bullock Park: **Roadside Trash Pick Up.** Clean  
your own street and help keep Royalston beautiful. A cookout will  
be held at 12:00 with hot dogs, chili, chips and soda. Contact  
Charlie Scribner - 978-249-2649.

7 pm **Blues Night** at Town Hall sponsored by Cultural Council.  
Mel and Blue Shots Opening for Tobasco Fiasco. Fun refresh-  
ments. Tix \$7 adult; kids free available at post office or door.

April 30 Monday  
7 pm **library trustee meeting**

May 1 Tuesday **May Day**  
9 a.m. Maypole dancing at Village School. Public welcome.

May 2 Wednesday **Full Flower Moon**  
6 p.m. **Baccalaureate Planning Pizza Party** at The Parsonage

May 11 Friday  
7 pm **The Annual Town Meeting at RCS**

### **Royalston Luncheon Club/COA**

The Royalston Luncheon Club is looking to boost its numbers this  
spring, and once the weather is a little more certain, will be plan-  
ning some special activities and trips. Until then, the "regulars"  
encourage those who are suffering from cabin fever to venture out  
to the Town Hall on Wednesdays for a nutritious hot meal and  
some good company, both of which are known cures for that win-  
ter malady. Lunches are just \$2 for seniors and \$2.50 for not yet  
seniors. Reserve a seat on Monday for Wednesday's luncheon by  
calling Betty Woodbury at 978-249-9656.

### **Select Board News** *Andy West, Chair*

In March, Selectmen hosted a public information session on Stra-  
tegic Planning. We had good discussions about the methods and  
benefits. This type of planning is used by many businesses and  
organizations to develop common goals across departments. In lo-  
cal government, departments often compete against each other for a  
piece of the budget. Strategic Planning helps the whole organization  
develop common goals and understand each department's needs.

Route 32 update: The Selectmen recently asked for proposals to  
do the engineering work on the Route 32 project. On March 22,  
the Town hosted a Pre-bid meeting to answer questions from pro-  
spective firms. No less than fourteen firms showed up! Not all  
of them may submit a proposal, but this is a really great level of  
interest. An engineering firm will be chosen in April.

The Board has been participating recently in the All Board Meetings  
held by the ARRSD School Committee. These meetings bring to-  
gether the Finance and Select boards from Athol and Royalston in one  
big meeting with the School Committee. The result has been very  
positive. All the boards have been extremely supportive of bringing  
a new direction to the school system and there is a new momentum as  
a result. Selectman Linda Alger has volunteered for extra duty, serv-  
ing on several subcommittees. Please be supportive of your boards  
and School Committee in this effort. Good will is contagious.

The Broadband Committee and twenty high-speed starved people  
met last month and discussed different technologies. The goal for  
the committee is to find ways to get affordable high speed internet  
to Town Offices and residents. The committee will look at dif-  
ferent technologies and perhaps suggest an experiment or two to  
find solutions. Last month, there was an error in newsletter on  
the Broadband listserve web address. Here is the correct address:  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/RoyalstonBroadband>  
*Selectboard meetings for April will be the 3rd and 17th at 7:00  
P.M. in the Town Hall. Of course, the public is always welcome.*

### **Fire Department Recieves Grant**

Fire Chief Wayne R. Newton is pleased to announce that he has  
been contacted by US State Senator Kennedy's Office and the US  
Department of Homeland Security. The U.S. Department of Home-  
land Security has awarded an \$81,724 Assistance to Firefighters  
Grant (AFG) program award to the Royalston Fire Department in  
response to Chief Wayne R. Newton's plea for Structure and For-  
est Fire Gear to be purchased for all members of the Royalston Fire  
Department. Chief Wayne Newton states "This is a huge success  
for Royalston. Complete structure gear sets can be priced from \$  
2,125 per person and complete Forest Fire Gear sets from \$ 650  
per person. The Town of Royalston has just saved \$81,724. In  
order to spend the grant monies, there will have to be an article  
presented at the Annual Town Meeting for a 5 percent match of the  
\$ 81,724.00 totaling \$ 4,301. This will allow a complete total for  
expenditure of \$ 86,025."

Also, the Royalston Fire & EMS Association reports March's  
Breakfast Buffet added more than \$400 to its account. All funds  
from the Association are used to purchase equipment and supplies  
or to fund training that would otherwise be paid through taxes.

## Town Clerk News

Melanie Mangum, Town Clerk  
Whitney Hall 978-249-0493  
Mondays from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.; Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

### Annual Town Election

The Town Election will be held, Monday, April 2nd. Polls will be open from 10 am. - 8 p.m. Precinct 1 polling is at Town Hall, Precinct 2 at Whitney Hall in South Royalston. If you are unsure of your polling place or whether you are registered to vote, contact the Town Clerk. *Please note the polling begins at 10 am. There are always a few early birds stopping at Town Hall. "Vote early and often", in this case, is not applicable!* A special note of thanks goes out to the "Two-who-wish-not-to-be-named" who cranked out tally sheets for the upcoming election.

**Want to be an Election Worker?** It's important to have enough election workers to cover the hours the polls are open as well as vote counters at the end of the night. In case of illness or availability issues with current workers, I am looking for election workers for both precincts, who would be willing to either be on call, work a shift or help count. Election workers currently get paid \$6.75/hr. If interested, write a letter to the Selectmen, who make the appointments. If appointed, I will contact you to be sworn in.

**Census:** Thank you to the volunteers who graciously spent their time helping get out the census forms and especially to Mary Barclay. Among other things, she helped stamp and mail 700 forms. Thanks also to Gary Winitzer who, along with another volunteer, helped stuff and seal. This census process takes several months from start to finish. Starting sometime in April, those who did not return their census form will be declared "Inactive Voters" (if they are currently registered) and will receive a confirmation post card that will return them to active status when filled out and returned.

**The Annual Town Meeting will be held on Friday, May 11.** Selectmen and the Finance Committee are busy with budget work, and I am working on compiling department reports and town meeting/election records from FY06 for the Annual Report. Annual Reports from FY05 are still available at my office free of charge.



