

THE ROYALSTON COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

March 2009



Volume XII, Issue II

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

Calendar of Events

March 4 Wednesday

Last day to withdraw from the election ballot

March 5 Thursday

3:30 pm **Kids' Cross Culture Club** at the Phinehas Newton Library. Visit Finland with Maba Cauthen. Free. Snacks provided. Call 978-249-3572 to pre-register.

3:30 - 4:30 pm **Friends of the Library Meeting.** Come set agenda for the annual meeting, support the library, improve the newsletter and plan upcoming events, including the 100th anniversary of the library's dedication.

March 6 Friday

7 - 10 pm **Open Mic at Town Hall.** Come to listen or to take the stage. Free admission. Home-made dinner fare and goodies available for purchase.

March 8 Sunday

2 am **Daylight Savings Time Begins;** spring forward one hour

3 pm **Music for a Sunday Afternoon** in the ballroom at the historic Maples on Royalston Common. Royalston musicians Carl Kamp and Deb Nunes will perform classical guitar and piano music. Refreshments. Free-will donation to benefit the Friends of the Library

March 10 Tuesday

noon **early dismissal RCS,** lunch served, no kindergarten

March 12 Thursday

3:30 - 4:30 pm **Kids' Cross Culture Club** at the Phinehas Newton Library. Visit Cameroon with Melanie Kamayou. Free. Snacks provided. Call 978-249-3572 to pre-register.

March 13 Friday

7:30 p.m. **Trekking Nepal: The Beauty and the Terror** with Kate Collins and Rebecca Krause Hardie. Slides, stories and sounds from the Roof of the World at the Phinehas Newton Library. Refreshments (home-made desserts, wine and cheese) served.

March 14 Saturday

6:00 p.m. **Ladies' B. Corned Beef & Cabbage Supper** at Town Hall. Pot-o-gold (\$100) raffle included in ticket price. (\$12/ adult)

March 15 Sunday

7:00 - 11:00 a.m. **Royalston Fire and EMS Association Breakfast Buffet** at the Winchendon Rod and Gun Club on Winchendon Road. Tickets are \$8.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children under 12.

March 17 Tuesday

before 8 pm **Last date to register to vote** in Town Election

March 19 Thursday

7 p.m. **Organic Lawn Care** with Bernadette Gilbin of Safe-Ground Landcare at the North Quabbin Garden Club meeting in the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street in Athol.

March 20 Friday

First day of spring
2 - 7 pm **Red Cross Blood Drive** at Town Hall, includes the famous "canteen deluxe". Successful donors receive a free movie pass to Gardner Cinemas. Sponsored by the LBS. Walk-in or call Donna Caisse to reserve a time 249-4497.

March 21 Saturday

10 - 11 am **Rabies Clinic : shots and tags at the Center Fire Station.** Rabies vaccinations with the Gardner Animal Hospital staff \$10 each. 2009 Royalston dog licenses, purchased separately with exact change or check: \$10.00 for an unaltered dog, \$6.00 for a spayed/neutered dog. Dogs cannot be licensed without proof of a current rabies vaccination.

March 23 Monday

7 pm **Library Trustee Meeting** at the library

March 26 Thursday

Full Worm Moon
(A.K.A. the crow moon, crust moon, sap moon and Easter moon)

March 27 Friday

6:30 pm Fun and Fabulous **RCS Talent Show**

April 1 Wednesday

All Fool's Day
(Deadline for Design a T-shirt for the Music Fest sketches)

April 3 Friday

7 - 10 pm **Open Mic** at Town Hall. Come to listen or to take the stage. Free admission. Home-made dinner fare and goodies available for purchase.

April 4 Saturday

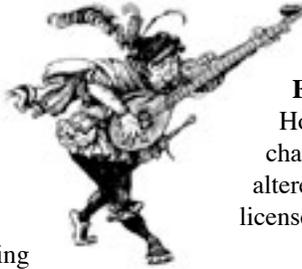
10 am **Annual Egg Hunt and Chocolate Molding** on Royalston Common. Bring a labeled container. Candy or monetary donations, dropped off at the store prior to the event, are welcome.

April 6 Monday

10 am - 8 pm **Annual Town Election**
2 pm - sell out **LBS Bake Sales** at each polling station

April 10 Friday

7 pm **Stone walls of Royalston** slide show with Larry Siegel at Town Hall.



Selectmen News: Override on Town Election Ballot

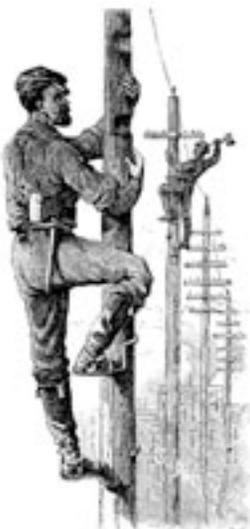
Promises of State cuts and promises of Federal stimulus aid leads to a chaotic budgeting season. The Board, Finance Committee, and town departments are hammering out next year's budget. At present, we are convinced only of the State cuts. We are taking a fiscally conservative approach; therefore, we believe cuts are imminent. We are trying to preserve essential town services.

Currently, our town tax receipts are \$48,000 below expected levels. On February 20, 2009 the Town Meeting voters decided to transfer the money from the stabilization account to balance the budget in order for tax bills to be mailed. State law requires a balanced budget before the tax rate can be set. This does not include promises of cuts in local State aid for this year.

The Board of Selectmen have placed a "Prop 2-1/2" override question on the April Town Election ballot. The question asks voters to allow the town to assess an additional \$130,000 in tax revenue. The Town has been trimming the budget in recent years without trimming services. At the same time, state aid has been dropping steadily. We have increasingly relied on our "savings" account to make up the difference. Royalston has done well in recently, keeping costs in check without seeking an override. But, as you know, the cost of doing business rises faster than 2.5%. Our savings are dangerously low and we are at a crossroads of prioritizing services to cut. With local aid expected to decrease \$60,000, tax receipts down \$30,000, increases in the budget for schools and snow removal at \$50,000, the override request does not actually "level fund" the budget. Cuts will still be necessary. We hope to ensure proper funding of schools and critical services.

