Calendar of Events

June 5  Friday
2-4 and 7-8 p.m.  Voter registration before the Annual Town Meeting outdoors on the ramp at Whitney Hall.
3:12 p.m.  Full Strawberry Moon

June 12  Friday
2-4 and 7-8 p.m.  Voter registration before the Annual town election outdoors on the ramp at Whitney Hall.

June 14  Sunday  Flag Day

June 16  Saturday
5:44 p.m.  Summer Solstice - First Day of Summer, and this year, the day with the longest duration of sunlight, potentially 15 hours and 18 minutes; daylight begins to decrease tomorrow, as we head to the Autumnal Equinox.

June 20  Saturday
2:41 a.m.  New Buck Moon

June 22  Monday  Annual Town Elections
Both precincts 1 and 2 vote at Town Hall. Early voting encouraged. Applications for early and absentee ballots are on the town website.

June 24  Wednesday  Midsummer’s Night
We can still dream, but there will be no Royalston Shakespeare Co. theater workshops for kids this year. If you’d still like some Shakespeare in your life, a group with a similar name as ours “The Royal Shakespeare Company” is streaming a new play every fortnight filmed at the Globe Theater. Right now, A Midsummer Night’s Dream (a required part of the 8th grade ELA curriculum in the ARRSD) is available. For the link, search Globe Theater. What fools these mortals be.

Shakespeare knew about plague and social distancing. In the year he was born, an outbreak began. Spikes reoccurred throughout his life, with a survival rate of just over 50 percent. His only son Hamnet died of the pestilence. Shakespeare has no heirs. In 1603, 30,000 out of a population of 200,000 London residents died. Theaters were shuttered, and Shakespeare went back to Stratford upon Avon, his picturesque small home town. There, while sheltering with his family, he wrote King Lear, a play famous for its crazed central character, stuck too long with his daughters in his cramped castle. Lear laments, about “...plagues that hang in this pendulous air”. In Romeo and Juliette, when Mercutio curses, “A plague upon both your houses,” it wasn’t a metaphor.

June 26  Friday  time and place TBA  Annual Town Meeting, check the town website and Facebook page for details. With the loss of income caused by the Covid-19 shutdown, budgets will be tight. Town meeting is registered voters big chance to have input in how our tax money is spent locally.

Wildlife Sightings

What’s in your back-yard? Let us know at the Royalston Community Newsletter.

BEARS! Mid-May, Sonja Vaccari caught a bear enjoying a meal of bird food and Roland Hamel observed a bear wandering around his property.

The MA Environmental Police and their Large Animal Rescue Team note, “Feeding can cause bears to lose their fear of people, which can result in the bear being euthanized.” They recommend the following to keep bears away from humans: Remove all food sources from your yard. Do not feed pets outside. Do not use an open compost pile. Keep grills clean. Secure all trash.

Support the Country Store
The Royalston Country Store, while closed for dining in, is still serving delicious, bargain-priced breakfast, lunch, and dinner specials from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Check their Facebook page for specials. Orders should be called in at 978-249-9798, and it will be ready for pick up when you arrive. Please observe social distancing when picking up your meals. Our continuing support is necessary for this new owner to make it in Royalston!

Neighbors Supporting Neighbors
A group of Town residents is providing support to Royalston people who may be quarantined or self-quarantined in the next few months. If you want to be part of this effort or you would like assistance, call Carla Rabinowitz at 978-249-4422, or email at Royalstonladiesb@outlook.com.
Select Board Notes
Christine Long, clerk, Royalston Select Board

Annual Town Meeting: The Select Board has voted to convene the annual town meeting on Friday, June 26 at a place to be announced, but may shift to a Saturday date. Possible locations include the Royalston Community School, a rented tent on the town Common, or the outdoor pavilion at the Royalston Fish & Game Club. Check the town website or Facebook page for the decisions on date, time and venue.

The state is allowing town meetings to go forward, but some people, including some town officials, are understandably nervous about attending. If you plan to come, please adhere to the by-now familiar guidelines: wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing will be required of all in attendance.

Why is the board pushing ahead with the meeting? Because the alternative is to submit a very onerous 1/12 budget for July only to the state Department of Revenue. Such a budget must account for any loan or lease payments due then, any contracts that demand an upfront payment, and enough to cover essential town and school expenses.

By contrast, holding the meeting in June allows voters to authorize the multi-year payments – for the Wastewater Treatment Plant and police, fire and DPW vehicles – as well as a bare-bones operating budget for FY21 and one or two Community Preservation projects.

Town Financial Picture: It’s bleak, but we’ll survive FY21. Those multi-year payments add up to almost $70K and will clean out our Capital Stabilization Fund entirely plus most of our remaining free cash.

