Calendar of Events

A complete listing of all department, committee, commission, and board meetings is posted on the Town’s website, www.royalston-ma.gov.

Dawn-dusk Deer Hunting/Archery through November 24th

November 1 Friday
7 - 10 pm Open Mic Night in the Town Hall The house band is SpaceBar. Free admission. Light fare.

November 3 Sunday
2 a.m. Daylight Savings Time ends and time to check the smoke, carbon monoxide, and radon detector batteries

November 8 Friday
7 p.m. Fire and EMS Turkey Raffle at uptown fire station. Raffles. Fun. Food.

November 9 Saturday
10 a.m. Friends of the Library meeting at the Library. All welcome.

Late Evening Taurid Meteor Shower, with about three shooting stars a minute, originating in southern skies

November 11 Monday
Veterans’ Day – Schools, Post Office, Town Offices, Library all closed.

November 12 Tuesday
7:00 p.m. Full Beaver Moon

Community Meeting of the Royalston South Village Revitalization Committee in the Second Congregational Church in South Royalston

November 16 Saturday
10 a.m. – noon Village School Open House

November 17 Sunday
Pre-Dawn Leonid Meteor Shower (from the Tempel-Tuttle Comet) with a shooting star every five or six minutes through November 18th

2:00 p.m. Ribbon laced wreath making workshop at the Town Hall, sponsored by the Friends of the Library. Open to teens and adults. Limited to 20 participants. No cost. Pre-register in person or by calling or emailing the Library. Include a call-back #.

November 20 Wednesday
11:30 a.m. Royalston Luncheon Club Thanksgiving Dinner

Drive by Pie!
Saturday, November 23
9:00 am to sell-out
Across from P.O., Royalston Common

Pre-Orders are Best!!

You can also drive buy and purchase what is available that day, but to ensure you get your favorite, pre-order by calling:

Maureen 249-5138

(Please leave name, order and call back number.)

Pies available freshly baked or frozen and ready to bake in your own oven!

Pumpkin $10
Apple, frozen or fresh $12
Mince $12
Blueberry, frozen or fresh $14
Pecan $16.

All proceeds benefit the Scholarship Fund Ladies’ Benevolent Society of Royalston

November 23 Friday

November 26 Tuesday
Dawn-dusk Deer Hunting/Shotgun season through Dec. 8th
10:06 a.m. New Cold Moon

November 27 Wednesday
No classes Village School; Early dismissal for ARRSD and Monty Tech for Thanksgiving break

November 28 Thursday
Thanksgiving Day

December 1 Sunday
11:00 a.m. Basket making workshop at the Town Hall. Class limit 10 people; preference to those who haven’t made a basket in previous years. Pre-register at Library - $15 materials fee.

December 4 Wednesday
6 p.m. Annual Tree Lighting on the Common.
Select Board Notes: Deb D’Amico, Chair, Royalston Select Board

Stormy Weather! As of this writing, Royalston has nearly recovered from the severe damage sustained during the October 17 storm. The last neighborhoods to receive power were the hard-hit sections of West Royalston – Route 32, Bliss Hill, Butterworth and Warwick Roads. But all of us were stunned by the devastation: trees uprooted and blocking roads; frayed and snapped phone and power lines; enormous branches broken off and hovering precariously overhead.

By 4AM Thursday our police, fire and DPW crews were out in force putting out tree fires, assessing damage, and clearing as many roads as possible. The Select Board wishes to recognize and thank Keith Newton and his DPW crew; Jim Barclay, our Emergency Management Director; Police Sargent Roland Hamel and his cadre of patrol officers; our First Responders and our intrepid on-call Fire Department. Everyone of these folks put in countless hours over several days to organize town efforts and coordinate with outside agencies. Thank you all!

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

Royalston managed to survive the somewhat unpredicted (at least as far inland as North Central MA) Nor’easter of October 17, 2019. It was an all-time record breaker, with a drop in air pressure of 30 millibars in just 15 hours. “Gusty winds” reached hurricane force, ripping the roots of centuries-old-trees out of the wet ground, and caught drenched leaves on tree branches, which caused trees and branches to take down utility wires for about two-thirds of Royalston’s residences. At least a dozen roads were completely impassable during the height of the storm. Many residents were stranded, ARRSD schools closed for two days. Route 32 was completely closed for several days.