The Route 32 project 75% design is complete and has been submitted to MassHighway. This is on schedule for an "early" advertising date of August or September. The available funding is \$3.8M. The current cost has risen to \$4.5M without the Tully "sidewalk" design. We are pursuing supplemental funding and cost cutting measures.

The Board reminds residents to register their dogs with the Town Clerk. Per the town bylaw, owners must be in control of their dogs at all times and walked on a lead off their property.



December Ice Storm Reimbursements

The Town of Royalston can recoup \$12/hour from the federal government for resident labor in response to the December 11 - 18 ice storm. This means that any volunteer time clearing trees or branches out of roads, caring for neighbors or animals, cooking for line crews or what-have-you should be reported to Royalston's Director of Emergency Management, Jim Barclay, so that the storm's icy blow to the town's finances can be softened. Please call 978 249-2904 or e-mail ema@royalston-ma.gov with a list that includes name, address, phone # and hours worked. Also, please know that it is permissible for residents to scavenge useful firewood from fallen trees and branches on town roadsides. In addition, there will be a town ice-storm debris pick-up scheduled soon for landowners who want to get rid of fallen wood and brush. Watch for more information.

A few lessons from the storm (as related by the Director of Emergency Management to the LBS on 2/25/09:)

For information during a power outage, listen to a battery or crank operated AM radio, particularly AM 580 out of Holden. *** To avoid sending power into the grid from a generator and to avoid blowing up appliances in a surge when the power is turned back on, turn off the electricity where it enters the house. (This is the biggest breaker with the biggest number at the top of the gray box.) Once power is restored, leave a porch light on all night so emergency personnel can tell which houses have electricity and which do not.***Keep a journal of hours spent volunteering and helping others. It may come in handy for future reimbursements.***Never try to cook inside or thaw pipes with a gas grill as this can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Board of Health News

Phil Leger, chair

The Board of Health at their most recent meeting voted to discontinue the paint and paint related collection program effective immediately. It will be replaced with a once-a-year regional haz/mat collection day held on September 26th at the Orange Transfer Station. There is a pre-registration required and more info will be provided as the date gets closer. This is being done because it is no longer cost effective to collect the paint at the transfer station. One reason is that not everyone pays the fee. Another reason is some materials we do not collect are left, incurring a cost to you the town. Latex paint may still be dried up with cat litter or speedy dry and put in trash. Paint that is labelled flammable, oil-based, or alkyd cannot be disposed of in trash and must be brought to the special collection day. It makes sense to useup leftover paint: paint your dog house, fence or the inside of a garage. Buy what you need, use what you have, dispose of properly what you can't.

The BOH will still collect clean motor oil, anti-freeze and oil filters at no charge. Please if you change your own oil, keep water out of the oil container. We will also be lowering the mercury bearing waste fee. Mercury bearing waste is no longer accepted in trash and must be recycled by law. This includes compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL) and mercury bearing lighting ballast. See transfer station attendant for current pricing. Some of these bulbs may be returned for free at Home Depots. Put burnt out compact fluorescent bulbs in a plastic bag and deposit into one of the orange CFL recycling bins near the front of the stores.

Please, before leaving something for the reusable area, check with the attendants to see if it is appropriate. We still have to throw a lot out, costing you, the town money. With every town budget being crunched, we will continue to cut out waste wherever possible. Recycling still saves money when compared to landfilling.

Recycle Returnable Cans and Bottles

Boy Scout Troup 16 would appreciate it if residents put their returnable cans and bottles in the blue box located inside the reusable area at the transfer station rather than in the recycling bins for plastic, metal or glass or regular trash. The scouts will redeem the nickle and put this money to loyal, trustworthy and brave uses.

Town Clerk News

Melanie Mangum, Town Clerk

Please note a change in office hours for the Town Clerk:

Open office hours will now be on Mondays, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and again from 6 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.

The change in hours was brought about after a discussion with selectmen about limiting the days that Whitney Hall was open to the public for cost savings in utilities. The hours were switched to a day when other departments were using Whitney Hall as well. The new hours will not affect special office hours, such as deadline dates for voter registration or nomination papers.

Rabies Clinic – Saturday, March 21, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Once again, Gardner Animal Hospital will hold a rabies clinic in conjunction with the Town Clerk's dog licensing clinic. Rabies vaccinations will be \$10 each. 2009 dog licenses, purchased separately, will be available for \$10.00 for an unaltered dog, \$6.00 for a spayed/neutered dog. For the licenses, please bring exact change or a check made out to the Town of Royalston. Please note that dogs cannot be licensed without proof of a current rabies vaccination.

Annual Town Election Preview:

The last day to register to vote for the Annual Town Election is Tuesday, March 17, from 2-4 p.m. and 7-8 p.m. Citizens who are not currently registered in Royalston are encouraged to either mail-in a registration before that date, or stop in on March 17 during the voter registration hours.

The Annual Town Election will be held on Monday, April 6. Polls open at 10 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. There are no contests on this year's ballot – with the exception of the Athol seats to the ARRS school committee - but an override question has been placed on the ballot. The question asks if voters will approve \$130,000 in additional real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of funding the operating budget of the public schools and municipal government for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2009.

The following offices and candidates appear on the ballot:

Selectman – 3 years – Linda Alger; Planning Board – 5 years – Charles Longsworth; Moderator – 3 years – George Northrop; Board of Health – 3 years – Eugene Kolimaga; Cemetery Commission – 3 years – John McClure; Constable – 3 years – John Chencharik; Sewer Commission – 3 years – Gary Winitzer; Library Trustee – 3 years – Barbara Guiney; Board of Public Welfare – 3 years – Mary Barclay; ARRS Royalston member – 3 years – Bobbi Newman; Trustees of the J.N. Bartlett Fund – one year – Mary Barclay, Roland Hamel, Roy Smith, Jr.; AARS School Committee – Athol seats – 3 years (Two seats only) Mary Forristall, William Caldwell, Steven Kaczmarczyk, Deborah Kuzmeskas.

