# Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>May 1</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>May Day</th>
<th>May 29</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Memorial Day observed Post office, library, schools all closed 2 p.m. Memorial Day Exercises Royalston Common 3 p.m. All-Town Luncheon at town hall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>May Day Celebration at the Village School. The public is invited. Children can join in May Pole weaving and dancing.</td>
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<td>May 4</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Eta Aquarid Meteor Shower – Look southeast in the pre-dawn hours, for approximately a shooting star every six minutes, remnants from the Halley Comet.</td>
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<td>May 5</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>7 pm Town Meeting: Have a say in where the town spends its money. Internet improvements are on the warrant. This is what democracy looks like. AREF's Father Daughter Dance at ACES. Tickets available at RCS and Kimball Cooke Ins. until 5/3. Then at the door.</td>
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<td>May 7</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>2 pm “What’s a Blog and How to Create One” workshop with Aaron Ellison, world traveller, Senior Research Fellow in Ecology at Harvard Forest and creator of a blog. See it at <a href="http://unbalancedecologist.net">http://unbalancedecologist.net</a>.</td>
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<td>May 10</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Full Flower Moon</td>
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<td>May 14</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Mother’s Day</td>
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<td>May 15</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>5 pm Library Book Discussion group meets to discuss Girls and Sex by Peggy Orenstein</td>
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<td>May 19</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>10 a.m. and 7 p.m. An Original Play, written and performed by the Village School at Town Hall.</td>
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<td>May 20</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Armed Forces Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>New Strawberry Moon</td>
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<td>May 26</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Ramadan begins at sundown</td>
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<td>June 3</td>
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<td>Saturday Morning on Royalston Common 7:30 - 10 am Pancake Breakfast at the Town Hall. Adults $6 Children $3. Organic blueberry pancakes and local syrup 7:30 - 11 Spectacular Silent Auction - Items include original paintings, crafts, gift certificates, maple syrup, half of organic lamb, and lots of interesting brand new items from local farms and businesses. The whole list of items for the auction is posted at <a href="http://www.villageschoolma.org">www.villageschoolma.org</a>. The Auction and Breakfast will benefit the Village School Building project at Camp Caravan. Giant Community Yard Sale Call the school to reserve a table! $10 a table. The program of events also includes the Millers River Morris Men, a Birds of Prey Presentation, an espresso and citrus bar, a Cake Walk for Children, face painting, live music, and lots more. 9 - 11:30 Friends of the Library plant sale at the Post Office 9 - noon Friends of the Library book sale at the library 9:30 - 11:30 Historical Society Museum open 6 pm Fire and EMS BBQ at Central Fire Station</td>
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Select Board News:
Christine Long, Chair
Save the date – Friday, May 5 at 7 p.m. at Royalston Community School – it’s annual town meeting time.

Along with routine items, voters will be asked two very large questions: Shall we proceed with expanding our broadband network throughout town, something that will require us to approve a Proposition 2½ debt exclusion to pay for the build-out? This is a legal necessity – but as the Broadband Committee will show, it is likely that loan payments will be fully paid by users themselves, with no taxpayer money at all.

Second, shall we approve a Proposition 2½ debt exclusion to fund the lease purchase of a 10-wheel sander and a one-ton dump truck for the Department of Public Works? The sander is needed immediately – our current vehicle will not pass inspection – and the dump truck will be needed within a year or two. The total is about $350,000, depending on exactly what we want to buy and when we want to buy them. Details will be available at town meeting.

Both these measures require a two-thirds vote at town meeting, but they also require a majority vote at a special town election sometime this summer.

As for the town’s operating budget, the Select Board will recommend one totaling $2,095,752, up 4.7%. Why? As we have explained over the last couple months, our Athol-Royalston Regional School District assessment is up 6%, 24-hour dispatch is up 29% – both for reasons beyond our control – and we are proposing larger than usual raises for a number of town employees.

Our budget plan will show, however, that we have enough income to justify that budget, plus a few fairly small article requests and one large one – snow and ice.

The big picture leaves a stabilization fund of about $75,000, less than desirable, but we do hope to fully reconcile our books soon and thus become able to certify free cash – “leftover” money we can return to stabilization.

On that note, we would also like to introduce a former town accountant as our new town accountant – Lori Bolasevich, whom many of you remember as Lori Blanchard. We welcome her back!

Cultural Council News
Our annual Blues Night is fast approaching! This year features two local bands, Side Street and the Reprobates. The fun goes from 7-10 pm on Saturday, May 13th, at the Town Hall. Beer, wine, and soda will be available for purchase, and snacks will be provided. Tickets are just $10.00, and as space is limited reservations are necessary. Please call Deb Nunes at 978-249-4000 and leave a message if she is not there. Your tickets will await you at the door, or she can get tickets to you. This is traditionally one of our best yearly events (summer Musicfest coming in July!), so don’t miss it! For further information please call Deb Nunes.