The snow-and-ice deficit will take a $50,000 bite out of our Stabilization Fund, and the operating budget will take another $10,000-15,000, leaving our key emergency fund with less than $100,000.

The Select Board had already pared the operating budget, rejecting most department requests for increases, and on May 22 cut all funding for temporary summer help at the DPW. The exceptions to level-funded budgets include the Board of Assessors, which is preparing for temporary summer help at the DPW. The exceptions to level-funded budgets include the Board of Assessors, which is preparing for temporary summer help at the DPW.

The ARRSD assessment is also an exception. The district’s interim budget was crafted to allow Athol a level-funded assessment, but because of the calculation of the split, Royalston’s will still go up about $30,000, or seven percent.

Proposals NOT being funded include the entire carefully crafted $45,000 capital plan, all raises for employees, and an increase from seven to eight hours for each day’s police patrol.

Revised Financial Picture? The spending plan outlined above assumes level-funded state aid. If in the coming months that picture becomes rosier, we can revisit the budget in another town meeting. But two cautionary notes: The state may in fact decrease its aid and that “interim” school budget could increase, meaning a bigger assessment for Royalston.

Everyone is pleased that the Covid situation in Massachusetts seems to be improving and that the state is beginning a cautious return to open. The Select Board urges all residents to adhere to state guidelines, maintain civility in all public dealings – and hope that both the state and local financial outlook improves in sync.

Town Clerk Notes, Barbara Richardson

The Annual Town Election is going to be June 22, 2020. Pending the vote of the selectboard, the polling places will be combined to one venue: the Town Hall. Hours of the election will be 12-7. Social distancing will be enforced. However, to avoid as much contact as possible, we would like people to vote by mail, applications for absentee/early voting ballots are on the town website.

Last day to register to vote for this election will be June 12, 2020, and a voter registration session will be held at Whitney Hall (outdoors on the ramp) from 2-4 and 7-8 p.m.

I have also posted the last day to vote at the Annual Town Meeting for June 5, 2020, a voter registration session will be held at Whitney Hall (outdoors on the ramp) from 2-4 and 7-8 p.m.

For all the good citizens who have sent in their dog license applications YOUR LICENSES ARE COMING! I promise!

Still looking for returns of street listings.

Royalston South Village Revitalization News

The Gazebo Sub-committee thanks Tim Wright who arranged for the donated services of Monty Tech students to create the metal post holders whenever that school reopens. This donation will save the project quite a bit of money.

There are plans that indicate the location of the pipes under Park Circle – these will be used by the Sub-committee to determine the placement of the gazebo. Sub-committee Chair Linda Alger and member Marlene Jarvenpaa are working with Tom Musco on plans for the gazebo and the coordinator of the volunteer carpenter crew is Roland Hamel.

One of the RSVR Committee’s concerns for the village is Whitney Hall. As we take this time to keep close to home and community, it is a good time to reflect on that iconic building. Maybe some of you would consider joining us in future discussions to start a serious dialogue about Whitney Hall.

We would like to thank the Community Garden Sub-committee Chair Rick Martin and member Kelly Dolan for their work on organizing the garden. Please contact them via the Country Store if you are interested in a plot.

Thank you to Jessica Spring, Social Media Sub-committee Chair, who designs and manages the RSVR Facebook page…please visit us at https://www.facebook.com/Welcome-to-the-Village-of-South-Royalston-109177197269651/?modal=admin_todo_tour A great place to see some beautiful photos of the riverside!

Visiting the Royalston Country Store Facebook page is a good way to keep up with take-out meals and new products. We admire the persistence of owners Heather Golding and Rob Sylvester in adapting to these challenging times.

The Royalston South Village Revitalization (RSVR) Committee is a group of residents from all parts of Royalston whose aim is to make the South Village a vibrant gathering place for the whole town to enjoy while building community and having fun in the process.

We are applying for a grant for planning assistance to develop consensus of how the town wants to develop the South Village. Meanwhile, it has various sub-committees to work on River Access, a Gazebo, and helping the town Building Committee in exploring ways to re-purpose Whitney Hall. For more information, reach Nancy Monette at 978-249-3694 or mimimonette@aol.com.

The RSVR Steering Committee: Janice Trask (Chair), Nancy Monette (Vice Chair), Ruth Suyenaga (Secretary), Rose Lawrence (Treasurer), Linda Alger, Marlene Jarvenpaa, Todd Neale, Marie Mello, Mark Shoul, and Alice Leonard
**Royalston Emergency Management**

**Director Jim Barclay**

e-mail ema@royalston-ma.gov or phone 978-249-2904

The Town of Royalston continues to receive all of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and associated supplies being requested through the MA Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). Most recently, mid-May, EMD Jim Barclay picked up extra gloves and sanitizing wipes, which were redistributed to the P.S. Newton Library, along with some of the previously-obtained hand sanitizer, to facilitate the Library’s limited re-opening; patrons can now call ahead for curbside pick-up of library materials. Also received were multi-use, antimicrobial fabric masks for non-medical personnel.