Positions on the ballot with no candidates: Board of Public Welfare – 2 years; Tree Warden – 3 years; Assessor – 3 years; one term of one year on the Bartlett Fund.

Royalston Fire and EMS Association

On Sunday, March 15th from 7:00 – 11:00 a.m. the Royalston Fire & EMS Association will sponsor a Buffet Breakfast at the Winchendon Rod and Gun Club on Winchendon Road. Tickets are \$8.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children under 12.

Assessors' Notes

The Board of Assessors meet 1st and 3rd Weds.

7:00pm Whitney Hall 978-249-0337

Tax bills should be out soon. Exemptions are available for disabled veterans, surviving spouses, and those over age 70 who meet income guidelines. Applications for exemptions must be filed every year. The assessors encourage those who think they may qualify to file an application. Abatements are for those who believe their property has been unfairly assessed. Information will be included with the bills.

We are awaiting state approval of the tax rate which is little changed from last year. The state Department of Revenue must approve the tax rates of all 351 cities and towns and make sure they stay within the parameters of Proposition 2 1/2. Simply put, this law allows towns to increase the property tax collections by no more than 2 1/2 % (plus new growth allowances) over the previous year. When home values go up - tax rates go down and vice versa. Royalston enjoys a low tax rate compared to the rest of the state. This is great for taxpayers but tough on town departments trying to provide services.

Practical Resources for Trying Times Available at the Town Library

Need to fill out a job application online but never used a computer? Need tax forms or job applications printed? Do you have to fax an application or information and don't have a fax machine? If so, the library can help. We print tax forms and job applications for free. The fax machine is available for just \$1.00/fax.

Assistance getting online or navigating job-search web-sites is available during regular library hours. More beginning level computer classes are being planned as well. If you are interested, please contact the library.

The library can also order books on preparing for various exams and Worcester Public Library has workbooks and samples tests. And don't forget you can borrow that book you used to purchase and save some money. The library is here to help. If you have a question, we'll try to answer it and if we can't answer it, we can contact Worcester Public Library for you. You can also email them directly on the 'Ask a Librarian' link on our website. Please don't hesitate to give us a call.

And remember the library has a great number of the best sellers, lots of movies, a whole bunch of magazines, books-on-CD and tape, CD-Roms, and CDs that you can borrow. Plus, for children, we have many stuffed animals and puppets and games that can be borrowed.

Historic District Commission Public Hearing

The Historic District Commission will hold a public hearing Thursday March 19, 2009 at 7:00pm in the Town Hall to discuss an application filed by Chris Dawson to construct an addition to his home at 2 On The Common. View the application at www.royalston-ma.gov/hdc or by request 978-249-5993.

Phinehas S. Newton Library News

Kathy Morris, Library Director

Trustees: Polly Longworth, Lisa Freden, Barbara Guiney

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

Saturdays: 9:00am - 12:noon

978-249-3572 www.royalstonlibrary.org

Donations to the Friends

Boyd Estus

Alyce Mayo

Newsletter Fund

Patricia Shea and Donald Igoe

Thank yous

Tom Kellner for a CD

Boyd Estus for a movie

Sandy Knight for a CD.

Art Exhibits at the Library

Phil Mickey of Bliss Hill Road will display his pen and ink and pencil portraits and landscapes at the library during the months of March and April. Phil and his wife, Nel Vaughn have lived in Royalston for years and are regulars at the town senior luncheon. Sonja Vaccari will be displaying new paintings during May and June.

Classical Guitar and Piano Concert



Come enjoy "Music for a Sunday Afternoon" on Sunday, March 8, 2009, at 3 p.m. in the ballroom at the historic Maples on Royalston Common. Royalston musicians Carl Kamp and Deb Nunes will perform classical guitar and piano music by a variety of composers, including Vivaldi, Giuliani, von Webber, Handel, and Carulli. A free will offering will be collected to benefit our library. Refreshments will be served. Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour the night before, so you don't arrive late!

Kids' Cross Culture Club

The world is more and more interconnected. For the umpteenth year, the library's cross culture club lets local kids have fun while finding out a little about other customs, climates and countries. The programs run on Thursday afternoons from 3:30 - 4:30 at the Phinehas Newton Library. International snacks served. Free.

February 26 Thanks to Elizabeth Farnsworth, the club watched fabulous slides of Belize, featuring Mayan ruins, barrier reefs, tall mountains and mangrove swamps; it also enjoyed a snack with fresh papaya and fried plantain.



Coming up:

March 5

Visit Finland with Maba Cauthen

March 12

Visit Cameroon with Melanie Kamayou

RCS students can take bus 302 to the library with a permission note from home. Pre-registration by calling the library 978-249-3572 helps plan for craft materials and food. Geared for elementary school aged students but all are welcome.

Trekking Nepal: The Beauty and the Terror

On Friday, March 13th at 7:30 p.m. at the library, Kate Collins and Rebecca Krause Hardie will each share slides and stories of trekking through Nepal. In October 1998, Becky took part in a rugged 21 day trek to the base camp of Kangerjunga, the third highest peak in the Himalayas at slightly less than 17,000 feet. She'll share her recordings of the sounds of the singing of the porters, songs from a local festival as well as the sounds of nature. Kate traveled to Nepal with a group of friends in November 2007 and trekked the Himalayas from tea house to tea house in Lukla to Namche Bazaar, Khumjung, Phortse, Pangboche, Dingboche, Tengboche, Phunki Drengkga and back to Namche and Lukla. This trek was in the Everest region. She also traveled around Katmandu and will have photos of the architecture, people, and pagodas. Both will read from their journals as well as share mementos of their trips. Delicious dessert, fruit, and cheese will be served along with coffee, teas, cider, beer, and wine.

Mystery Writers Panel at the Library

Local Author to Speak

On Sunday, March 22nd at 2:00 p.m. at the library, join us for a panel discussion "New England Crime Story Collection Explores Back Roads and Dark Streets": with mystery writers whose stories appeared in the new book, *Deadfall: Crime Stories by New England Writers*, while they discuss writing, publishing, and their experiences. Royalston resident, Kathy Chencharik, whose photo also graces the cover and who has a story in the book, will be on the panel. Delicious refreshments will be served. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.