While the Town’s main electrical service has been restored, there are a number of residents, as of late October, who are still without phone and internet services, and may well be without those services for a matter of weeks.

Please, the next time you come across a member of our DPW, Fire & EMS, or Police Departments, thank them. They were ALL out there from the time the storm began taking down trees and wires, 24/7, for many days, doing their level best to keep roads open, and responding to their usual calls. In an effort to improve communications and speed up restoration of utilities, RPD officers accompanied many of the pole and line crews working on tree and wire removal. Thank Town Clerk Barb Richardson for allowing her office to be used as an Emergency Operation Center (EOC), since the usual locations were without power and/or phone. Also thank our Select Board, especially Chair Deb D’Amico, who made it a priority to be in on the initial pre-storm updates, and personally accompanied me on trips around town during and after, to confirm safety of residents, assess storm-related damage, and monitor progress of recovery work.

Although this event did not rise to a level that allows for Royalston to apply for damages and reimbursement for residents who volunteered their time, talents, and resources, I want to thank YOU for doing YOUR part – being prepared with supplies enough to shelter-in-place so you did not need assistance early on, checking in on elders and shut-ins to ensure they were ok, sharing information on hazardous conditions, road closings/openings on your social media sites, and doing what you could safely do to clear roadways of hazards – all of which went a long way to helping us return to at least some semblance of normal.

This was a good practice run for what could happen this winter – when temperatures are much lower, and conditions are much less forgiving. Just a reminder, during any event of this nature, please keep a detailed log/diary of your time, vehicle mileage, equipment usage, and supplies expended. If you can safely record damage in photos, please do so, adding dates, times, and details. Had reimbursement been available, properly-documented information of this nature can bring thousands of dollars to Royalston to cover expenses and future hazard mitigation.

Emergency Management isn’t just a department, it’s a group effort. It takes all of us, working together, to prepare, survive, and recover! Check out www.ready.gov for some steps you can take to be prepared for whatever Mother Nature throws at us during the next few months!

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The Future of Royalston – On September 24, members of Royalston’s boards and committees and several residents attended a “Future of Royalston” meeting at Town Hall. The purpose was to share insights and concerns about the town’s future. Over the course of two hours a lot of wisdom was shared and many good questions were asked. Discussion focused on how to increase revenue, maintain town services, care for our aging buildings, and preserve the rural “feel” of our town. There are no easy answers.

By the end of the night most were in agreement that there is a pressing need to find additional revenue for the town. In addition, we must determine what matters most to our residents so that the funds we have will be wisely spent. The Select Board will be pursuing next-steps for this process and will be looking for involvement from all residents. We will keep you informed. For the complete minutes from this meeting visit our website at www.royalston-ma.gov.

New Website Coming Soon – Last month the Select Board accepted an anonymous donation which will fund the design and implementation of a new website for Royalston. This is a generous gift that allows us to hire a company to design the site according to our specific needs and train staff to update and manage it. We have known for some time that our site needed some TLC, but we could not find the funds to make it happen. We are grateful to our anonymous donors and are confident that they – and you – will be pleased with the results. (photo courtesy Mary Judge via Mary Barclay)
Luncheon Club News: Thanksgiving Meal
The Royalston Council on Aging is inviting all those who are interested to join the Wednesday Luncheon Club for a Thanksgiving meal on Wednesday, November 20th at the Town Hall at noon. The meal includes turkey with herb gravy, stuffing, mashed potato, maple cinnamon butternut squash, a whole-wheat dinner roll and cranberry sauce. Dessert will be pumpkin pie.

Board of Health News

Phil Leger, chair person
Due to tree and line damage to RRATS, we had to close the facility the Saturday after the storm. It was the first time we had an emergency closure. We apologize for the inconvenience but due to the extensive damage across town, there was no choice. That being said, if bringing spoiled food to trash, be sure to bag tightly.

Flu season is upon us. Vaccines increase your protection.

BOH Office hours at Whitney Hall Wednesday 5-9pm every week.

Reduce or Reuse = Avoid adding extra greenhouse gases to the atmosphere: What is your best find from the recycle room at the transfer station?
Beth Weaver reports that for her, it is some 1920s style etched glass sherbert cups, (which just by chance I, Beth Gospodarek, had put there.) Let us know at the RCN and we will print the story of your treasures.