## Board of Health News *Phil Leger, Chair*

The Board of Health at its next meeting on April 11th will consider raising the Construction and Demolition rates at the transfer station. Right now they are based on what the town pays, which is \$120 per ton. Raising that rate to \$130-150 per ton to assure that the town does not lose money on this necessary service is under consideration. Many small contractors have been taking advantage of this service. There is a need to adjust the rates. Also, the BOH has proposed to install a scale so that these transactions are fair and consistent. If anyone has comments, contact one of the BOH members. If anyone wishes to attend the meeting, it is held at Whitney Hall in the South Village at 7pm.

## ZIPCODE 01368

*Pat Jackson*

Royalston is lucky to have a post office. We mourn the loss of both Arline Vining and Sonja Vacarri and we mind the inevitable changes. But we are still very lucky.

Many of us remember when a piece of mail would get to its designated recipient quickly with only the recipient's name and Royalston, MA or the name and zipcode on it. All Royalston mail would go to Royalston. The Postmistress knew everyone's name and would track odd folks down. Little was sent back.

Now the wonderful small town friendliness and common meeting place of the post office has gradually been changed by big-city protocols. They come through Springfield and, locally, from Athol. It is even rumored that some people upstream would like our post office to disappear as many little ones have. It is hard not to mind the rigidity and niggling rules we have to live with. But beware if your mail is not addressed precisely accurately. You will lose. You will not prevail against the computerized machines. For example, if "P.O." isn't put before "Box" for mail coming to the boxes in the post office, it will be sent back by the machines even before it gets here.

The U.S. Post Office began to stop hand sorting mail seven years ago when the so-called "DPS" computer system was installed. As a result, there has been steady attrition of personnel in Athol as fewer and fewer positions have been refilled and equipment used in hand sorting has gradually been sent back to Springfield. Now there is an even newer computer system - "PARS" - which is causing more confusion and mail inexplicably misdirected. Forwarding of mail used to happen here. At the moment, the computer program reads the forwarding instruction sheets we fill out and diverts the mail even before its first sorting. To document recent mistakes, the Postmistress in Royalston has started to add our dated stamp to the backs of envelopes. She has seen pieces of mail come back bearing several Royalston stamps.

Sadly, things will probably get worse before they get better. In any case, they will be farther and farther from the anticipated service of a small town post office.

The postman's motto is, "Neither rain, nor sleet, nor gloom of night will keep me from my appointed rounds." Sadly, that is no longer true. In the face of "progress", Royalston's Postmistress is trying to provide services that will make "01368" become even more of a place for people to encounter each other. She is also trying to save her job, not eliminate it. She needs help, not hindrance.

## Attention Registered Democrats:

The Royalston Democratic Town Committee will reorganize at a special meeting in the town hall on Monday, April 9, at 7 p.m., to be chaired by State Sen. Steve Brewer. All registered voters who are enrolled as Democrats and reside in Royalston are invited to attend. Committee officers will be elected at the meeting. This meeting is being held because the previous committee expired due to inactivity.

# 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 yous

**Lorraine and Bob Casinginho** and **Linda Alger** for movies

**Marsha Charest** for library supplies

**Sherwood Burnett and Carol Bean** for *Reflections on Royalston*

**Rolanda Brousseau, Becky Divoll, and Susan Seghir** for books

**Doreen Sawyer, Tom Musco and Melanie Mangum** for audiobooks

**Gary Winitzer** for CPR classes and loading everything onto our laptop so we could use it with the projection system.

**Frank Stearns** for photos and essays about his parents, **Barney** and **Anne Stearns**, to be included in the Town Scrapbook.

## Recent Donations to the Friends

**The Carrier family**

**Bob and Lorraine Casinginho**

**Bill and Lian Cutting**

**Pat Jackson**

**Ruth Suyenaga and Mark Shoul**

**Richard and Paula Paul**

**Gertrude Parnanen**

**John and Susan Fortwengler**

**Phil Mickey and Nell Vaughn**

**Bill and Sue Richard**

**Steve and Cindy Savoy**

**Bob and Faye White**

**Rev. Dr. Ginger Asel**

**Lillie Dobson**

**Joan Katz**

**Gerry and Marie Lajoie**

**Buddy Dyer**

**Paul Montero**

*These donations help fund this newsletter and many other library programs as well as pay for library materials. Thank you!*

## Quilt Display Continues at Library

Doreen Sawyer has several beautiful quilts on display at the library through the end of April. Included are two quilts made by her daughters Christine and Ashley when they were 10 and 7. Several different quilting techniques are represented in the exhibit. Pat Kelley will have her toile paintings on display during May and June.

## CPR Home Instructional Program Available

Gary Winitzer has donated The American Heart Association CPR course for home instruction to the library. It may be borrowed for two weeks by anyone with a valid library card. This course will give you the basics needed to perform CPR and. Several of us from the library just took the AHA CPR course and were impressed with the techniques and the training included in the DVD. The home course is similar to this and will enable individuals to learn how to react in case of an emergency.

## Multiple Sclerosis Walk in Worcester

The library's own Gina Verrelli will be participating in the MS Walk Worcester on Saturday, April 28th at Burncoat High School. This is Gina's fourth year participating in the six mile walk. Donations to sponsor Gina in this walk may be dropped off at or mailed to the library. Go Gina!

## Library receives copy of *Reflections on Royalston*

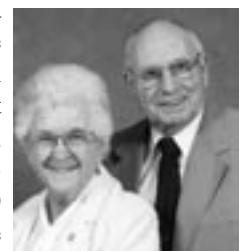
A copy of *Reflections on Royalston* that belonged to Minnie Lemon has been donated to the library. Minnie lived in Royalston with her parents, George and Alice, at The Highview Conservation School, which existed between 1916-1936. From 5 to 20 children from broken homes stayed at the school for several months to years until they finished the eighth grade. The school had a farm where "everybody helped out" with ducks, geese, chickens, cows and horses. Minnie graduated from Athol High School. Then, she assisted her father in running the school. She taught mathematics and English and helped with the cooking. During WWI, she drove the tractor. Although it "wasn't her church", she taught Sunday School at the 2nd Congregational because it was "the only church in town." She enjoyed croquet, tennis and was a sharpshooter with a rifle. She was also president of the Athol Woman's Club. In 1947, after her father's death, she sold the school property to Camp Caravan. She moved to Needham, Mass. where she lived to the age of 102. The book was in the possession of Sherwood Burnett, and her dear friend, Carol Bean, who have passed it on to the library for others to use to search for information on their ancestors.