Resident Book Reviews

with guest reviewer Alyce Mayo

Loving Frank by Nancy Horan is a passionate love story which takes place during the turn of the 20th century, set against the values and mores of that time. It tells the story of the affair between Frank Lloyd Wright and Mamah Cheney, but its greatness lies in the exploration of the character of Mamah Cheney, an intellectual and a feminist, and a woman of courage who makes choices..... and where these choices lead her.

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Burrows. By all means, do not let this off-putting title dissuade you from opening this wonderfully charming story gleaned from letters to and from the various beautifully depicted characters on this Channel Island off the coast of England during World War II. It is a first time book written by a woman who recently died and whose niece, a children's author, helped finish when Ms. Shaffer became ill. If you love books, you will love this story and you will fall in love with these characters. *ed note: I also recommend this book as historical fiction. It captures the dreariness of exhausted post-war Britain and the ambiguities of the Nazi occupation of the Channel Islands quite well.*

New Books at the Library

Adult Fiction

Beaton, M. C. *A Spoonful of Poison*
 Boyle, T. C. *The Women*
 Brown, Rita Mae *Santa Clawed*
 Cabot, Meg *Ransom My Heart*
 Cornwell, Bernard *Agincourt*
 Cussler, Clive *Arctic Drift*
 Erdrich, Louise *The Red Convertible*
 Evanovich, Janet *Plum Spooky*
 Grisham, John *The Associate*
 Hannah, Kristin *True Colors*
 Higgins, Jack *A Darker Place*
 Hooper, Kay *Blood Sins*
 James, Eloisa *When the Duke Returns*
 James, P. D. *The Private Patient*
 Kallos, Stephanie *Sing Them Home*
 Markoe, Merrill *Nose Down, Eyes Up*
 Matthiessen, Peter *Shadow Country*
 Parker, T. Jefferson *The Renegades*
 Patterson, James *Cross Country*
 Patterson, James *Run for Your Life*
 Penny, Louise *A Rule Against Murder*
 Perry, Thomas *Runner*
 Phillips, Susan Elizabeth *What I Did for Love*
 Rozan, S. J. *The Shanghai Moon*
 Schlink, Bernhard *The Reader*
 Trigiana, Adriana *Very Valentine*

Adult Non-Fiction

Allport, Susan *Sermons in Stone: The Stone Walls of New England and New York*
 Bittman, Mark *How to Cook Everything: 2,000 Simple Recipes for Good Food*
 Grandin, Temple *Animals Make Us Human: Creating the Best Life for Animals*
 Smith, P. Allen *Bring the Garden Indoors*
The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2009



Young Adult and Children's

Non-Fiction

Patterson, James *Daniel X: Alien Hunter*
 Allen, Thomas *Mr. Lincoln's High-Tech War: How the North Used the Telegraph, Railroads, Surveillance, Balloons, Iron-Clads, High-Powered Weapons, and More to Wind the Civil War*
 Aronson, Marc *Up Close: Bill Gates*
 Bang, Molly *Living Sunlight: How Plants Bring the Earth to Life*
 Harbo, Christopher L. *The Kids' Guide to Paper Airplanes*
 Hatkoff, Juliana *Looking for Miza: The True Story of the Mountain Gorilla*
 Hughes, Langston *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*
 Mortenson, Greg *Listen to the Wind*
 Rappaport, Doreen *Eleanor, Quiet No More: The Life of Eleanor Roosevelt*
 Rockwell, Anne *Clouds*
 Shange, Ntozake *Coretta Scott*
 Turner, Pamela S. *A Life in the Wild: We Are All Born Free*

New Music

Keith, Toby *Classic Christmas*
 Brightman, Sarah *Winter Symphony*
 Hill, Faith *Joy to the World*
 Disney Channel *Holiday*
 Kravitz, Lenny *Greatest Hits*
 Springstein, Bruce *Working on a Dream*

Young Adult Fiction

Goodman, Alison *EON: Dragoneye Reborn*
 Harrison, Lisi *P.S. I Loathe You*
 Hiaasen, Carl *Scat*
 Horowitz, Anthony *The Switch*
 Llewellyn, Sam *Lyonesse: The Well Between the Worlds*
 Stroud, Jonathan *Heroes in the Valley*
 Shakespeare, William *MacBeth*

New Audiobooks

Auch, J. J. *One-Handed Catch*
 Carroll, Lewis *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*
 Evanovich, Janet *Motor Mouth*
 Evanovich, Janet *Plum Lucky*
 Finder, Joseph *Power Play*
 Gartner, John D. *In Search of Bill Clinton: A Psychological Biography*
 Goodman, Alison *EON: Dragoneye Reborn*
 Hiaasen, Carl *Scat*
 King, Stephen *Lisey's Story*
 Larsson, Stieg *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*

New Movies on DVD: *Burn After Reading, City of Ember, Hancock, IGOR, A Midwife's Tale, Next, Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist, Open Season 2, The Jane Austen Book Club, The Secret Life of Bees and Tropic Thunder*

Village School News

There are a few openings in the classes for next year. If you are interested, call to schedule a visit and observe a classroom. 978 249-3505

Science Night Wednesday evening March 25 7:00 pm

In January, 4th-6th grade students choose a topic to investigate, and with the help of scientist Cathy Szal, design experiments to prove or disprove the initial hypothesis. Students will enthusiastically display their work and will be ready to explain it. Come see their work and ask questions! Everyone is welcome.

The Trip to the U.K. February 11-18

Most of the 4th-6th class traveled to the U.K., accompanied by ten adults, two Village School alumni and two older siblings of children in the class. We took a day flight to London and the children had their first taste of London as they traveled from the airport in a 'tube' train to the hostel in Hammersmith. The next morning we visited various London sights, including Westminster Abbey, the London Eye, a river trip to Tower Bridge, Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery. The children were excited to see many of the paintings they had been studying in class. The children gazed up at 'Big Ben' (which they now know is the name of the bell, not the tower) and heard the famous bell strike the hour. They saw Buckingham Palace from the Eye and noted the royal standard flying above it, showing that the Queen was at home. The next morning we toured the Tower of London, before heading west in two 15-seat buses to Salisbury.