Royalston Community Newsletter passes 20th Anniversary

November 1999, the first Royalston Community Newsletter was direct mailed to every household in Royalston free of charge, and in the decades since, 10 issues a year have gone out faithfully bringing news and musings, kudos and milestones, and connection and memories… Along the way, it has created a historical record. The number of pages eventually grew from four to a steady twelve. The newsletter is still produced by the Friends of the Library and still comes in the mail for free.

The newsletter started as a way to address the people who would say to the Friends of the Library, “Oh. I wish I’d known about that program.” Barbara Pontier was the impetus and she soon got a start-up grant from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation. The church shared its bulk-mailing permit. Correspondents fired up our computers (mine was an aqua clamshell), listened to the ethereal tune of dial-up connecting, and hit send. Proofreaders got out their red pencils. Barbara put it together and burned it to a cd-rom, which she drove to the printers (Fieldstone Press). A few days later, five or six volunteers (including small children – (thanks Tobey and Katie) met at Town Hall to collate, fold, tape, apply mailing labels, and sort into boxes according to mailing route. Then, one more trip to Athol was needed to arrange the bulk mailing. Original production was a lot of steps involving a lot of people, but the newsletter was born.

As the years progressed, the process slimmed down a bit. Post office regs changed, so it was no longer necessary to fold. A cd-rom with a finished issue could be brought in the wee hours to the printer’s car (Mark Smith) and brought back in the evening. The newsletter comes collated from the printer (nowadays it’s Highland Press) but when there is an insert, Maureen Blasco usually taps, stuffs and sorts the mailing (often with the help of Patti Stanko while watching a movie) and then drives the completed newsletter to the Athol post office.

Over the 20 years of the RCN, the library trustees have been consistently supportive. The library director, Kathy Morris, has been the beautiful and unswerving face of our library and our newsletter all this time. Advertisers and donors have generously and repeatedly contributed with only the breeziest of nudges. Residents have shared their interests and talents. Many, many friends and caring citizens have volunteered to submit news, proofread, philosophize, wax poetic, and share milestones and kudos. Mary Barclay has been a contributor since the first issue and is the reason we know that November is the Beaver Moon; Larry Siegel has written over 120 cunning and carefully-crafted columns. Dozens of black bears have been spotted. Kids have grown up seeing their names in the paper. Theresa Quinn and Larry Siegel have taken their responsibilities as grammarians and proofreaders very seriously. Stephen Chase, the first to decipher our publishing software, has helped in a 1000 ways with ads, graphics, and layout and is the RCN swear-at-the-computer in-chief.

And then there are the recipes. For many issues, a seasonal recipe was submitted by residents (usually chased down by Maureen). To mark the 20th anniversary of the RCN, some of these recipes are being collected in a cookbook. It will be available for a donation at the library in a few weeks. Looking forward, if you have a good recipe that fits the month, send it along to the RCN.

In the end, it is the community that makes the newsletter. Every resident, brand-new-in-town or born here, is very welcome to submit appropriate recipes, kudos, milestones, news, wildlife sightings, poems, photos, drawings, ads, or what-have-you to chasesgos2@gmail.com. The newsletter is only as good as we all make it. Everyone is welcome to participate. Your name is in our name: Community.
Donations to the Friends - Thank You!
Stephanie McClure for Halloween refreshments and picking up the fall mums which had blown half way across the Library yard in the “bomb cyclone”.

Yoga with Charlotte Yeltsin will continue each Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. in the basement of the First Congregational Church until the Town Hall is available.
Preschool Storytime with Brooke Coleman every non-holiday Monday at 10:00 a.m. No pre-registration necessary. Stories, crafts, snacks, networking, play time.

Library Winter Book Club - All Welcome
Get cozy and curl up with some good books and then discuss them with your neighbors this winter. The Library Winter Book Club will be exploring the theme “making unexpected connections”. It meets three times:

Once in February to discuss the non-fiction Talking to Strangers by Malcolm Gladwell, once in March to watch the dvd Best of Enemies, and once in April to discuss the graphic novel Good Talk by Mira Jacob. That means readers have 2 months to read each selection, but if it doesn’t get read, all are still welcome for mingling, refreshments and book chat.