Open Space and Recreation Committee News
Paul A. Montero, Chairperson
Members are desperately needed for the Open Space and Recreation Committee. The Committee started with seven members but was revised to five since it was difficult to get attendance. Currently there is only one member other than myself.

Royalston’s Open Space and Recreation Plan recently expired. Until the Plan is updated, Royalston is ineligible for funding through the Division of Conservation Services grant programs. Projects like the Eagle Reserve Conservation Area was a huge success last year and was mostly funded by grants. If you want projects like the Eagle Reserve in Royalston to continue, join us. Contact me by telephone at (978) 249-5879 or by email: gozorno@verizon.net.

Board of Health News
Phil Leger, chair
A reminder that the reusable area is first come first serve. Anyone that has a current RRATS vehicle sticker can leave good items or take good items. It seems that some residents think it’s their private source of flea market and yard sale material. There has been some harassment of volunteer help in that regard. We do not have to provide this area. We do it because it diverts useful items from the trash and it’s popular. If folks bully or threaten people we will refer these instances to the RPD. If you are being bullied or threatened, please inform staff so we can follow up. Let’s be peaceful to one another. Enough said.

Ticks are everywhere. The Library has excellent reference material in this area. Wear gaiters, or bag your pants in your socks and check your armpits, groin, and other parts of your body after being outside. Prevention is key. If ticks are found use a tick twister (personal fav) or tweezers. If you develop a round ring around bite area, go to your local healthcare provider. Don’t mess with ticks. Bug season will be upon us this month. Use netting or repellent of choice. Check screens in your dwelling.

Although ground water levels have improved over the winter months, our area is still in drought advisory. Conserve your local water source.

Thank you Checkpoint Charlie Scribner for organizing the town’s roadside clean-up, now in its 252nd year. Way to go Checkpoint!

Ready for Barbecue Season?
Please join your Royalston Fire and EMS Association for a Chicken Barbecue on Saturday, June 3rd. The BBQ will be located at the Center Fire Station. In addition to the meal, beer will be available for purchase. Serving will begin at 6pm, but come early and enjoy some yard games with your local friends! Tickets are $12 for adults and $6 for kids. Contact your local Fire and EMS personnel for tickets. Tickets will also be available at the Post Office, DPW, and the Transfer Station.
Royalston Memorial Day Celebration
Monday, May 29th 2:00 pm – Town Hall
Join us as we honor Royalston’s veterans, sing, march in a parade, listen to the bugle and recoil at a musket firing. Stay after our service to enjoy a delicious lunch prepared by the Ladies Benevolent Society.

Cemetery Commission
WORK OPPORTUNITY: Contractor/individual to work as needed with the Cemetery Commission and area funeral homes for Royalston burials. For more information on requirements, contact Commission Chair Roy A. Smith at 978-249-9697 or Roland G. Hamel at 978-249-4587.

Royalston Wireless Broadband Internet Network Launch
After 6 years of hard work, we’re launching RoyalstonNet, our own Town-wide High-speed Wireless Broadband Network. RoyalstonNet will connect everyone to the internet, and serve everyone, everywhere in town. It will also connect 12 of our core town departments; Fire, Police, Emergency Management, Town Hall, the Library, the Royalston Community School, DPW, and all our Town offices at Whitney Hall. RoyalstonNet will transform our Town, our Community, as it already has for many in the south village.

About 50% of the town, 340 families, have already pre-registered, and signed the Tech Easement Form at the town website (http://www.royalston-ma.gov). It’s not too late to sign-up and get on board. Stop in, and try it at the Village Store. It’s free … and it’s fast.

It’s important that you attend the Annual Town Meeting on Friday, May 5th, at 7 PM at RCS (Royalston Community School) on Winchendon Road, in support of a “Debt Exclusion and 3 other Broadband Articles” for the RoyalstonNet Project, and also vote at the upcoming Special Town Election – Date to be announced soon.

Funding RoyalstonNet, our town owned Royalston Broadband Network
GREAT NEWS! The Commonwealth Mass EOHCD (Executive Office of Housing and Community Development) has just told us we’re eligible to apply for a grant of $1.125 million dollars. This is $565,000 more than we had expected! This is a non-competitive grant; the funds have already been earmarked for Royalston. This means, if we write a very compelling application, they will give us the funds. We all certainly believe there is a very compelling case to be made for Royalston.

However, actually receiving these grant funds is contingent upon the town voting TWICE in favor of the project: 1st at town meeting AND 2nd at a subsequent special town election. Both are very important. We need your help!

The entire town-wide Broadband Network project will cost $1.4 Million. But, with the state grant of $1.125 million, we now only have to borrow $280,000 (less than $30K a year principal and interest). It is highly unlikely that we will have to raise taxes to make the annual payments on this loan. We believe the monthly subscriber fees for internet service will cover our operating expenses AND the payments on the loan. State laws require the town to vote for this because the town has to guarantee that the loan will be repaid.

We’re pretty confident about this, because the projected income for the town-wide system, based on the subscription fees in the south village, show that if only 50% of households sign up we will ‘break even’. We think way more than 50% of Royalston residents will sign up, by the time the system goes online. If so, it means we might be able to reduce the monthly subscription costs, or pay off the loan sooner, or add more services, or all of those things.