Minnie with charge at Highland Conservation School c.1919

**The Town Scrapbook Submissions:** No history of our town has been written since *Reflections*, but there is the Town Scrapbook, a collection of photos, memorabilia, and essays about life here in the 20th Century, which will be a good source to mine for anyone who does attempt to write the next history. New submissions are always needed. Minnie Lemmon's photo and a brief biography will be added to the Scrapbook. In addition, Frank Stearns recently contributed biographies of his parents, Barney and Anne Stearns. Both were pillars of the community.

Barney grew up in South Royalston and must have known Minnie Lemon. He served on the Board of Assessors, Grange, and Bi-centennial Committee and was an active supporter of the 1st Congregational Church, Democratic Party and Salvation Army. As loan officer at the First National Bank, he "put in a good word" for many local residents. Anne Stearns met Barney at a Grange function in 1933. They were married two years later at the 1st Congregational Church and had a son, Frank. Among other jobs Anne worked as office manager of the Athol Daily News for 30 years. She was noted for her friendly smile and sharp perceptive mind.



Anne and Barney Stearns

## Local Filmmaker Documentary Series Continues: Brandon and Estus Screen their Work

On Friday April 13th, award-winning independent filmmaker Liane Brandon will show two of her celebrated short films, discuss her circuitous path to becoming a filmmaker, and show an excerpt featuring rare footage of songwriter-satirist Tom Lehrer.

Liane is a filmmaker, a photographer and Professor Emeritus at the UMass/Amherst. She was one of the first independent women filmmakers to emerge from Boston in the early 70's, and is a founder of New Day Films. Her classic films have been featured



on Home Box Office, The Learning Channel, USA Cable and Cinemax. Her film *Betty Tells Her Story* was nominated for inclusion in the National Film Registry and was featured at the Library of Congress. Currently working as a still photographer, her credits include *Unsolved Mysteries*, and the PBS shows *Murder at Harvard* and *Typhoid Mary: The Most Dangerous Woman In America*.

On Friday, April 27th, Boyd Estus will show excerpts from his recent PBS programs, and behind-the-scenes production stills. He will reveal some of the secrets and techniques of making these films – as well as answering questions from the audience. Boyd Estus is a motion picture Director of Photography and Producer/Director whose credits include the Academy Award winning *The Flight of the Gossamer Condor* and the Academy Award nominee *Eight Minutes to Midnight* as well as many Emmy winning television productions. Boyd has made films for many of the celebrated television series on PBS (e.g., *NOVA*, *Frontline*, *The American Experience*, *American Masters*, *Eyes on the Prize*), the BBC and other overseas broadcasters, and commercial television (e.g., the long-running *Unsolved Mysteries*, *Spenser For Hire*, the History Channel, the Discovery Channel, and the National Geographic Society).



## Royalston Poet Laureate Competition Deadline Fast Approaching

Amherst has its Belle: Royalston is about to have its first Poet Laureate. Submissions of poetry about Royalston, any form or length are due by midnight April 15th. One previously unpublished entry per person accepted. There are no age requirements. Contest open to all who have ever lived, studied or worked in Royalston. Submissions may be hand delivered at the library on the Common, put in the drop box, mailed to PO Box 133, 01368 or zapped to chasegos@gis.net. ) Please put names and phone numbers on a separate sheet of paper. The Board of Selectmen will crown the winner. Along with a laurel wreath crown, the winner receives two books of poems of the poet's choice. One will be donated to the library with a bookplate announcing its source and one goes home as a prize.

## Some of the New Books:

### New adult fiction:

Auster, Paul *Travels in the Scriptorium*  
 Beaton, M.C. *Death of a Maid*  
 Bernardi, Adria *Openwork: A Novel*  
 Binchy, Maeve *Whitethorn Woods*  
 Blunt, Giles *By The Time You Read This*  
 Bohjalian, Chris *The Double Bind: A Novel*  
 Brashares, Ann *Forever in Blue; The 4th Summer of the Sisterhood*  
 Braun, Lillian Jackson (LT) *The Cat Who Had 60 Whiskers*  
 Cornwell, Bernard *Lords of the North*  
 Crais, Robert *The Watchman: A Joe Pike Novel*  
 Crider, Bill *Murder Among Owls: A Sheriff Dan Rhodes Mystery*  
 Delinsky, Barbara *Family Tree*  
 Dessen, Sarah *Someone Like You*  
 Dessen, Sarah *That Summer*  
 Dessen, Sarah *This Lullaby*  
 Downie, Ruth *Medicus: A Novel of the Roman Empire*  
 Ford, Richard *The Lay of the Land*  
 Gardner, Lisa *Hide*

Haddon, Mark *A Spot of Bother: A Novel*  
 Hall, James *Magic City*  
 Kelton, Elmer *Texas Showdown*  
 Kinsella, Sophie *Shopaholic & Baby*  
 Kinsella, Sophie *Shopaholic Ties The Knot*  
 Kleypas, Lisa *Sugar Daddy*  
 Krentz, Jayne Ann *White Lies*  
 Mailer, Norman *The Castle in the Forest*  
 Orenstein, Denise Gosliner *The Secret Twin*  
 Palmer, Michael *The Fifth Vial*  
 Parker, Robert B. *High Profile*  
 Parker, T. Jefferson *Storm Runners: A Novel*  
 Patterson, James *Step On A Crack*  
 Phillips, Susan Elizabeth *Natural Born Charmer*  
 Picoult, Jodi *Nineteen Minutes: A Novel*  
 Rice, Luanne *The Edge of Winter*  
 Robb, J.D. *Innocent In Death*  
 Smiley, Jane *Ten Days in the Hills*  
 Steel, Danielle *Sisters*  
 Westerfeld, Scott *Pretties*  
 Zahn, Timothy *Star Wars. Allegiance*