Saturday, a glorious warm sunny day, began by visiting Stonehenge. From there we stopped at Old Sarum, originally an Iron Age hill fort and later a Norman settlement that played a key part in the subjugation of Saxon England. In the afternoon we took a delightful tour of Salisbury's 12th-century cathedral, and attended evensong, which gave us a chance to enjoy the singing of a visiting Dutch choir and to hear the liturgy echoing from the vaulted ceiling. Next we drove to South Wales, and saw Caerphilly Castle, the second largest castle in Britain. It was constructed in an astonishing three years as part of the 13th-century English campaign to subdue the Welsh. On the way to our overnight stay in a 13th-century castle (now youth hostel) that once belonged to King John, we visited the ruined abbey of Tintern in the spectacular Wye Valley. On Monday, with the sun still shining and no snow in sight, we took in the spectacular Chepstow Castle, built on a cliff above the Wye River. This was most people's favorite castle (and by now we were all experts). From Chepstow we drove north to Tewkesbury, whose fine abbey church survived Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries (unlike Tintern) because the townspeople ransomed their church from Henry at a cost of £470. After a night at the youth hostel in Stratford-upon-Avon, our final visit was to the castle at Warwick (pronounced Worrick). This was inhabited as recently as the 1970s, though it dated back to a motte and bailey castle built in 1068. Our visit included a demonstration of how medieval swordsmen really fought (not much like the movies) that was as fun as it was informative. Wednesday saw us back on the plane to Boston, and safely home. It may sound complicated to conduct a large school group (26 total) for a week around a foreign country, but it's easy when the children (and their parents!) are so helpful and engaged. This week we will start studying the Crusades – onward and upward!

George Bennett, 4th-6th teacher

Upcoming Events at RCS

March 1 - 11:00 - 3:00 p.m. Elks Awards Banquet

March 2 - 16th, Yankee Candle Fundraiser

March 3 - PTG meeting @ 6:30 p.m.

March 4 - Third Quarter Progress Reports

March 5 - Nature's Classroom Informational meeting for students & parents @ 6:30pm

March 6 - Dare Graduation @ 2:00 p.m.

March 10 - 1/2 day, noon release, lunch served, No Kindergarten

March 12 + 13 - Hartford Children's Museum visits RCS for classroom programs

March 13 - Cake Dance @ 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

March 27 - Talent Show @ 6:30 p.m.

Free College Courses Open to Royalston Residents Offered in Athol

Greenfield Community College, in collaboration with the Town of Athol, will offer up to four courses (based on the interests and number of people registering at the information sessions) free of charge to low/moderate income residents of Athol, Royalston, Phillipston, and Petersham. Non-low/moderate income residents of any surrounding North Quabbin town may enroll for a fee of \$75 for a 3-credit course and \$25 for a non-credit workshop. The possible courses are BUS 105 *Personal Financial Literacy*, CIS 100 *Foundations of Computers & the Internet*, MAT090 *Basic Mathematics Skills*, and one advanced computer applications non-credit workshop, e.g., *Introduction to Quicken*. Four information/orientation sessions will be held at the Athol-Royalston Regional High School: Session 1: Saturday, February 28th at 10:00 a.m., Session 2: Saturday, February 28th at 11:30 a.m., Session 3: Monday, March 2nd at 6:00 p.m. and Session 4: Monday, March 2nd at 7:30 p.m. Call 413-775-1438 to register for an information session. A complete description of the program and the courses is available at the library.

Local Scholarships Available

Applications for these scholarships are available from the guidance department of Athol High School or through the contacts listed below. Deadline for applications is April 15, 2009.

The Katherine Seymour Bullock Cole Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$500 is available to a graduating high school resident of Royalston going on to a higher education. This scholarship is sponsored by the Royalston Academy in memory of the academy's founder, Katherine Cole. Contact Kristen West c/o Royalston Academy Scholarship Committee, Box 35, Royalston, Ma 01368.

The Judy Jenkins Musco Scholarship is available for high school students, home-schoolers or returning students interested in pursuing formal or informal training for a practical and creative future. Contact: Kristen West c/o Royalston Academy Scholarship Committee, Box 35, Royalston, Ma 01368.

The Ladies Benevolent Society offers scholarships in various amounts to residents of any age enrolling in a college or university. Contact Nancy Bolton 978-249-3483.

The Donald Black Scholarship and the **Parent Teacher Group Scholarship** offer \$250 to a college bound student who once attended Royalston elementary schools. Contact: Mary Carnie at the Royalston Community School 978-249-2900.



CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD NEWS

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



Second Quarter Academic Honor Rolls:

Royalston Community School - *Straight As*: Felicia Tourigny and Tobey Chase; *All As and Bs*: Tiffany Lusco, Beau Guimond, Emily Mangum, Katie Robinson, Cody Nolette, Kadasia LaJoie, Abby Divoll, Loryn Killay, Rhiannon Fletcher, Karianna Tobias, Dahlia Wright, Brianna Cauley, Kassandra Frazier, Olivia Kimball, Alyana LaJoie, Ann Reynolds, Rebecca Tetreault and Ryan Warner

Athol Royalston Middle School - *Straight As*: Robert Javier; *all As and Bs*: Mike Campos, John Divoll, Gabriel Jarvenpaa, Brandon Tisdale, Mary White, Sydni Ayers, Shelby Bronnes, Caleb Chase, Alexis and Ashley Javier, Tim Normandin, and Josh Roberts; *All As, Bs and one C*: Tristan Melanson, Garrett Hall, Jacob LaJoie, and Amber Simmington.