Read something good lately? Let us know at the RCN. Send your review by the 22nd of the month prior to publication. All ages welcome.

Art Exhibit
In preparation for the approaching cold, Cathy Offutt will display photographs of the intriguing shapes of frozen water. Last winter she did a lot of walking with her dog Sherman and was fascinated by the shapes created in freezing water. A nurse-midwife, Cathy has lived in Royalston since 2002.

Holiday Craft Programs
On Sunday, November 17 at 2:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, Gina Verrilli will lead a decorative mesh wreath workshop. Participants will create a wreath using different mesh ribbons. There will be a large selection of colors to choose from. This workshop is open to teens and adults and is limited to 20 participants. There is no cost for this workshop. Register by stopping by, calling, or emailing the Library. Include a phone number where you can be reached.

On Sunday, December 1 at 11:00 a.m. at the Town Hall, Sue Morello will again lead a basket making workshop. The class is limited to 10 people and preference will be given to those who haven’t made a basket in one of her classes; but everyone interested should sign up for a spot. Participants can choose from any of three baskets to make. You must pre-register for this workshop with the type of basket you want to make and $15 materials fee.

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Read something good lately? Let us know at the RCN. Send your review by the 22nd of the month prior to publication. All ages welcome.

Preschool Storytime
at the library
10 am each Monday
Stories, socializing, songs, snacks and crafts
Free
Call the Library for more information

yoga- every Tuesday night at 7 pm RELOCATED TO THE BASEMENT OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH DURING ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTION, sponsored by the Friends of the Library. Free but donations welcome.
The recent South Royalston Fair highlighted lovely readings of narratives about the early 20th century Finns in the South Village that had been collected in the library’s Town Scrapbook. One story was set in the 1920s and 30s when Pleasant Street was multilingual. While the children learned English at school, sometimes the adults did not have opportunities to learn English quickly. One Finnish mother did not read in any language, but when she got a letter from her home country, she would bring it to her Italian-speaking neighbor who spoke no Finnish but could read the mail phonetically and the news could be understood.

The stories collected in the library’s Town Scrapbook keep alive personal stories that may not have been saved in a public space otherwise. Many of those interviewed at the turn of the century for oral histories have since passed. If you know someone with a good story about life in our town, please write it down and get it to the historical society or Town Scrapbook. In 20 years, your words could be the center of readings at a town fair.
Peter Kraniak, president
Royalston Historical Society once again had its walk through the Center Cemetery on Oct. 19th with an enthusiastic group of participants, who had an enjoyable experience listening to life stories of those interred there. The building by that time had power restored from the storm that lashed the area a few nights before. The previous day, the Society held its annual meeting and pot luck supper in its museum lit by candles much as it would have been over 100 years ago. The election of officers was held and those that are in office retained their positions.
The dates for the meetings in 2020 are as follows:
January 17th
April 17th - Pot Luck Supper
July 17th
October 16th - Pot Luck Supper
With the exception of the July meeting all meetings are held at the home of the president, Peter Kraniak.

Building news: Work has been completed on all the interior parts of the windows and work will restart on the electrical soon.

REMEMBER: History is an important part of us so kindly join us for the meetings and offer your support.

Fire and EMS Turkey Raffle
Robert Newton
Turkey raffle on November 8th at 7:00 pm at the Fire Station. There will also be several other prizes raffled at the event. All encouraged to come support the fire and EMS team.

RSVR Community Meeting on Nov 12
Hello Royalston neighbors,
Have you noticed changes in the South Village? Due to two workdays this summer and fall that brought 46 volunteers to trim brush around the bridge, a beautiful view of the river has been opened up. Flower boxes were built and filled by volunteers Gabe Jarvenpaa and Maureen Blasco. The DPW rebuilt the white wooden fence by the bridge, cut down the knotweed and built a beautiful chain fence to the west of the bridge. Also, volunteers have trimmed the riverside down toward the 68 Bridge for other glorious views. Please take a pause in your life, stop on your way through the village, grab a Deans Beans coffee and sandwich from the store and enjoy the riverside. We are lucky in Royalston to be surrounded by such beauty

On October 5, the First Annual South Village Fall Fair was enjoyed by all. Thank you to the many people who helped put on the fair and worked there. It was a time to visit with neighbors and enjoy the fall.