To support this project, we all need to do the following: Come to the Annual Town Meeting on Friday May 5th, 2017 and Vote YES on the following four (4) Broadband Network Articles
Article 25 to set up a “Broadband Enterprise Fund” (this will publicly and transparently track the accounting for the Town-wide Broadband Internet Service.)
Article 26 establish a budget of expenditures for the Enterprise Fund.
Article 27 support a “Debt Exclusion” of $1.4 Million for Broadband Service. The amount we actually have to borrow is approx. $280K or the difference between the $1.4 Million and the $1.125 million grant. The Town Meeting Article does say this in a very legal kind of way.)
Article 28 lets us pay the annual debt service on this ‘borrowing’ that will come due in FY2018 (estimated to be less than $30,000 annually) out of subscription income.

Vote “Yes” in the June Special Election in favor of the Debt exclusion for the Town-wide Broadband Internet Service.

RoyalstonNet Project Schedule Highlights:
2 Votes: Town Meeting & Special Election
Hire a Project Manager
Sending out RFP’s, easements, finalize designs
Hire Network Operator
& ISP (Internet Service Provider)
Install Access Point Poles, Get Permits and Build Monopole Towers
Begin Building 8-mile Fiber Backbone

Network Operations Center Hut Built
Households Connected
Network Testing Optimization and Tweaking by neighborhood
Go live for entire system

Once we have a YES from both the town election ballot vote, we anticipate having the first new customers go online in late fall 2017, with everyone online over the following 6 months. The entire RoyalstonNet Project should be completed by the summer of 2018.
Phinehas S. Newton Library News
Kathy Morris, Library Director
Trustees: Jeffrey Magnum, Clarence Rabideau, Theresa Quinn
Mondays: 10:00 am - 8:30 pm. Thursdays 1:00pm - 5:00pm and 6:30 - 8:30pm
Saturdays: 9:00 am - 12 noon
978-249-3572  www.royalstonlibrary.org

Donations to the Friends- Thank you!
Virginia Moore  Joan Katz
The Village School  Phebe and Fr. Phil Jacobs
Bob and Lorraine Casinghino  Gordon Morrison
Sara and Michael Dilg  Boyd Estus
Dan and Cheryl Mahoney  Kate Duffin
Phil and Carla Rabinowitz  Grace Belmont
Donald and Marlene Jarvenpaa  Diane Lincoln
Aaron Ellison

Program: What’s a Blog and How to Create One
Aaron Ellison will describe what blogs are and how to set up one of your own on May 7 at 2:00 p.m. at the library. He has been ‘blogging’ for a few years – check his out at http://unbalancedecologist.net. Aaron is a Senior Research Fellow in Ecology at Harvard Forest and spent the last year traveling around the world, as he puts it, “creating a huge carbon imprint”. His blog describes his travels and adventures in the world of ecology. Join us for conversation and information sharing as well as some great refreshments. This workshop sponsored by the Friends of the Library and is open to all ages. For more information, call the library.

Library Plant Sale and Book Sale - June 3rd
Bargain books and local plants available. Donations of plants needed. Seed or dig up a few extra perennials, annuals, veggies, flowers, herbs, or houseplants for the Friends! Drop at the library ahead of time or bring to the sale.

MassCat Catalog Change
If you have tried recently to log into the library catalog and noticed that it didn’t get you there, it’s because there was a change to the service that occurred without our knowledge. It used to be that our identifier was croy (which stood for central Massachusetts and roy for Royalston) but that has changed to royalstonlibrary and so the correct website for our catalog is royalstonlibrary.masscat.org. And remember your login is your library card number. If you don’t remember your password (or card number) call the library and we can assist you. This is also the login for ebooks and databases.

Axis360 = Free eBooks!
Do you have an iOS device (iPad, iPhone), Android, Kindle Fire, or Windows PC? Do you buy eBooks or eAudiobooks? Did you know you can get them FREE from the Library? All you need to do is download the Axis360 app to your device, log on with your library card number and password and you’re all set to borrow up to 3 books at a time. Books check out for 14 days and automatically expire; meaning no need to worry about returning your books on time. Axis360 offers a wide selection of fiction and nonfiction titles including new bestsellers. For help downloading and setting up your device stop by the Library. Visit http://royal.axis360.baker-taylor.com/ to download the app and browse the great selection of titles available.

Art Exhibit at the Library
Karen Otto, who did the first performance (a puppet show that was packed) at the library after I was named Director, will display a selection of fabric collages at the library during May and June. Karen has been an artist her whole life and has taught art in the public schools.

Library Book Discussion Group meets at 5:00 the 3rd Monday of most months unless it is a holiday. Then, it meets the 4th Monday. Library Book Group to discuss Girls and Sex by Peggy Orrenstein. Copies of the novel are available to be checked out of the library.