Athol High School - *Straight As*: Natalie Whitcomb, Catie Brighenti and MacKenzie Bennett; *All As and Bs*: Sofia Brighenti, Christine Sawyer, Kimberlee Thompson, Alyssa Bergquist, Pat Scribner, Hillary Whitcomb, Kourtney Frazier, Dylan Hall, Joseph Ridell, Allison Bergquist, Colby Easton, and Kelly Frazier.

New Film with Royalston Connection

Several Royalston filmmakers are involved in the upcoming PBS television program *The Powder & the Glory*. The film is the story of how two pioneering entrepreneurial women - Elizabeth Arden and Helena Rubinstein - created an industry, became global rivals and cultural icons, and changed the way that we look at ourselves. The television premiere is scheduled for Monday, March 23rd at 10:00 pm, on WGBH/2 and other PBS stations. **Boyd Estus** is the project's Director of Photography, working with **Damon Bundschuh**, Gaffer. **Liane Brandon** is the Still Photographer. The film is narrated by celebrated actress Jane Alexander and was produced, written and directed by Ann Carol Grossman

Milestones: Obituary

Evelyn M. (Clancy) Gorham, 81, of 8 Blossom St., S. Royalston, died Sunday, Feb. 8, 2009, at Quabbin Valley Healthcare, Athol. She was born in Brattleboro, Vt., on May 21, 1927, the daughter of the late Charles and the late Nellie (Gould) Clancy. Evelyn grew up in Brattleboro, Vt., and graduated from Brattleboro High School. She moved to Athol when she married Francis A. "Frank" Gorham in 1947. They later moved to South Royalston where she has resided since 1961. She and her husband owned and operated Frank's Store in South Royalston for many years. She was a member of the Second Congregational Church of Royalston. She enjoyed bowling, crossword puzzles and playing solitaire.

She leaves two daughters, Donna L. Smith and her husband, Roy of S. Royalston, and Diane S. Padziora and her husband, Larry, of S. Royalston; one son, Charles R. Gorham and his wife, Becky of Athol; one granddaughter, Christie Chiappetta and her husband, Jeremy of Providence, RI; two great-grandchildren Katelyn and Jackson Chiappetta of Providence, RI and her beloved cat Shadow. She was predeceased by her husband of 51 years, Francis A. "Frank" Gorham who died in 1998.

Funeral services were held Friday, Feb. 13 in the Murphy Funeral Home, 137 Main St., Athol. Pastor Jeffrey Francis of the Second Congregational Church in Royalston officiated. Music was performed by Ryan Hood. A reception followed at the Royalston Fish and Game Club. Burial in Jonas Alliene Cemetery will be in the spring. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that memorial contributions be made in her memory to Quabbin Valley Healthcare - Activity Fund, 821 Daniel Shays Hwy., Athol, MA 01331.

Mr. Scott Duplessis: Unsung Hero

The Royalston Community School community would like to recognize **Mr. Scott Duplessis**, the head custodian, as an "unsung hero". He goes above and beyond in everything he does. Not only is he the biggest contributor to the great condition of the school but also he is an important role model of kindness. He greets every child each day with a smile and a kind word. He has taken the time to know enough about these children to make them smile in return. Several weeks ago, Mr. Scott was on breakfast duty when a kindergartener began to choke. Mr. Scott acted swiftly and finger-swept the child's mouth clean and was able to dislodge the food. Without his quick thinking and response, a tragedy could have occurred. Sometimes when people go above and beyond so regularly, it becomes routine and expressions of thanks are neglected. Even though Mr. Scott shys away from recognition, he should know how very much everyone at RCS appreciates him.

Democrats Have Chosen Delegate

Democratic voters at their caucus in Royalston Feb. 7 elected Allen Young as delegate to the party's state convention to take place in Springfield in June. Rep. Robert Rice of Gardner, whose district includes Royalston, attended the caucus and participated in a discussion about state politics and budget issues. Rice indicated that significant government reforms are needed before any new taxes, such as an increase in the gasoline tax or sales tax, could be justified. Seven Royalston Democrats attended the caucus, which was open to all registered Democrats in the town.

Scraps from the Scrapbook

The Great New England Hurricane of 1938

Royalston is still coming to terms with the aftermath of last December's ice storm, but of course, it could have been worse. On September 21, 1938 one of the most destructive storms ever to strike New England generated 80-100 mph winds which crushed houses, knocked down trees, and lifted barges onto land. Throughout New York and New England, the unexpectedly fierce wind and water felled 275 million trees, seriously damaged more than 200,000 buildings, and knocked trains off their tracks. Over 600 people died. Many "hurricane trees" are still visible in the local woods. Look for 70 year-old trees with sharp bends leaning towards the north half-way up the trunk.



The CCC was sent to Royalston to clean up debris from the '39 hurricane.

Soon after the '39 hurricane in Royalston, the Department of Agriculture sent Civilian Conservation Corps crews to clean up the debris. They set up portable lumber mills in a field that is now the DPW and Aliene Cemetery. A shelter was built across Winchendon Rd.

Arline Shine's fancy was captured by one of these "government men" who came to cut trees. They married and the Vining family set up their household on Beryl Hill.



The Civilian Public Service Camp

In 1941, during WWII, this CCC housing was used again as conscientious objectors were sent to Royalston to finish cleaning up the trees and dig 7'x24' ponds for forest fire prevention. These workers stunk at sports and were "slaughtered" at baseball during the August 23 Royalston Day celebration that year. However, they were a particularly erudite bunch. They offered language classes to the community, gave lectures with titles like "Why I am a Pacifist", sang in the church choir and put on Chekhov at the Town Hall. They also published a newsletter, *New Roots*, monthly.

Here is an excerpt from *New Roots*, Issue 1, Sept. 1 1941: "Why we are here - The hurricane cut a wide swath as it roared across the peaceful New England countryside in September, 1939. Uprooted trees, roofless barns and blocked roads were left in its wake. Lumber speculation might have bared thousands of acres of hillside to erosion had not the Department of Agriculture stepped in to clear the debris in a scientific manner. The American Friends Service Committee is operating...Civilian Public Service Camps for ...young men, who "by reason of their religious training and belief" have been declared sincere objectors by their local draft boards, and are attempting to live out a constructive life of service during their stay at the camp. They feel ...that this type of life is helping them to better understand people and contributing to the welfare of their fellow men, and is thus a positive expression of their fundamental belief in the practicability of world brotherhood." To see more photos of the "government men clean up of downed trees after the hurricane or read the entire 1st issue of *New Roots*, lug out the *Town Scrapbook*. It's a giant tome kept in the reference room of the Phineas Newton Library documenting life in the 20th century of our town. New recollections, photos, documents and what-have-you always needed.