On November 12, there will be a Community Meeting to see what our next steps will be. It will be at 7:00 p.m. at the Second Congregational Church in South Royalston. All people from every part of Royalston are welcome. You don’t have to be from South Royalston…we want to make the South Village a vibrant gathering place for the whole town to enjoy and have fun while doing it.

If you are not into meetings, you can still sign up to be on our mailing list to be informed of work days and projects. Please contact Nancy Monette at 978-249-3694 or mimimonette@aol.com if you would like to be added to our email list.

The RSVR Committee would like to acknowledge the following: the church, Charlie Scribner, and Phil Leger who lent us the big tents; Jennifer Monette who designed the T-shirt; the Fish and Game Club who lent us the grill, chairs and tables; speakers Allen Young, Dave Small, Joyce Neale, Luann Simula and Maureen Blasco; Jim Bennett for operating the sound system, Chyle Crossley for coordinating the music and photography; Phil Rabinowitz and Ryan Hood for performing; demonstrators Tom Kellner, Laurie Truehart, Ryan LeClerc and Officers Chapman and Wright with their police dogs; all of the volunteers who helped put on this fair, especially Jessica Springer, Rick Martin and Terry Dolan; the 46 volunteers who cleaned up the bridge and along the river and to those who recently spruced it up, in particular Dick Lawrence, Todd Neale, Scott Monette, Rick Martin, Lynne Kellner, Rene Lake, and Keith Newton, the DPW with Mike Truehart and Mike Richardson.
Sonja Vaccari Creates Mural:
Converts Cement Foundation into Happiness
A mountain lion slurping from the Millers’ River as River Rat canoeists drift by, a flock of birds emerging from a box clutched by a little girl, the Sentinel Elm, bears in the Beardsden, a celebration of stories and more have been painted on the foundation of the Old Stan’s Autobody on Main Street Athol (across from the UTD railway bridge). Artist Sonja Vaccari got permission from the owners to paint on the private property. With no outside funding and all donated time, Sonja spent the month of October building community through art. So many people have appreciated her work that unsolicited donations from passerby and others mean that all material costs are now covered. Sonja made room for other community members. Stop by and see which of your neighbors has painted a chunk or is referenced in the art work.

David Spackman Joins Boards
David Spackman of Butterworth Road has joined the board of directors of two significant local charitable organizations, Heywood Health and the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust.

Until his retirement earlier this year, David served on the leadership team at the Lahey Hospital and Medical Center in Burlington, Mass., where he was General Counsel and Senior Vice President for Legal Services and Government Relations. Prior to that, he was head of the public charities division under Attorney General Martha Coakley. A native of Philadelphia, he received a bachelor’s degree in 1970 from Beloit College in Wisconsin and a law degree in 1976 from Suffolk University in Boston.

Heywood Health, based in Gardner, is the parent company of Heywood Hospital and Athol Hospital, as well as physician group practices. The Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, based in Athol, has protected more than 30,000 acres of forests and farms, including the Eagle Reserve off Winchendon Road in Royalston as well as some privately-owned land in various parts of town.

David purchased the former Celt Grant residence in 2014. David’s sister and brother-in-law, Eleanor Spackman Alden and Thomas Manning, purchased a home on Bliss Hill Road in 2017.

On September 12 Deb D’Amico and Tom Musco paid a visit to Vyto Andrelunias at his new home in Danvers Mass. While his wife and daughter looked on, “Andy” was presented with the Town of Royalston’s Proclamation which had been read at the Special Town Meeting on July 30. As you can see in the photo, Andy is very pleased to be so fondly remembered. He sends his best to everyone in Royalston.

Garden Club
Pauline Alldred, co-president
On Thursday, November 21, 2019, at 7 pm at the Millers River Environmental Center, Danny Botkin of Laughing Dog Farm, who taught and counseled youth for 20 years, will talk and show slides to illustrate his uniquely “low tech” gardening practices. These include “low-till” soil building and a series of unconventional propagation and season-extension methods to keep green food alive year round: without tractor, chemicals, fossil fuel or heating of any kind. He has a homestead farm on a five-acre hilltop plot in Gill, Mass. This is a joint meeting with the Athol Bird and Nature Club.