Preschool Storytime
at the library
10 am each Monday
Stories, socializing, songs, snacks and crafts Free
Call the library for more information
**Some of the new materials at your library**

**Adult fiction**
- Atwood, Margaret, *The Handmaid's Tale*
- Baldwin, David, *The Fix*
- Bandi, A Line Made by Walking
- Baume, Sara, *The Accusation*
- Bell, Darcey, *A Simple Favor*
- Berry, Steve, *The Lost Order*
- Bo, C.J., *Vicious Circle*
- Carr, Robyn, *Any Day Now*
- Cussler, Clibe, *The Cutthroat*
- Deaver, Jeffrey, *The Burial Hour*
- Eberlen, Kate, *Miss You*
- El Akkad, Omar, *American War*
- Baume, Sara, *The River at Night*
- Gill, John, *The Gargoyle Hunters*
- Heat-Moon, William, *The Accusation*
- Heller, Peter, *Celine*
- Ills, Greg, *Mississippi Blood*
- Jance, J.A., *Man Overboard*
- Korelitz, Jean, *The Devil and Webster*
- Kostova, Elizabeth, *The Shadow Land*
- Leon, Donna, *Earthly Remains*
- Macomber, Debbie, *If Not for You*
- Paretsky, Sara, *Fallout*
- Patterson, James, *Humans, Bow Down*
- Patterson, James, *Never Never*
- Ryan, Jennifer, *The Chilbury Ladies' Choir*
- Scottoline, Lisa, *One Perfect Lie*
- See, Lisa, *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*
- Shreve, Anita, *The Stars are Fire*
- Steel, Danielle, *Dangerous Games*
- Tinti, Hannah, *The Twelve Lives of Samuel Hawley*
- Towles, Amor, *A Gentleman in Moscow*

**Adult Non-Fiction**
- Brown, George, *Essential Pruning Techniques*
- Didion, Joan, *South and West*
- Finkel, Michael, *The Stranger in the Woods*
- Grann, David, *Killers of the Flower Moon*
- Hayes, Christopher, *A Colony in a Nation*
- Moore, Kate, *The Radium Girls*
- O'Rourke, P.J., *How the Hell did this Happen?*
- Pulpe, Alona, *The Forks Over Knives Plan*
- Sankovitch, Nina, *The Lovells of Massachusetts*
- Warren, Elizabeth, *This Fight is Our Fight*
- Wright, James, *Enduring Vietnam*

**Audiobooks**
- Atwood, Margaret, *The Handmaid's Tale*
- Harris, Robert, *Conclave*
- Jones, Darynda, *11th Grave in Moonlight*

**Young Adult Fiction/Non-Fiction**
- Downham, Jenny, *Unbecoming*
- Elliott, David, *Bull*
- Giff, Patricia, *Genevieve’s War*
- Yoon, Nicola, *The Sun is Also a Star*

**Children’s Fiction**
- Angleberger, Tom, *Rocket and Groot*
- Barnett, Mac, *Places to Be*
- Choldenko, Gennifer, *Miss Ellicott's School for the Magically Minded*
- Cousins, Lucy, *Hooray for Birds!*
- Daywalt, Drew, *Legend of Rock Paper Scissors*
- Dewin, Howard, *The Four-Star Challenge*
- Drummond, Ree, *Little Ree*
- Fagan, Cary, *Wolfie and Fly*
- Falconer, Ian, *Olivia the Spy*
- Iwasa, Megumi, *Yours Sincerely, Giraffe*
- Johanson, Carl, *All Kinds of Cars*
- Lemniscates, *Trees*
- McMullan, Kate, *Mama's Kisses*
- Myracle, Lauren, *The Forgetting Spell*
- Nye, Bill, *At the Bottom of the World*
- O’Connor, Jane, *Jojo’s Big Mess*
- O’Connor, Jane, *Jojo’s Magic Trick*
- Palacio, R.J., *We’re All Wonders*
- Robertson, David, *When We Were Alone*
- Schiwartz, Joanne, *Princess Cora and the Crocodile*
- Sher, Emil, *Town is by the Sea*
- Stilton, Geronimo, *Hunt for the 100th Key*
- Stilton, Geronimo, *Stay Strong, Geronimo!*
- Stockdale, Susan, *Fantastic Flowers*
- Sweeney, Sheila, *Scyther, Heart of a Champion*
- Van Slyke, Rebecca, *Lexie, the Word Wrangler*
- Westerdley, Scott, *Horizon*
- Yolen, Jane, *On Duck Pond*

**Children’s Nonfiction**
- Bishop, Nic, *Penguin Day*
- Christelow, Eileen, *Robins!*
- Lasky, Kathryn, *Newton's Rainbow*
- Meisel, Paul, *My Awesome Summer, CD*

**DVDs:**

**CDs:**
- Linq, *Time to Draw the Line*

**Stop Lyme**
The Natick Public Library in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Town of Natick, and health librarian Margot Malachowski with funding from the National Library of Medicine and the University of Massachusetts Medical School has created a reference handbook: STOP LYME: Information for Tick-Borne Disease Prevention, Identification and Patient Care. Fourteen states, all in the northeast, account for 95% of all verified cases of Lyme disease. The book provides information on all aspects of the disease. In addition, several new books on Lyme disease dealing with conventional and alternative methods of treatment have been added to the library collection.
Ladies’ Benevolent Society
Fresh Floral arranging with Donna Caisse (with flowers from your own garden) is scheduled for the May 31st meeting of the Ladies’ Benevolent Society. The program begins in the Town Hall immediately following the brief, 7:30 p.m. business meeting. Participants should pick flowers the day before and keep them in water. Bouquet raffle to follow.