### New Adult Nonfiction

Brodie, Christina *Drawing and Painting Plants*  
 Coleman, Ellen Schneid *Caring for an Aging Parent*  
 Crocker, Betty *Betty Crocker Cookie Book*  
 Day, Jerry R. *How to Raise Kids You Want to Keep: The Proven Discipline Program Your Kids Will Love (And That Really Works!)*  
 del Vecchio, Michael *Knitting With Balls: A Hands-On Guide to Knitting For The Modern Man*  
 Eagleson, Janet *The Maple Syrup Book*  
 Harris, Mark *Grave Matters: A Journey Through the Modern Funeral Industry to a Natural Way of Burial*  
 Lamott, Anne *Grace (Eventually): Thoughts on Faith*  
 Pearce, Fred *With Speed and Violence: Why Scientists Fear Tipping Points in Climate Change*  
 Pulliam, June Mitchell *Read On... Horror Fiction*  
 Rhodes, Linda *Should Mom Be Left Alone? Should Dad Be Driving? Your Question & Answer Companion For Caregiving*  
 Romm, Joseph *Hell and High Water: Global Warming The Solution and the Politics and What We Should Do*  
 Sabath, Ann Marie *One Minute Manners: Quick Solutions to the Most Awkward Situations You'll Ever Face at Work*  
 Sedaris, Amy *I Like You: Hospitality Under The Influence*  
 Smallin, Donna *Organizing Plain & Simple*  
 Taylor, David *Old Dog, New Tricks: Understanding and Retraining Older and Rescued Dogs*  
 The Iraq Study Group Report  
 Trueit, Trudi Strain *Surviving Divorce: Teens Talk About What Hurts and What Helps*  
 Wagner, John *Barns, Sheds and Outbuildings*

## Come, Fly a Kite

The kite flying day tradition continues at the library during April vacation on Thursday, April 19 at 2:30 pm. Bring a kite or the library will have lots available to share. All ages welcome. Kite cake served. There will be opportunities to write poems about kites and spring too. Wind or no wind, we'll have a good time.



## **Do Your Part: All Town Roadside Trash Pick Up 4/28**

Royalston's seasons are pretty effective at hiding the worst of the wrappers of our throw-away world, but in April, when the snow has melted and the weeds are barely greening, the coffee cups and beer cans are jarringly ugly. It's time to grab a trash bag and hit the streets.

On Saturday April 28, from 9 am - noon, there will be free disposal for roadside trash at the dump. Wear gloves. Be careful of traffic. Kids should be accompanied by an adult. A cookout will be held at noon at Bullock Park with hot dogs, chili, chips and soda. Contact Charlie Scribner, who is organizing this event for the umpteenth year, at 249-2649 for information. **Clean a street and help keep Royalston beautiful.**

## **Congregational Churches Youth Events**

The Youth groups from the Royalston Congregational Churches will be raising money for the Massachusetts Project Bread at its **Walk for Hunger** on May 6 in Boston. Join our team or pledge money to feed hungry people in Mass.

Team Name: Royalston Youth - Walk for Jesus

Team Leader - Charlie Scribner at 978-249-2649

Attention Graduating Seniors: A Pizza Party to **plan the upcoming Baccalaureate Service** will be held at the parsonage on Wednesday May 2nd at 6 p.m. The Baccalaureate Service will be held at the Second Congregational Church on June 6th at 9 a.m.

## **Ladies' Benevolent Society**

Now in its 183rd year of continuous service to the community, the Ladies' Benevolent Society of Royalston is a group of 30 women committed to doing good deeds while having a great time. Anyone who is interested in benevolence, regardless of gender, age or religious affiliation, is invited into membership. Meetings are open to the public. If you would like to obtain one of the 2007 program brochures, call one of the officers. Elected for 2007 are President Kim MacPhee (978-249-0946); Vice President and Treasurer Brenda L. Putney (978-249-7787); Secretary Maureen Blasco; Remembrance Committee Millie Poor and Helen Feliciano; Devotions Committee Marguerite Langlois and Andrea Lively; Program Committee Andrea Lively, Kristen West and Rebecca Krause-Hardie; and Scholarship Committee Nancy Bolton, Beth Gospodarek and Theresa Quinn.

Programs for the year (at 7:30 p.m. at the home of the hostess, unless otherwise stated) include: Apr. 25 - A Peace Workshop in Cyprus with Jessica Guiney, hosted by Kristen West at the Town Hall; May 30 - Zoning Task Force Update with Kim MacPhee and Vyto Andreliunas, hosted by Rebecca Krause-Hardie; Aug. 17 - the annual Benevolent Picnic, beginning at 4 p.m. with swim and fun and a 6 p.m. pot luck supper, hosted by Beth Gospodarek at Packard Pond; Sep. 26 - Health Care in Haiti with Dr. and Mrs. John Mulqueen, hosted by Brenda L. Putney; Oct. 24 - meeting followed by 8 p.m., public Memorial Piano Concert, hosted by Patience Bundschuh; Nov. 17 - Annual Braised Beef Fundraising Dinner at the Town Hall; Dec. 19 - Annual Basket Packing for shut-ins; Also, a June blood donor day is in the planning stages.

## **Royalston's 9th Annual Easter Egg Hunt and Chocolate Melting**

Date: Saturday, April 7, 2007 (rain or shine)

Time: 10:00 a.m. sharp

Location: Royalston Town Hall and Common

Ages: All who can enjoy

Bring: Something to carry your candy in - put your name on it. Dress for the weather - if it rains, we'll use the 2nd floor of the Town Hall and lots of hay.

What: There will be plenty of plastic eggs filled with candy hidden throughout the Common. Don't forget the 20 pounds of chocolate that will be molded, bagged, and taken home after the egg hunt.

Donations of plastic eggs, wrapped candy, or funding can be left at the Royalston library, the country store, or call Rene Lake at (978) 249-4639. (Note: Once again we'll be recycling the plastic eggs.)

## **Fish and Game News**

Another one of the F&G's **Incredible Roast Beef Dinners** is planned for Saturday, April 21 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clubhouse. Proceeds from this dinner will benefit the Snowmobile Club. Tickets are \$10 each and available from Donna Smith at 978-249-9687.