Recipe of the Month: BLONDIES

Jen Barkus not only works at the library and runs the pre-school story hour but also is a noted cook and the the Royalston assessors' clerk. Everyone thinks that setting the tax rate is a thankless job, but come to find out, Jen keeps the assessors smiling despite grim economic conditions by bringing sweets to most of the weekly meetings. These Blondies are a favorite both at her home, (the former Petersen Dairy populated with her husband Tim, three beautiful daughters, Hannah, Carly and Laura as well as a dog, a pony and chickens,) and at the assessors' office. Tax bills should be coming out in March. Taxpayers can only hope to encounter the soothing effects of Jen's desserts as they march into Whitney Hall to seek abatements.

Ingredients

- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 cups firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 large egg plus 1 large egg yolk, at room temperature
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Heavily grease an 8 inch square baking dish or line bottom with greased parchment paper. Mix flour and salt together and set aside. In a saucepan over medium heat, combine butter and brown sugar. Stir until sugar has dissolved. Continue to cook one minute longer so the mixture bubbles but does not boil. Set aside to cool for about 10 minutes. Add the egg, egg yolk, and vanilla to the cooled sugar mixture and stir with a wooden spoon to combine. Sprinkle flour and salt over the sugar mixture and stir until just blended. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake until the center is springy and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 25-35 minutes. Transfer pan to a wire rack and cool completely before cutting into squares. (Adapted from the *Williams-Sonoma COOKIES Cookbook*)



Arline Shine's fancy was captured by one of these "government men" who came to cut trees. They married and the Vining family set up their household on Beryl Hill.

RCS Poetry Club

The RCS poets have been experimenting with regret poems in the style of Williams Carlos Williams'

This Is Just To Say:

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox
and which
you were
probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

At my birthday party
while my friends were filling
water balloons
I sprayed them with a hose
I probably shouldn't have
It was fun
that they all backed away
into the woods

Rhiannon Fletcher



Sorry everybody
those pies were really good
I know that in the morning after
Thanksgiving you might like some
So sorry
they called to me
"eat me"
"and me"
"me too"
I just couldn't hurt their feelings
So it's happened every year.
Pie is just so good
You should try some

Tobey Chase

T-Shirt Design Contest

Elizabeth Farnsworth, Royalston Cultural Council

Royalston Cultural Council needs t-shirt ideas! The mid-summer Royalston Music Fest has become a community tradition, and so have the t-shirts designed for each year's event. Many of us have a full six-year "run" of all the great Music Fest shirts, and they are fast becoming collectors' items. Royalston youth have contributed some great designs in the past, and the Cultural Council wants to tap teen talent again this year. Do you have an idea for a t-shirt design for this summer's Music Fest? If so, make a sketch and either drop it in the Cultural Council mailbox to the left of the front door to Town Hall, or email a scan to Elizabeth Farnsworth at efarnswo@mtholyoke.edu. If you'd just like to discuss design ideas, feel free to give Elizabeth a call at 249-6771. \$50 and a t-shirt with your very own design on it will be presented to the artist at Music Fest. Entries due by April 1.

Being Benevolent - Two Big LBS events in March

LBS Corned Beef Supper - March 14 at 7 pm at Town Hall

Menu includes traditional corned beef, boiled spuds, cabbage and turnip, soda bread and green desserts like key lime and grasshopper pies. Tickets are \$12 for adults; \$6 for kids. Every ticket includes a chance at the a "pot-o-gold" raffle, a decorative pot stuffed with 100 one dollar coins. See any lady or call Mary Barclay 249-2598 for tickets. Take-out available.

Red Cross Blood Drive - March 20 from 2 - 7 pm at Town Hall.

Start off spring by helping others. Blood cannot be manufactured. It can only come as a **gift** from people. Only 5 percent of eligible donors across the nation donate blood, but the number of transfusions nationwide increases by 9 percent every year. Statistics show that 25 percent or more of us will require blood at least once in our lifetime. Donating blood is intrinsically rewarding, and it's made even more palatable in Royalston by the LBS "canteen deluxe" stocked with homemade goodies, diverse magazines and neighborly chat. And wait, there's more... Successful donors will receive a **free movie pass** to Gardner Cinemas. Personal satisfaction, home baked sweets and movie passes are not a bad trifecta in exchange for a pint of blood and an hour of time. Walk-in or call Donna Caisse to reserve a time slot 249-4497 to give blood or offer baked goods..

Community Egg Hunt and Chocolate Molding

The 11th Annual Royalston Easter Egg Hunt, with chocolate making, will be held this year on Saturday, April 4, a week earlier than usual, to avoid a conflict with the River Rat Race. The hunt for more than 2000 eggs hidden on the Royalston Common will begin promptly at 10:00 AM. Rene' Lake-Gagliardi, who has organized the event for the past 11 years, recommends that children be dressed for the weather. The event will be held rain or shine. In the event of rain, the hunt itself may be moved inside. Each participant should bring a bag labeled with his/her name.



Following the egg hunt, children will have an opportunity to make chocolate candies in the Town Hall. Twenty pounds of melted chocolate will be ready to be molded, cooled, and brought home.

Traditionally, the community has supported the hunt with donations of candy or cash. The candy must be individually wrapped and small enough to fit into the plastic eggs. Cash contributions can be of any size and need not be wrapped. Those who wish to contribute may bring their donations to the Royalston General Store. Donations should be dropped off no later than Sunday, March 29. Sooner is better than later since all of the candy must be stuffed into the 2000 eggs in advance of the hunt. To volunteer to help on the day of the hunt, call Rene' at 978-249-4639.