Guests and new members are always welcome, so join us this month and learn something new about gardening. Meetings are free to members and guests are asked for a donation.
Village School News
We are at the tail end of many outdoor field trips. All K-6th children went canoeing on Tully Lake. The 5th-6th went on a field trip to the Harvard Forest, participating in a forest study and viewing the realistic dioramas. All K-6th classes joined in the hour-long beautiful Friday afternoon hike on the east portion of the Camp Caravan property, down old cart paths, crossing rivers, through the woods, over gigantic erratic boulders, through the field and back to the school again, making a full circle.

Saturday November 16  Open House  10 a.m. to 12 noon.  Come meet the teachers, talk with parents, meet alumni, tour the new building, find out about the unique curriculum and get your questions answered!  Bring your children, they will enjoy art and science activities in the classrooms just for them.  Preschool starts filling up for next year.  

For continual updates on events or information, go to villageschoolma.org

Monty Tech
Mary C. Barclay, Royalston Rep., m-barclay@montytech.net

Monty Tech’s Veterinary Clinic is now open, and serving hundreds of resource-limited families in the School District. From the opening on September 16th, the Clinic has been seeing patients every other week (“B Week” only, for the remainder of this year), and is fully scheduled three weeks out. Clinic Manager Laurice Russell reports, “These students have an amazing foundation. They already know more than people I have hired in my previous clinic, and I cannot wait to see how well-prepared they will be after having worked in this clinic for two years.”

Royalston residents with a valid EBT card issued by the MA Dept. of Transitional Assistance, and a matching, valid ID, are able to take advantage of the services, which include general wellness visits for dogs and cats, sick calls for “stable, but urgent” animals with vomiting and/or diarrhea; skin/allergy issues; and x-rays for coughing. Students perform chemistry profiles; complete blood counts; urinalysis; fecal testing; Feline Leukemia/FIV testing; and heartworm testing.

The reduced costs are thanks to many generous partners. In the first month, for example, Zoetis, MediV.E.T.S., DRE Veterinary, and Boehringer Ingelheim, all provided free or at-cost vaccinations, preventive medicines, and medical supplies.

Cultural Council News
First Open Mic, Friday, Nov. 1st, 7-10 pm Town Hall.  Great music, great food, great friends, great fun!  No admission charge.  
Host band:  Spacebar
Money raised helps to fund our free summer Musicfest.

Saturday, November 2, Cultural Council meeting to award grants for 2020, 10 am, Town Hall downstairs.

Holiday Tree Lighting, Wednesday, December 4th, 6 pm, Town Hall.  Tree lighting, carols, Santa’s arrival, cocoa and cookies inside, singers from RCS.  Rain or shine.

Open Mic, Friday December 6th, 7-10 pm, Town Hall.  Great music, food, friends, fun, as always!

Royalston Fish and Game Club

Contact the Club at 978-249-3004 for your 2020 membership.  
Help support the Royalston Fish & Game Club, on Route 68 just past the Phillipston town line, which has a beautifully groomed facility than includes a club house, function hall with complete kitchen, dining pavilion, covered barbecue area, firing and archery ranges, horseshoe pit, well-groomed ball field with back stop, and a fishing pond.  Club members open their club for a number of public events, including the Walter E. Carlson Memorial Fishing Derby each Mother’s Day. Check into the Royalston Fish & Game Club Facebook page to see what new events are added!

Ladies’ Benevolent Society
It’s pie time:  Get it fresh or frozen across from the Post Office on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.  Priced from $10 to $16.  For best selection, pre-order with Maureen.  Call 978-249-5138.  Really good homemade from scratch pies at really good prices.

While you are there, pick up an ornament to decorate in memory of a loved one. In December, bring it to the memory tree the LBS is setting up in the South Village. Watch for more details or query Laurie Deveneau.

Signs of the Times at Tully Dam.  No drones.
**Classifieds**

*free:* File Cabinets: 4, gently used, 4 drawer; 2, a bit more mileage, 5 drawer. Assorted office, desk top trays and dividers. 978-249-3531, please leave message.

*free (or a small donation to the Friends of the Library):* 4 drawer filing cabinets - Available at the library. (They were free, used, surplus equipment when we acquired them many years ago but all the drawers move freely and they serve their intended purpose. None lock.) Contact 978-249-3572.