## **The 3rd Annual National Poetry Month Event**

On Friday, April 13 at 6:30 p.m. in the back corner at Bruce's Browser of Athol, some well known local poets will read from their works and an open mic will follow. Diane Lincoln will open with her Stalker CD. Don't be superstitious, bring your poems and creativity. Free refreshments. Sponsored by Bruce's Browser and Sharon Harmon of Royalston.

## **This Royalston Open Mic also a Birthday Party**

On Friday, April 6 at 7pm, the last Open Mic of this season will take place in the Royalston Town Hall. The usual format will structure the event but this one will also be a birthday party: the Royalston Open Mic has been around for five years!

Dan Vaccari was a very young teen when Sonja decided to create a new opportunity for her son and the band he was playing with. The Open Mic gave them, and other artists as well, a stage and an enthusiastic public. They were the first house band with Noah Siegel on guitar and Josh Morris-Siegel on bass, Norah Dooley voice and violin, Jim Bennett on sax and Dan on drums. Their band was the Black Cats and Melanie Mangum soon became the official singer. The rest is history: they passed the baton to the Funky Door Boys, who in turn gave the role of house band to the Blue Shots. Today, Sonja only regrets that this event attracts mostly musicians; she would love to see comedians, poets, and why not also dancers, magicians.... Amazingly, after these five short years, many artists who have started their performing careers on the Royalston stage are now flying at professional levels. Promises have been made that they will return on April 6 but, as usual with this very informal affair, the actual program will be a surprise.

## **Blues Night at Town Hall**

On April 28th, Melanie and the Blue Shots will open for Tabasco Fiasco at a fundraising event for the Royalston Cultural Council. Expect rhythm and blues and classic rock played hot and spicy. Beer, sangria and soft drinks for sale. Fun foods and desserts. Tix available at the post office or at the door. (\$7/ adult; kids under 12 free.) Call Marie 575-0654 for info.

## CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD NEWS



Congratulations to Royalston students on the Monty Tech honor roll: *High honors:* **Brittany Warren** and **Dylan Bates.** *Honors:* **Andrew Parnanen, Jessica A. Putney: Daniel Demboske, Ryan Gaudet, Emily R. Putney, Amanda Warren, Justine Brousseau and Rebecca Paine.**

**T.J. Misilo** of Palm Bay Florida, formerly of Winchendon Road, recently received his Master's degree in Engineering Management from the Florida Institute of Technology. TJ completed his degree with a 3.66 G.P.A.

Northeastern University fall semester Dean's List students maintain a 3.25 G.P.A. **Carolyn Bennett** and **Brendon Kellner** were among the students earning this distinction.

**David Bourbeau**, owner of Royalston Auto Sales on South Royalston Road, recently competed in a series of motorcycle races, in the "Vintage Superbike Lightweight Class," on a 1979 Suzuki 425E built by Jeff Castine of All Sports Cycle in Orange. "Super Dave" took first on March 1 in Bloomingdale, Georgia in the rain at Roebing Road Raceway; at Daytona International Speedway, he got 1st on March 5 and fourth on March 6. Congratulations.

**Ben West** will be appearing as the lead character, JoJo, in the Theater at The Mount's production of "Seussical Jr." This kid-friendly musical, based on many of the popular books by Dr. Seuss, will run April 24-28. Tickets are \$6 for all seats and may be purchased by calling the TATM Box Office at 978-632-2403.

**Linq Performs:** On April 5th at 7:30PM Royalston's Linq will celebrate her new CD release with a performance at the Old Town House in the center of New Salem, MA under the auspices of the 1794 Meetinghouse. More information is available at 544-5200.

### Recipe of the Month

*Andrea Lively offers this month's recipe. Andrea is known for her wide smile, long strides and willingness to help out; she is a long time member of the Cultural Council and LBS. She says, "This recipe has quite a few steps but soo very worthwhile in the end result. It still tastes great in the late winter-early springtime but this definitely has an affinity for the fall menu."*

#### PUMPKIN GINGERBREAD

Mix and let set for 30 minutes (stir occasionally):

- 1/3 cup of dried currants
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 3 Tbs crystallized ginger (available in the oriental section of your grocery store)
- 2 Tbs of ginger brandy and 1 tsp of vanilla

Beat together until mixed well:

- 2 eggs
- 2/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/3 cup molasses

Combine together in small bowl:

- 2 cups flour (half whole wheat if desired)
- 1 1/2 Tbs ground ginger
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp cloves and cinnamon
- 3/4 tsp allspice
- 1/2 tsp salt and nutmeg
- 1/8 tsp ground pepper

In large mixing bowl combine:

- 1 cup pumpkin
- 2/3 cup buttermilk
- 2 Tbs oil (canola)
- 2 Tbs melted margarine or butter

Now add flour mixture to egg mixture alternately with pumpkin (begin and end with pumpkin). Fold in brandied fruit. Cook in oven preheated to 375 degrees for approximately 35 to 45 minutes in a greased and floured 9" square pan. Do not over bake as this will dry out the texture.

**Grandbabies:** Maureen and Jim Meausky of 51 Athol-Richmond Road welcomed another new grandson this month. Rocco Maxwell Meausky was born to David Meausky and his wife, Loren Bourgeois of Belchertown on Sunday, March 4th. He weighed 7 pound 3 ounces and was 19 inches long. He joins a sister, Levi Vega, age 3.

Brandy Lee Mallett Lefsyk and Jason Matthew Lefsyk of East Road in Orange announce the birth of their son, Sawyer Shon Lefsyk. He was born March 14, 2007 in Greenfield Hospital, weighing 7 lbs. 9 oz. and measuring 20 inches. William and Linda Lefsyk of Athol are his grandparents and Sharon and Wade Harmon of Butterworth Road, Royalston are also tickled pink to be his grandparents.



**In Afghanistan:** Marshal Carrier, the son of Naomi and Michael Voldahl-Corliss has been deployed to Afghanistan for the next year. All thoughts and prayers to bring him home safe to us and his family are greatly appreciated. Letters or care packages, can be sent to: Marshal Carrier/ HQ 782nd BSB/ APO AE 09314. He shares everything with his men. Do not put rank on the envelopes please.