Dowsing

Jon Hardie is providing a free of charge dowsing service. Call 978-575-1454 for info.

Wildlife Sightings

On January 27th, Cindy Ross-Hamilton came over the bank at the intersection of Creamery Hill and Bliss Hill roads and almost hit three **bald eagles**, two mature and one immature. Cindy ran home, grabbed her camera and went back in time to get several pictures.

Ranger Jeff Mangum saw a **bobcat** near Camp Caravan in mid-February, and a few days later, he saw a **mink** scurry over Tully Dam.

February is the shortest month, but it brings a marked change in strength and length of sunshine to Massachusetts. Royalston has gained over 2 minutes of sunlight per day to go from 10 hr 1 min to 11 h 11 min of solar stimulation in the last four weeks. On bright, above-freezing days hibernating animals crawled out to snack and take the temperature of the world. **Skunks** and **raccoons** were toddling across the bottom of Frye Hill on Feb. 15. **Pussy willows** were noticed blooming on NE Fitzwilliam Rd on Feb. 16.

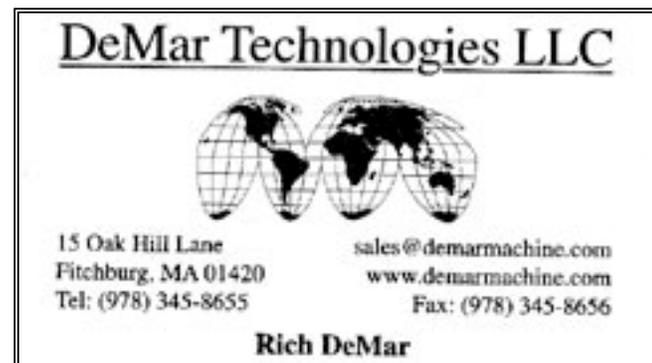
Kristen and Samantha West waited for a herd of more than a dozen deer to cross Rt. 68 near Camp Caravan mid-month.



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Rich DeMar

Garden Notes

18 February 2009

This issue marks the onset of the fifth year of garden notes. After the first year, there were members of my household who suggested that I had nothing else to say and might best stifle it. There were others who suggested I had entirely too much to say and might best stifle it. I trust the column falls somewhere in between.

We all endured the January cold snap. Embarrassingly, I admit to 'enduring' it by traveling to northern California to experience mild, sunny weather, returning (on February 3) to discover a couple feet of snow encased by a sheet of ice. I walked through the garden. I assume it was the garden, surrounded as it was by a diversity of fencing, some of it still standing. It had the general appearance of an ice rink. The only things in sight were last summer's datura (moon lily) plants, an annual which self-seeds (often extravagantly) every year. Showy white trumpet flowers are followed by ornate seed pods, useful in dried arrangements. The plant will grow to three feet and spread even more. The root system is as sturdy as the top growth and I am unable to pull them up. So they remain to remind me that there is, in fact, a garden below.

One of my first undertakings upon returning was to sort through the contents of the root cellar. The apples, mostly drops, had deteriorated the most. Those least salvageable were fed to our herd of steer (all two of them). The most salvageable were left in place, and the 'use immediately' were turned into sauce. Carrots were divided similarly, with the 'use immediately' turned into juice. (My gratitude to whomever among you left the restaurant-quality model #100 Olympic juicer at the re-usable area of the transfer station a couple of years ago.) But one cabbage remains; just as well, they wouldn't have lasted much longer. The winter squash are laid out on shelves in a somewhat warmer, drier spot than the roots. I need to pay attention to the squash: one can turn from sound to a pile of mush in ten days. Once again my buttercups have lasted longer than the butternuts, in spite of the prevailing wisdom. The potatoes, onions, leeks, celeriac, beets, and rutabaga have settled in for the long haul and I hope to be eating some of them in May.

I walked the garden again today. With significant snow melt, all the mini-greenhouses (read fish tanks) have re-appeared; alas, most of the glass is cracked. It seemed like a good idea at the time. There were bits of green among the spinach and parsley but not a sign of lettuce. No open ground anywhere, so I bide my time.

After ten years of neglect, I've begun pruning the fruit trees for the second year in a row. I don't imagine it will make a great deal of difference to quality or yield (given the realities of unsprayed fruit), but it gives me an excuse to escape from the house. Timing my pruning to just before sunset provides additional motivation.

Veteran readers of these notes are aware that indoor seeding begins in March. The sequence of events remains unalterable: onions and leeks are planted early on; celery, celeriac, and parsley by the middle of the month, and peppers during the third week. Each requires many weeks of nurturing before being set out in the garden. A week into April is early enough for tomatoes, many annual flowers, and the broccoli/cabbage/cauliflower clan (for those of you who spring plant the brassicas; I do not). Let the games begin.

Larry Siegel

Classifieds

Tree work call Aaron, Mike, & Jake at 978-249-6283.

Birch Hill Computers – Sales, Repairs, and Parts. Birchhillcomputers.com. 978-790-7876.

Seeking patient, committed, energetic man to accompany 30 year old man to social events and outdoor activities, approximately 6 hours/month. Must work well with individuals with special needs and enjoy outdoor physical activities. Must have valid drivers license and reliable vehicle. \$10.00/hr plus expenses. Please call Kathy at 978-249-4260.

Handmade Items: Towels, dish clothes, bag holders, shawls, baby blankets and baby sweater sets. Call Betty 978-249-3119

Winter sale - handknit men's ski hats, mittens, boot socks and baby items. Call Shirley 978-249-4013.

Available: A babysitter with banter, call Asher 978-249-0358.

Two Art Classes Offered in Petersham: DRAWING 1/LEARNING TO SEE for those with little drawing experience who want to draw or improve. 6 classes 2 hrs. each, limited to 6 students \$120 and WORKING ON SITE which covers composition, changing light, simple color theory, equipment, and more. 6 classes 3 hours each, limited to 5 students \$180 Instructor: Janet Palin tel. 978-724-3394 or email: levinepalin@verizon.net

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