**Services Available**

**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 978-249-8108 or 978-248-9454

**2 matted horse stalls available:** round pen, arena, generous turnout, watchful care 24/7. Black Horse Farm is near Birch Hill Dam by horseback. $400 per month. Training or any number of lessons $575 per month. Text Susanne at (978) 424-8580. Current email: cobbzuzanne4@yahoo.com. Stalls available for winter. Thanks!

**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 bruiney@wildblue.net

**House cleaning.** 4 hr - $60.00. Royalston resident. Call Fran: home 249-4936 or cell 978-895-0817.

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

**Congregational Churches News**

First Congregational Church of Royalston, 15 On The Common- Services start at 11 a.m. with Pastor Tim Oja. Fellowship gathering and refreshments served after service. Thursdays, at 3 On The Common, there is a 5 p.m. prayer worship and a 7 pm women’s Bible study group.

Second Congregational Church of Royalston, 3 School Street Services start at 9 am with Pastor Tim Oja. Fellowship gathering and refreshments served after service. On Wednesday at 7 pm, there is Bible study with Pastor Tim Oja.

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for sale:


**Bosch 7-1/4” worm drive saw in excellent condition** - $75 - only used on one job. Antique folding wooden wallpaper pasting table 22” x 73” (folds to 11”x73”) nice patina - $300. Contact Dave at 978-939-3663.

**Putney’s Sugarhouse** $6.50/half-pint; $10/pint; $18/quart. Jessica Putney Schanz at 978-939-3329 (cell); 978-249-7787; jessputney1989@gmail.com.

**Maple Syrup from Divoll’s sugar house.** Prices: pints $10, quarts $18, half gallons $30 and gallons $55. Call John 978-894-5109

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


**Glass etching:** by Swank Kreations. Custom options by experienced graphic designer and etching of glassware. Single pieces or sets. Contact Krys and Keith Swan at Swankkreations@gmail.com.

**Hand-knitted items:** Hats, mittens, boot socks, baby sets, etc. 978-249-4013.

**Pork Cut Packages available.** Variety packs. 10 lbs- $55 20lbs- $100 Sausage also available for $4/ lb- breakfast, hot, sweet, and cajun. Call Chet 978-895-6327

**Riding Lawn Mower Lift:** Used only one season. Like new. Paid $119, will sell for $80. Call 978-249-4013.

**Jarvenpaa Farm Eggs.** $2.50/dozen. 17 River Rd, So. Royalston. Come by anytime. Cooler at the bottom of the driveway next to road.

**Dean’s Beans Coffee** You can get yours delivered, fresh, once a month to the Village School, whole beans or ground. Find the order form at www.villageschoolma.org and order online- it’s easy! You’ll pick up the coffee in the Village School hallway.

**Nature books and prints.** Commissions accepted. Call Gordon Morrison at 978-249-2947.

**Local, raw honey** from Squier Davis Farm. One pound jars $8.00 Cash preferred. Call Deb/Joe Nunes at 978-249-4000.

**Mulch your garden** - Fertilize by the load or by the bag from Black Horse Farm (978) 424-8580 or email suzannagaits@gmail.com

**Birch Knoll Farm** - Hay for sale, Contact Helen at 978-249-3163 or 774-239-5062

**Firewood**- Green $195/ 170 cu feet. Call Jim Putney. 978-249-3379.
Garden Notes  

October 21, 2019

There was a frost advisory for the evening of the fourth and this time we decided to pay attention, picking any tomato with the slightest indication of color, any pepper large enough to be considered a pepper, any winter squash approaching maturity, and covering selective plants to ward off the impending frost. There was no need. With the exception of the unprotected basil (of course), everything survived, if barely, their days of productivity past. While there is no compelling reason to keep the plants in the ground and out of the compost heap (other than bragging rights in respect to continuing to pick tomatoes from time to time), why not? When my days of productivity are past, I’d just as soon hang around before transfer to the compost heap as well. There was a second advisory on the eighteenth, and, while we harvested whatever had developed in the intervening two weeks, we did not bother with our array of blankets for protection. Again, it mattered not at all, the tender plants alive still.

It is not all dreary in the garden. The brassicas and the raspberries are thriving. Both will shrugged off a light frost. By design, I grow my brassicas as fall crops, green foodstuff when no other is available. While harvest continues apace, the late cabbages and cauliflowers are later-than-late this year and will require several more weeks of moderate temperatures to mature. I am cautiously optimistic. The raspberries, too, are later-than-late. While we lack quantities of them this year, a quart every two days more than satisfies our fresh eating requirements. With many berries yet to ripen, they, too, would benefit mightily from a continued frost-free stretch.