**Memorial:** T. June Tibbetts, 82, died Wednesday March 7, 2007. She was born in Boston on June 26, 1924, the daughter of Victor B. and Minnie (Scott) Miller. She grew up and lived for many years in Dorchester and Quincy before moving to Royalston following her retirement. She graduated from Burdette's Commercial College in 1945. She was an assistant traffic manager for F.S. Webster Co and also worked for Dewick & Flanders Ins. and Power & Hall Attorneys in Cambridge. After her retirement, she worked 12 years at the Wal-Mart in Orange. She was pre-deceased by her husband, Charles G. Tibbetts. She leaves a sister, Alta M Blake and her husband, Hugh, of Royalston. There are no services and the burial will be private at Forest Hill Cemetary in Boston. Memorial donations may be sent to: Quabbin Valley Healthcare/ Activities Fund/ attn: Marie King/ 821 Daniel Shays Hwy/ Athol.



Serve with:

- Gingered Whipped Cream
- chill 1 1/2 cups whipping cream
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 3 Tbs sugar

Whip these ingredients until thick peaks form then add:

- 3 Tbs rum or brandy
- 1 tsp vanilla

Continue to whip now until stiff peaks form then fold in :

- 1/4 cup minced crystallized ginger
- Transfer to chilled serving dish and pass with the freshly baked warm gingerbread. Enjoy !!!!!

### **School Committee Candidates' Statements:**

On the April 2nd Town ballot, voters will be asked to vote for school committee members from both Athol and Royalston. **Chet Hall is running a write-in campaign for the 3 year Royalston seat on the school committee and is no longer seeking a seat on the planning board.** All of the Athol Candidates were approached by the RCN to submit candidates' statements, but not all responded. In addition to the candidates listed, **Renee LaPointe** is also running.

**Kala Fisher** has already been appointed to a one year seat on the board. If she wins in the election, she will have the choice on serving the one year appointment or the 3 year elected position. I have been a resident of the Athol-Orange area most of my life. I have two children in the ARRS; one is in ninth grade, the other is in first grade. Along with most of the town, I am frustrated with all that is happening. I believe it is time for a change, new perspectives, and new voices on the Committee. I will be that new voice when elected.

**Lee Chauvette-** I have enjoyed serving the citizens of Athol & Royalston as a member of the school committee. I would appreciate the opportunity to continue to do so. There is a lot of work to continue, such as the High School accreditation, FY08 Budget discussions and raising MCAS scores. I have lived in the district all my life and have chosen to raise my two sons here. I would appreciate your support on April 2. Thank you.

**Pamela Caranfa** - I've been serving on this committee for the past seven years. Athol has been my home for over 20 years. I'm a wife and mother of three; our oldest graduated from Athol HS and is finishing her first year in college. Our other two attend Athol HS in their freshman and junior years. Most people know me as the "Postmistress" in Royalston, among other jobs centered in and around the community. Let's just say, "I keep busy."

As a mother, wife, and small business owner, I have to prioritize my time. It's not just one meeting a month, it's more like three-six a week. While some meetings are difficult and frustrating, I am not and never will be a quitter. I remain steadfast in finding not only sound educational solutions to our problems, but making financially reasonable decisions as well. I believe that decisions should be based on information and research. The job of a good school committee member is to make policy, by working together; without personal agendas, and without aiding and abetting the gossip mill. A school committee member should never act as a "Lone Ranger" or micro-manage the administration. When voting please keep in mind that: all ten members represent Athol, and all ten members represent Royalston. There shouldn't be any division or preferential treatment of one town over another. I feel that my record speaks for itself. As for the decisions I've made, I truly feel that they have been for the entire district and not just what's good for Athol. It's my belief that, the historical and procedural knowledge that I bring to the committee is beneficial to the community as well. I feel that my continuous experience on the negotiation and budget subcommittees together, strikes a good balance for the community's interest, as well as for the education of its children. This is the way to make sustainable and meaningful change. It would be my hope that you allow me to continue to do the work I started seven years ago, as I vie to retain my seat on the school committee. I am, truly committed to the 3000+ students under my watch.

**Jacqueline Doherty-** I am a candidate for re-election to the Athol Royalston School Committee, on which I have served for two and a half years. I have worked on several committees and have grown to appreciate the magnitude of the challenges we face as a district. We cannot tackle these problems alone. We need your help to improve our district. I became a school committee member so that I could make a difference in our children's lives. Following my public school education, I became a scientist and now work in Boston. I want to help other kids pursue their dreams. With the right tools, and with a solid foundation, our kids can be whatever they want to be. The school committee has taken important steps in addressing the many serious questions raised about student performance and regaining accreditation. I want to ensure that the interests of our towns continue to remain focused on education and the future of our children. I will continue to work hard to make the committee one that we can all be proud of by trying to make rational choices, by reducing conflict within the committee, and finally by supporting strong leadership. We have made a commitment to achieving our educational goals and are solidly behind our superintendent, who has mapped out a path to future success for our students. I am proud to have served with this team and hope that you will allow me to continue for the next three years.

**Joseph F. Maga-** This election will set the stage for the next three years, perhaps a new course. Regardless, it may well be the most significant election this board has ever experienced. School committee members are elected to provide the best possible education within our financial means.

As a life-long resident of Athol, graduating from Athol High in 1973, I received a Bachelor of Science in History/Education from Worcester State College in 1977 and a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership and Administration in 1989. For approximately thirty years, my involvement and employment have been in public education, presently retired. My service to our community for the past thirty-three years has been in elected and appointed positions, most significantly as a member of the Athol-Royalston Regional School Committee from 1976-1996. We must now move to the Next Steps:

1. Full and unconditional accreditation of Athol High School and stemming the tide of school choice students leaving our district knowing that there will be financial considerations and sacrifices borne by the citizens of both communities.
2. Full and unconditional compliance with any and all recommendations made by the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (and several others).
3. Full fiscal responsibility and accountability particularly in light of the recent passage of a Proposition 2 1/2 Override and Commonwealth of Massachusetts bailout.
4. The issue of a K-6 school in Royalston, presently "off the table," should never have been brought to the table for discussion. Having been part of the K-12 negotiations between the two towns in 1976, I can confidently state that the intent was for the two communities to provide K-6 education locally with grades 7-12 in a collective manner.
5. Continue to provide instruction so that our children will be successful in all grade levels of MCAS testing.
6. Re-establishment of TRUST between the School Committee/Administration and the towns it represents.