The Kite Poem
Isabel Cardona

What a day to fly a kite.
Nice breeze to blow my hair,
but not enough to blow the kite.
I run and run, but it comes back.

Even with a friend, you refuse to fly.
Then, you see the the leaves flying next to you, and you want to fly too.

I try one more time with a prayer in mind.
I lift you up high, and you take to the sky,
steal the breeze, and soar.
What a day to fly a kite.

Royalston Emergency Management Agency
Royalston Emergency Management Director Jim Barclay
e-mail ema@royalston-ma.gov or phone 978-249-2904

Despite the fact we don’t have too many, we do on occasion have tornadoes in Massachusetts, even out in the central and western parts of the state. This past March alone, 368 tornadoes touched down across the U.S. There are some preparations that should be made for any kind of hazard, but some specific ones for tornado or “wind events,” including not only tornadoes, but straight-line winds, microbursts, and hurricanes.

Before you need it, find the safest room in your house. A room in the cellar, or an interior room on the ground floor (no windows to break/spray glass) are the best options.

Know the terminology – Tornado Watch, for example, means conditions are right for tornadoes; Tornado Warning means there has been either an actual sighting or a radar indication.

Make sure any important documents or irreplaceable photos or items are in a safe location. “Locked and low” is the best – in the basement, in something like a fireproof safe or container in a chest freezer, where they will be protected from wind, water and fire damage.

For all hazards, you should have a three-day disaster supply kit which allows your entire family – pets included – to get by in relative comfort before being “rescued” or any “shelter in place” order is lifted. Have at least one gallon of water per person, per day in storage, and sufficient non-perishable foods for three days. Ensure you have disposable plates, napkins, utensils and do NOT forget the can opener! Also be sure to keep a few days’ worth of any prescriptions and personal hygiene products on hand. Other things to keep on hand for pretty much any emergency include a first aid kit, blankets, battery-powered flashlights and radios along with spare batteries.

The Historical Society is working to archive some of the newspaper clippings of long-time town reporter, Milly French. If you have items to share with the RHS, please contact Peter Kraniaik.

19-year-old Climbs Electricity Tower to “Look for Little Pond” (a cautionary tale) from the files of Milly French

Want to know more about Town history? Why not get involved with the Historical Society? The museum is open many Saturday mornings in the summer, and will be open June 3 during the hoopla on the Common. Check out the facebook page or website or just walk into the museum and ask a question (the historical method) to get involved.
A rare gathering of LEOs (Law Enforcement Officers) took place during the Royalston Community School’s recent D.A.R.E. graduation. In addition to D.A.R.E. Instructor Sherry A. Miner, Athol’s Chief Russell T. Kleber and Royalston’s Chief Curtis A. Deve- neau, as well as Royalston’s Patrol Sergeant Roland G. Hamel, Officers William J. Chapman (an RCS parent), Jamison R. Thiem and Nicholas R. Trinque attended the ceremony. Worcester District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr. (D-Worcester) also attended, addressed the graduates, and surprised Officer Sherry with a “graduation gift” of $300 from some of the “drug money” his agency has seized. The generous gift will be combined with donations from individual donors, businesses and community services agencies, and used towards future D.A.R.E. classes and community education programs.
RCS Calendar
May 05 - Father - Daughter Dance @ ACES @ 7:00 - 8:30pm
May 05 - Royalston Town Meeting @ 7:00 - 11:00pm
May 15 - 19 GRADES 5 & 6 TO NATURE’S CLASSROOM!
May 18 - Grade 1 FT to SouthwicK Zoo
May 18 - HEALTH FAIR @ ACES 6 - 7:30PM
May 19 - Hug-A-Tree Program - K - 3 @ 9:00am
May 22 - Caring for Kids Dental Program @ RCS
May 23 or May 25 - Grade 6 to UMASS w Ms. Schwab, Brian, Tina
May 24 - Wacky Wednesday
May 25 - Kindergarten trip - Community Helpers
May 26 - Memorial Day Program @ 2:00pm w Jim Barclay & Jess Putney Schanz
May 29 - Memorial Day
May 30 - BOGO Scholastic Book Fair

RCS DARE Graduation
Now in her eleventh year as a D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) instructor, Royalston Police Officer Sherry A. Miner saw 23 RCS fifth graders graduate from the ten-week program. Winning essayists included Jonah Paulino with an honorable mention; Andrew Robinson and Savannah Basso, runners-up; and Madison Colo, who read her first-place submission. Other graduates were Trevor Bullock, Chase Canfield, Ivan Cardona, Jr., Colton Chapman, Hailey Dig, Melany Eldridge, Andrew Fitzpatrick, Cody Gere, Julianna Godette, Brooklyn Hopkins, Summer Lamson, Philip Martin, Masson Mello, Charlie Michaud, Taylor Pearson, Lillian Rathburn, Colin Rowe, Jamieson Vincent and Abigail Willhite.