Garlics have been planted, after a delay precipitated by the BIG BLOW last week. (Will prizes be awarded for the longest time before power was restored? Prospect Hill: mid-day Sunday.) Dense plantings provide a lot of food in a little space. With cloves set approximately six inches apart, a plot no larger than five feet x four feet will generate seventy-seven bulbs, more than enough to satisfy the most garlic-loving among you (and your acquaintances). Harvested garlics dry naturally (the process is called curing), and, given a cold, slightly humid (60-75%) environment, will store well into spring.

Once again, I am taking a stab at over-wintering spinach. Just today I seeded four fifteen foot rows. My objective is to have them germinate and grow a couple of inches. They will be heavily mulched before cold weather sets in. In an ideal world, we will remove the mulch next April and behold a bed of growing, thriving spinach. On the other hand, nobody would suggest we live in an ideal world. I will engage in that time-honored agricultural activity: crossing my fingers.

I am not quite prepared to sit back and compliment myself on a job well done. November is work-with-your-back-month, whether it’s hauling firewood from place to place, or, in respect to the garden, turning, composting, and mulching as many of next year’s beds as I have time, and energy, for. There will be time. Of energy, I’m a bit less certain.

Larry Siegel

Field Trip

Something told the wild geese
It was time to go.
Though the fields lay golden
Something whispered, “Snow!”

Thus begins the poem “Something Told the Wild Geese” by Rachel Field. In it she draws our attention to late autumn’s trickery where warm, golden days might well be followed by nights of killing frost. She invites us to see this changing season as the wild geese know it – through a combination of instinct and memory.

My first encounter with this poem was in Mrs. York’s fourth-grade classroom, where each week she wrote a poem on the far-left side of the chalkboard. The poem stayed there all week for us to memorize before the week was out. On Friday afternoon Mrs. York would invite volunteers to stand before the class and recite the poem from memory. We became surprisingly fond of this ritual and a growing number of us took the challenge. Week after week, more and more brave souls came forward to recite.

I am grateful for this treasure trove of poems from my childhood. They come to me at odd moments, like a tap on the shoulder: “Remember me? This moment, right now, is what I was telling you about.”

On a recent afternoon I wandered outside and sat on a bench in our yard. The sun was warm in a clear blue sky, and the surrounding trees still had a mixture of green. Purple asters bordered our gardens and bright red berries dotted bushes and vines. Everything I saw suggested that days of warmth and light were still ahead.

Then the silence caught my attention. I knew the songbirds had long since gone. But this quiet, broken only by a lone squirrel’s call, spoke of something else altogether. It seemed the woods and fields had been utterly abandoned. Where was everybody?

A tiny “pop” caught my attention, and I looked down. A bright green grasshopper had landed on a leaf at my feet. I watched as he turned left and right over and over again. Was he also wondering where his summer world had gone? Nearby a tiny white spider traveled aimlessly between crisp brown leaves. Back and forth she went on an invisible thread that couldn’t possibly catch her dinner. Was she also confused by the mixed message of warm sun and dead leaf?

It was at that moment that Rachel Field’s poem came to me, and I thought of the wild geese. They would not be fooled. “Leaves were green and stirring, /Berries, luster-glossed, /But beneath warm feathers /Something cautioned, — ‘Frost.’”

I thought of all the times I’d heard the call of wild geese and watched them cross an autumn sky. In those moments I had been struck by the perfection of their chevron and the beauty of their cry. But now their departure also seemed wise. “Something told the wild geese /it was time to fly. /Summer sun was on their wings /winter in their cry.”

Autumn will catch you unawares, we are cautioned. Watch the wild geese as they form and go. They know what lies ahead.

Deb D’Amico
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Big Blow in a Little Town

Power lines were turned to spaghetti all over town in the recent “Bomb Cyclone”, where air pressure dropped very sharply in a very short time in the middle of the night. Roads were blocked. Schools closed. Many residents lost power for three to four days. Still people looked after each other and the town emergency workers and government worked hard to look after us all. It takes a village, especially in a storm.

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