## Between the Covers with the Candidates

The recent Candidates Forum at RCS was well attended and because of the good humor and organizational skills of moderator Ed Wheeler, it was quite informative. Every candidate for a contested seat on our ballot made statements and answered pointed questions. Following are the replies to "What book are you currently reading?"

### Planning Board:

Kate Collins, *The Waves*

### Select Board:

Gary Winitzer, *JavaScript*

Jon Hardie, *Freakonomics*

Wayne Newton, *267 Years of Town Service*

### School com:

Joseph Maga, *The DaVinci Code*

Jackie Doherty, *The Bible*

Renee LaPoine, *Dr Suess and Exodus*

Lee Chauvette, *TV Guide*

Kala Fisher, *Mass. School Committee Rules and Regulations*

Pam Caranfa, *Mass. Gen. Rules and the Regional Agreement*

Chet Hall, *Why are You Doing This? You Must be Crazy.*

## Village School News

### Upcoming Events:

Tuesday April 10 2pm at the Royalston Town Hall

**5-Along**, an award-winning jazz a cappella group from the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School. 5-Along has performed at the North Sea Jazz Festival, the Monterrey Jazz Festival, the Falcon Ridge Folk Festival, and Lincoln Center. This year, it won 1st place in the MA state finals of the National Championship of High School A Cappella (NCHSA). One of the current singers is Isaac Richardson, a graduate of the Village School. Children free, adults suggested donation \$5. Cd's for sale after the show.

Monday April 23 2:00 Royalston Town Hall

**Tim Van Egmond** Folksinger and Storyteller Tim will perform early American songs, tunes and stories. These will reflect the culture of American life in the 1800's. The program will be geared towards 1st-3rd graders. Free and open to all. This program is supported by the Royalston Cultural Council.

Tuesday, May 1, at 9:00 a.m. at the Village School

Come Celebrate **May Day**. Children can join in May Pole weaving, singing and dancing. Rumor has it that the aging Millers River Morris Men will appear, unable to contain themselves, and leap and pound the earth to drive out winter and awaken the earth, and bring fertility to the crops, the fields, the animals and the people! The public is invited. This event will last under an hour, just enough time to greet the spring and evade the black flies.

What's Happening at the Village School? Class change! We are going to have a **combined kindergarten and 1st grade classroom** next year under direction of our new kindergarten teacher, Martin Brown. As a result, we will also have a smaller, combined 2nd and 3rd grade classroom. We have openings! Call Rise at the school to schedule a visit, (978 249-3505) or look us up at [www.villageschool.to](http://www.villageschool.to)

## Mt. Wachusett Community College Update:

Job Hunting? Why not dress for an interview, grab resumes, and head to MWCC's Job Fair '07 on April 4, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Gardner Campus commons. For details: [pbrewerton@mwcc.mass.edu](mailto:pbrewerton@mwcc.mass.edu) or call 978-632-6600 x254. Also, in anticipation of the large biotech company going in at the former Fort Devens, MWCC is getting ready for a fall, 2007 rollout of their new Associate's Degree in Biotechnology. Plan to attend one of the information sessions in Gardner April 11 and May 16 from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 6-7 p.m., or at the Leominster campus on April 23 or May 23 from 6-7 p.m. Registration is required. Contact 978-630-9207 or [cweitz@mwcc.mass.edu](mailto:cweitz@mwcc.mass.edu).

## RCS Update

Pls. call 978-249-2900 for more information about any of these events:

**Kindergarten Registration** for all children who will be 5 years old prior to September 1, 2007 and wish to attend RCS will be on April 10 from 8:30 am - 4 pm at the school. Bring a birth certificate and immunization records. It is also possible to call the school secretary, Marie LaJoie, to arrange pick up for the paperwork for registration before April 10. (NB: Registration at RCS is a different date than in other ARRSD elementary schools.)

**DARE Graduation:** Thank you, Royalston Police Officer Sherry Miner, and recognition to the 17 RCS fifth graders who completed an eight-week program on Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE). Recognized for their essays were John Divoll (winner), Gabriel Jarvenpaa and Andrea Linnus (runners up), and Kelsey Bushee, Chalia Euvrard-Brewington, and McKenzie Spear (honorable mentions). In addition to family and RCS staff, the graduation was attended by Superintendent Polito, Selectman Kellner, Police Chief Deveneau, and State Representative Rice.



## Upcoming Events

The Royalston Academy will be sponsoring **Tom Ricardi and his Birds of Prey** on Friday, April 6. The community is welcome to see his rehabilitated owls, falcons, hawks and a bald eagle.

**Scholastic Book Fair:** 4/9 - 4/12 - volunteers needed. Please contact Marie at RCS to help. Profits benefit RCS library.

On April 9 at 6:30 pm, the **ARRSD superintendent, Anthony Polito, will come to RCS**. There has been an agreement not to **move the 6th grade** to the Athol Royalston Middle School in the '07-'08 school year. However, such a move is still a possibility in the future. The superintendent will share information on potential benefits of such a move and listen to parent concerns. A PTG meeting precedes at 5:30.

Also, The Royalston Cultural Council and the parent teacher group are sponsoring an **all-school trip to Theater at the Mount on April 25 to enjoy "Seussical Jr.," starring Royalston's own Benjamin West.**

## Monty Tech Offers Childcare

Looking for quality child care? Check out the Little Builders program at Monty Tech's Child Development Center. Staff includes fully-licensed day care providers, as well as teachers and upperclassmen from Monty Tech's Early Childhood Education program. There are full and partial week and full and partial day options, available year round.

**PS.** Long time Monty Tech teacher, coach and athletic director David Reid is retiring. Send congratulations to Mr. Reid c/o Monty Tech, 1050 Westminster St; Fitchburg, MA 01420.