In addition to family and friends, the grads had a number of important guests for their ceremony, including ARRSD Superintendent Steven C. Meyer, School Committee Chairman Nancy D. Melbourne of Royalston, and Vice Chair Deborah Kuzmeskas and member Mitch Grosky, of Athol. Also attending: Royalston Selectboard member Christine Long, Athol Selectman Anthony A. Brighenti, Police Chief Curtis A. Deveneau and his Patrol Sergeant Roland G. Hamel, and officers William J. Chapman, Jamison R. Thiem and Nicholas R. Trinque, and Athol Police Chief Russell T. Kleber, State Senate President Stan Rosenberg (D-Amherst), State Rep. Susannah M. Whipps (R-Athol; 2nd Franklin) and Worcester County District Attorney Joseph D. Early, Jr. (D-Worcester).

RCS PTG is collecting “Box Tops for Education” to improve the school playground. If products you buy have these special box tops, please drop at the school.

ARRSD Superintendent Meyer Resigns; Search Committee Forms
With the resignation of Dr. Steven C. Meyer, a new ARRSD Superintendent Search Committee has been formed. Royalston residents participating in the selection process are School Committee member Nancy D. Melbourne, Royalston Community School’s faculty member Jessica H. Willhite and Mary C. Barclay, long-time Royalston’s representative to Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School. The position was posted via the usual help wanted site (Schoolspring.com) on April 13th; applications were accepted through April 28th. The Search Committee’s first meeting is May 1. ARRSD Committee Chairman Lee Chauvette is planning to present the names of as many as three finalists at the regularly scheduled Committee meeting May 17th. Dr. Meyer, who is leaving the District for Clinton Schools to be closer to his family in Lancaster, has pledged his support during the transition period, stating, “I will take on whatever role the school committee asks of me… I will continue to work to ensure that Athol-Royalston is poised to continue making progress next year and beyond.”

What’s happening at the Village School?
Rise Richardson, director
Tuesday May 2 May Day Celebration
On Tuesday May 2, at 9:00 a.m. sharp, the Village School will host an old fashioned May Day celebration. Children can join in May Pole weavine dancing. There will be singing of traditional songs, and rounds, and local musicians. 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! Young and old will join in the uplifting “Shepherds Hay” to complete the event. The public is invited. This event will last under an hour, just enough time to greet the spring and evade the black flies. Rain date is Wednesday May 3.

Friday May 19 Annual Original Play
Friday morning 10:00 a.m.
Friday evening 7 p.m. at the Royalston Town Hall
Based on a year-long study of the westward expansion in the 1800’s, the 4th-6th grade class write an original humorous script, which they produce and perform, in three acts. The characters range from immigrants to bank robbers to miners. The set is created by the students, and the young actors also sing and play music. Everyone is welcome. Free, and donations are accepted to defray production costs. Best seats are available at the morning performance.

Right after April vacation, the classes fanned out and identified the local flfauna for Biodiversity Day. One class visited Lawrence Brook, a few classes went to the Camp Caravan pond, and the preschoolers explored the vernal pool near the school. The students also illustrated the written records of their discoveries. The students are planting the garden, looking towards the fall harvest. Potatoes go in first, followed later by squash, pumpkin and Indian flint corn.

And if you see a concrete truck and backhoes at the Camp Caravan building site, then you can be sure the foundation for the new Village School is being poured! More next month.

Openings for the next school year at the Village School
There are openings in K-3rd grades. Call to set up a visit as soon as possible. You are invited to Open Visiting Mornings in April and May on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Come at 8:30 to observe classes, talk to staff and meet with the Director. You can find out about Financial Aid and carpools too. Call 978 249 3505 to schedule in advance.
Classifieds

Services Available:

Saxophone/Clarinet/Piano/Contemporary Songwriting and Theory Lessons: Laura Ramsey. Experience with students on ADS and learning disability. $20/half hour session. Call Laura 774-272-0760 or email lramsey@alumni.berklee.edu

Piano and Guitar Lessons: Evan Foisy, $20 for a half hour session. Call Evan 978-249-4250, or email evan55@comcast.net

Photography Services: Events, portraits, weddings, horse and dog shows, and commercial photos. Visit www.snowheronstudios.com Call at 978-249-8108 or 978-248-9454

Horse Board: Closed shed w. turnout available in Royalston at Black Horse Farm for one or two horses. $300 monthly per horse, advance pay discounts available - secure space, arena, nearby trails. Breed your mare to your stallion of choice. Call 978-249-9880 or suzannagaits@gmail.com

Laurie Truehart: private wood carving lessons. 978-249-3291.