## The RCS Poetry Club

### Grasshopper

hop on fresh green grass  
quiet night noises wake you  
tiny field jewel

*Hannah Barkus, Isabelle O'Connor, Colleen Demboske, Alyana La-Joie, Ryan Ganley, Cassandra Frazier, Carrisa and Krista Boudreau, Sarah Arsenaault, Autumn Tigourny, Haylie Baker and Oliva Oliveira*

### Wildlife Sightings

In addition to the usual **downy** and **hairy woodpeckers**, a beautiful **red-bellied woodpecker** has been hanging out at Nell Vaughn's suet feeder in West Royalston over the last several weeks.

The Morris-Siegels watched a **sharp shinned hawk attack, kill and eat a Junco** at the feeder outside their dining area.

While crossing Tully Dam on Sunday, March 9, Keith Swan and his family were pleasantly surprised to see a **bold eagle** glide over their heads. They hope to see this magnificent creature again and view this sighting as evidence that future development(s) around Tully Lake should be prevented. Also, Jim Meausky spotted a **bold eagle** swooping down in his backyard for a bit of lunch on Monday, March 12th. He has seen them before but never that close (about 10 feet from the computer room window).

On March 7, John McLure enjoyed an up close view of a **bobcat** which had crossed Rt 68 on the curve between the power lines and the Stearn's home in front of his car. After the crossing, the "monster cat" stopped ten feet into the woods to eye John while John pulled over to observe the bobcat. The mutual study lasted several minutes before the bobcat sauntered into the woods. Kim, Michele and Beth Thompson saw a **bobcat** run across the road on 68 by Camp Caravan on the afternoon of March 10.

Observations of the Mangum family: **Two pileated woodpeckers** were spotted on Doane Hill Rd. on March 14 and some migrating **hooded mergansers** were in the open water near the Long Pond canoe launch mid-March. Furthermore, Jeff and Emily came across a **mink** coming up on the bank of the Millers along River Rd.

Two **mink** were also spotted from the bridge where NE Fitzwilliam Rd crosses Lawrence Brook. Further investigation revealed a musky den made in a clear spot under a fallen tree and enclosed in a snow cave with tunnels to the water and to another fallen log. The den was fairly easy to find because two minks were noisily mating inside. The male had a tenacious hold on the female's neck with his teeth.

Vyto Andreliunas happened upon 3 **moose** near Boyce Brook in North Royalston. One was wearing a collar. Vyto also heard screeching and looked up to see **porcupines** mating in the tree branches over his head.

**Cowabunga Dudes:** "Turtles of Massachusetts" and "Hatchling Turtles of Massachusetts" posters and a DVD focusing on Massachusetts native terrestrial and freshwater aquatic turtles are now available free of charge at MassWildlife District offices, including Acton or Belchertown. Good for teachers, con com members and backyard naturalists.

## Garden Notes

*Larry Siegel*

For two days the garden was snow-free. I was filling my mind with things-to-do and then the snow returned and now I'm in a funk, even crankier than my normal custom. Like the racehorse at the gate, I'm itching to get started. I trust (hope?) this next snow-melt will be the last.

I've been harvesting my first "crop", maple syrup. Trees were tapped on March 10, ran for forty-eight hours, rested for seven days, and has been re-running since the 20th. (It is now March 22.) When running, the sap has been plentiful and sweet. As a rule, I boil down thirty-five gallons to obtain one gallon of syrup. This year I've been getting it from twenty-seven gallons.

Boiling down gets me outdoors for long stretches of time, a timely escape from the winter-wearied confines of the house. Since it occurs in the cow pasture, I entertain myself during lulls by gathering the winter's worth of manure and uneaten hay, moving it one step closer to the garden. I'm able to burn off another year's accumulation of pine branches, discarded parts of the house, busted furniture, and what-have-you. (Recently torched were the remains of a pig shelter I built almost thirty years ago, a relic from my early attempts at carpentry.) Oh yes, I'll have on the pantry shelf another year's supply of maple syrup.

It has hardly begun and already there have been garden setbacks. Parsley and celery, indoor planted weeks ago, show no sign of emerging and I am beginning to doubt they will. The onions germinated but our cat elected to bed down in one of the flats. Peppers have begun to emerge. Most everything else can be started in early April, providing eight or so weeks of indoor growing.

The grass that was momentarily uncovered in mid-March was green, had apparently remained so all winter. (I do not recall the last time that occurred.) It was the beneficiary, probably, of the mild early winter and the generous snow cover before the cold set in. I trust those same conditions were beneficial to our perennials. In April, we will have determined which perennials, are, in fact, perennial. Each year at least some winter-kill. I try to minimize their numbers by setting out hardy stock, plants that thrive, and leave plant-pampering to others.

Some final thoughts: as the days warm, the root cellar requires attention. The last two winter squash need baking. The carrots are in miserable shape, the beets beginning to sprout. The cabbages, our principal green vegetable, are more white than green. Potatoes are plentiful, but smaller and smaller. Leeks are in pretty good shape. The turnips and rutabagas are, as always, rock-hard. Having grown, harvested and stored these vegetables, it becomes a delightful task to prepare and consume them and a challenge to use them while still useable. (I've become partial to stews and soups).

April, as always, is the best time to plant peas and spinach. Pleasant days, bug-free, what else you got to do?



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*School Committee/ Royalston Rep.*

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**Deans Beans Coffee:** The Village School Parents Group is selling Deans Beans coffee once a month, at great prices. (\$7.25/ lb.) See website ( www.villageschool.to ) for varieties and the order form. You can order online or by mail . Pick up coffee at the Village School. Next order is due April 6, and will come in April 13.

**Royalston Community Coop:** The next orders are due by 5 p.m. Thursday, April 19, and the will be delivered the afternoon of Thursday, April 26. Anyone with locally grown produce, agricultural products or locally-made items is invited to promote them in our monthly e-mailings to members. Contact mbarclay@juno.com brenput@yahoo.com.

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

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Mail: PO Box 133, Royalston MA 01386

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Phone: 978-249-0358

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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No. 42  
Athol**

Royalston Resident  
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