Graphic digital artist. Websites, print materials - posters, flyers, brochures, business cards, etc... Also photo and slide scanning offered. Barbara 508.364.3339 or binguiney@wildblue.net

House cleaning. 4 hr - $60.00. Royalston resident. Call Fran: home 249-4596 or cell 978-895-0817.


Affordable horseback riding lessons. C + R Ranch on the Royalston border in Winchendon. All ages; beginner and up. Call Cindy 978-894-5611

DTM Landscaping. spring cleanup, snowplowing. Call Theresa Gates 413-336-1850 or David Plourde 413-336-1593

Monty Tech Update
Mary C. Barclay, Royalston's Representative – royalston_community_news@yahoo.com

Monty Tech accepted more than a half-million dollars in grants and donations last month. First, a $435,856.67 Governor’s Skills Grant to support the Machine Technology program and establish an evening program to help meet the needs of manufacturing. Second, a Massachusetts Life Sciences Grant of $99,697 will fund STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) education projects. Last, but not least, a $10,000 donation from MIT will help underwrite the costs of the Student Space Experiment Program, which sees Monty Tech science students sending experiments into space. In addition, $4,300 was raised with the “Puppy Love” booth on Valentine’s Day and $4,150 has been raised to date on the car raffle – both going towards the Veterinary Sciences program, which takes its first students in September.

Monty Tech’s “Marine Raiders” took third place in the All-Service Division of the CyberPatriot IX National Finals, held early April in Baltimore, MD! To put this impressive achievement into proper perspective, the group was one of more than 4,400 teams competing, against teams from all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, and U.S. Department of Defense Schools all around the world.

for sale:
1) Antique wooden hand operated grain thrasher.
2) Large old wooden book case with temovable shelves.
3) Large old wooden top load ice chest.
4) Large oak 4-drawer slant top desk.
5) Small oak 4-drawer desk.
6) Cherry color electric heater fireplace. Must see to appreciate! Please call 978-249-6814 for measurements and prices.

Mosquito Magnet advanced mosquito defense system. ½ acre range. Used one season only. Ideal for small yards and patios. $100.00 firm. Call Sharon 987-249-3040.

Royalston Maple Syrup from Divoll’s sugar house. Prices pints $10, quarts $17, half gallons $30 and gallons $52. Call John 978-894-5109

Sweetwater Sugar House at the LeRays has syrup available. Call 978-249-3464.


Local, raw honey from Squier Davis Farm. One pound jars $7.00 Cash preferred. Call Deb/Joe Nunes at 978-249-4000

Hand-knitted baby sweater sets, etc. Call 978-249-4013.


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Garden Notes
April 23, 2017

So…. one day I’m sitting around the house bemoaning my enforced idleness and the next I was idle no longer. Opening day: April 10, and except for the last two dreary, wet, cold days that hobbled outdoor activity, I’ve spent a couple of hours in the garden every day since, mostly kicking it into shape, but also finding the opportunity to plant the first of the peas and spinach and all of the potatoes. Radishes will be seeded today, and, in three and a half weeks, will join the lettuce, spinach, and scallions in the salad bowl. Yes, the fish tank-enclosed lettuce survived as did my October planting of spinach. (No surprise, my August and September plantings did not.) The alliums, bless ‘em, abound. Four hundred ninety garlic cloves set into the ground last fall, four hundred ninety garlic plants emerged. Chives and perennial scallions are upwards of ten inches. Two leeks, slipping by last fall’s harvest, wintered just fine. They will send up a flower stalk and mature a quantity of seeds which I can collect and plant in 2018. Continuity. Parsnips, having sweetened up after a winter in the ground, are being consumed in earnest. Lest you might get the impressions I am on top of things, I continue to rake and move last year’s leaves. If I ever get around to reducing my ‘life’s work,’ leaf-raking will be the first to be abandoned. I am even less enthusiastic about dealing with the twigs carpeting the lawn. The leaves, at least will evolve into compost in two years (assisted by a healthy dollop of manure); in two years’ time the pile of twigs will evolve into a pile of twigs.

A new feature this spring is the presence of a pair of mini-greenhouses (emphasis on the mini), unearthed at one of the thrift shops I frequent. At first blush, I wrote them off as just another piece of junk emanating from China, but, at second blush, I decided (for less than the price of an entrée in a mid-range restaurant) to give them a try. Assembled in minutes, they appear to be a step above the shoddiness I anticipated. Tubular steel frame (albeit light weight), four wire-mesh shelves, a sturdy plastic cover with a zippered front for access to the plants and to cool off the interior temperatures (which could easily exceed 100° during a 70° sunny day). They are situated on the south side of the house (that’s the sunny side folks), somewhat protected from the wind. Taking no chances, we have pegged them down with tent stakes. Mini though they may be (assembled size: sixty-three inches high, nineteen inches deep and twenty-seven inches wide), the two will comfortably house one hundred twenty-eight six-packs of plants. So far, the seedlings seem satisfied with their surrounding; I am cautiously optimistic.

The last two days notwithstanding, it is a delight being outside in these waning pre-black fly moments, observing spring unfolding, reflecting on spring unfolding. Daffodils started flowering early, earlier even than the hyacinths which is not typically the case. Fruit tree buds are swelling but not yet open. This is good, what with the temperature hovering in the mid-30s at the house four of the last five mornings: a frosted flower is a fruitless flower.

We’ve turned the corner. Again.  Larry Siegel

A Small Annoyance
Deb D’Amico

They’re back! The black flies are out there - and earlier than they should be. Folk wisdom says they swarm between Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. But I was visited by a rather tentative swarm while uncovering the garlic bed in mid-April. Maybe the freak warmth of earlier in the month, when the temperatures soared into the 80s, woke them early. Whatever the reason it would seem that our very brief springtime without them has come and gone.

I first encountered these little black flies as a child growing up in the White Mountains. As soon as most of the snow had melted and we could run through the backyard without boots, we were outside. The longer days of April and May were irresistible, and we’d beg our mother to let us go outside after supper to explore the woods and streams near our home. Of course, this was prime-time for the black flies and we would return to the house bitten but oblivious. Our mother would note each bite with concern as she reached for the bottle of Witch Hazel. The bites would ring our ankles like bracelets and pepper the tender skin behind our ears. But they never stopped our outdoor play. Perhaps, as small children, we were moving too fast, or playing too hard, to notice or care.

However, the annoyance factor increased with age. As teenagers trying hard to be sophisticated and cool we were done in by the flies. The swarms were so persistent at the school bus stop on Route 16 that we had no choice but to put our books on the ground and use both arms as windmills to keep the flies from landing. Once on the bus, we would congratulate ourselves for outsmarting the little buggers – only to find several tiny flies crawling up the windows next to us with bellies full of blood. Ours, no doubt. Inevitably the bus windows became streaked with tiny lines of blood indicating the demise of a black fly at the hands of an avenging teenager.

I spent the majority of my adult years living just outside of Boston where there is pollution, noise, and crowding – but no black flies. While this trade-off suited me, it did nothing to build up my resistance. Now that I’m back in the country, I see that my tolerance is nil. I bemoan the fact that I can’t sit outside for more than a minute before I am surrounded. I swear that, each spring, the first bites I get are the worst ever. What good are these tiny creatures anyway?

Funny you should ask. Some quick research tells me that, of the 40 species of black fly that make New England their home, only two are significant human biters. This is the “count your blessings” part of the story. These tiny black flies spend their larval stage in running water, filtering out algae and bacteria. They are sensitive to pollution, so their presence in any given season indicates a healthy ecosystem. Once they hatch, black flies are an important food source for fish, amphibians, and birds. In fact, many songbirds time their migration to coincide with the hatching of these tiny insects. It is the female that bites us. She needs blood to lay her eggs, but otherwise feeds on nectar. Who knew?! The males are the first to appear in the spring and their non-biting nature explains why those first swarms I encountered in the garlic bed seemed so “tentative”: they had no interest in biting.

Resolved: I am a New Englander, born and bred. I will not be defeated by these tiny marauders, no matter how beneficial or interesting they may be. I will purchase all manner of netted clothing and appear in the early garden beds like an alien in a HAZMAT suit. I shall slather myself with bug repellent until I’m a walking Superfund site. I will venture forth knowing the flies will find whatever quarter-inch of skin is exposed and chomp away. I shall return home each evening undaunted - and reach for the Witch Hazel.
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A Midsummer Night’s Dream  
It’s almost here….  
Royalston Shakespeare Company’s  
Theatre Workshop 2017  
June 22 - July 3 at the Royalston Town Hall

The RSC is looking for enthusiastic actors, directors, costume makers, set builders, and inspired lighting and sound engineers, ages 8 and up. Adult volunteers are welcome to jump in and lend a hand as well. This annual production is a lot of work and a lot of fun. The group accomplishes amazing feats of theatre in less than two weeks. All levels of experience are welcome.

This year’s play, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, is one Shakespeare’s most famous and fun comedies with plenty of opportunities to ham it up on stage: a quadrangle of confused lovers, a jester, mischievous fairies with magic love potion, kings and queens (human and fairy), a duke, a carpenter, a weaver, a tailor, a tinker, and a bellows mender.

The program is supported by a grant through the Friends of the Library, the Royalston Cultural Council, T-shirt sales, and donations from participating families and Friends of the Royalston Shakespeare Company.

Our schedule will be a little tight this year due to all the snow days. We ask that participants be able to attend every rehearsal.

For more information contact Grace: Belgra3@gmail.com

Wildlife sightings:

John McLure spotted a Golden Eagle soaring over Frye Hil Rd. The angle, the time of day, and his mindset made it look as if the eagle’s wings spread all the way across the road.

Lots of bears! It is past time to take in the bird feeders.

The Royalston Community Newsletter  
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Photo: Pralinsky