June 2 marks two weeks into Phase 1 of Massachusetts’ “Reopening plan,” which, for individuals, is pretty much unchanged from earlier guidelines. Changes involve loosening business restrictions while carefully and deliberately balancing the economic benefits of relaxing restrictions versus the risks to public health from increasing person-to-person contact. While the progression may appear painfully slow, especially if you’re suffering loss of income, or have been pushed to your limits by confinement or teaching in a one-room schoolhouse, this snail’s pace is absolutely necessary to ensure there is health care available for all who need it.

Oddly enough, preventing COVID-19 is not the primary goal of these restrictions. As of yet, there is no way to prevent COVID-19, so the goal is controlling the numbers of people who are infected and requiring medical care at any given time. The reality is, with as much as a two-week incubation period, a perfectly healthy-feeling person could be infected and spreading this novel Coronavirus far and wide, and not even realize it. If enough people are infected and suffer some of the devastating symptoms that require intensive medical care, it is possible – even likely – there will not be enough resources to ensure all patients receive the care they need to survive.

With any luck, come June 9, there will be no major increase – no “spike” – in the number of people requiring hospitalization with serious COVID-19 symptoms, and further loosening of restrictions will continue. The very best thing every Royalston resident can do to ensure this outcome is to continue observing the guidance from the CDC, which includes covering your face, washing your hands frequently throughout the day with soap and water, social distancing, watching for any symptoms, and isolating yourself if you feel ill or have even the slightest symptoms.

Face coverings seem to be an issue for some – please remember that your mask or scarf does not protect you, it protects others. By not wearing a face covering, you haven’t substantially increased your risk, but you put others at a substantially greater risk. Please be kind and considerate of others who may suffer serious medical consequences – or maybe even die – if they contract COVID-19, and wear a face covering whenever you’re in the vicinity of others, and even when wearing face coverings, stay at least six feet from others whenever possible.

Also remember FIRST-HAND FACTS are the only facts... For medical info, go to www.cdc.gov; for Massachusetts-specific details (statistics, directives/advisories, unemployment/small business assistance) go to www.mass.gov; for free, non-emergency COVID-19 screening, visit www.Buoy.com/mass; for urgent questions regarding COVID-19, dial 2-1-1; for regional information, Heywood Healthcare (serves Athol Memorial and Heywood Hospitals, Tully Walk-In and Heywood Urgent Care Centers, and the Quabbin Retreat mental health and substance misuse treatment center) CEO Win Brown provides twice-daily YouTube updates roughly at noon and 6 p.m. If you’re willing and able to help neighbors, or need help with groceries, pharmacy pick-ups, etc., let the Ladies’ Benevolent Society know – they’re pairing helpers with those who need help – e-mail RoyalstonLadiesB@outlook.com or call President Laurie at 978-249-5807.

*Preparedness beats panic every time. Be informed. Make a Plan.*

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**Board of Health News**

**Phil Leger, chair person**

As we enter Phase 1 of MA reopening plan, folks are eager to get back to work and play. We must realize that the other reopening phases are dependent on how things go with the preceding phases. Hospital admissions and ICU census will drive the process. It takes 5-6 weeks for a second wave to appear, just in time for July 4th.

So what can one do? Social distancing, facemasks inside when shopping, wash hands, stay home if sick, etc. all the things we have been doing.

It’s unfortunate with current national leadership that some folks have made the pandemic response political. Some of us in public health are getting some serious pushback in some of our communities. This is hard on everyone but to take it out on your overworked, overwhelmed, public health workers is just plain wrong.

It’s the few that make it hard on those that are doing the right thing. Luckily, we have had excellent cooperation from town residents. All we can do is one day at a time and be safe.

That being said, trash bag sticker fees and annual windshield sticker fees are scheduled to increase July 1st. Last chance to get $2.50 stickers until then.

Black flies will be gone soon, just in time for mosquito season. Ticks are busy too. Take precautions. No black flies yet, but the ticks are out. Check yourselves and pets when coming in from outside.

**Grab and Go Lunches for Seniors**

The Council on Aging, along with LifePath, is offering the nutritious meals as a “grab and go” (to be re-heated later) to people who want to drive to the Town Hall, receive their meal, and drive away, keeping a safe distance. This service will be every Wednesday from 11:00 AM to Noon. On the third Wednesday of the month is still a pick-up for Brown Bag. For weekly meal or any questions, call Betty Woodbury by Monday 5 PM at 978-249-9656.

**Royalston Cemetery Commission**

Just a friendly reminder regarding cemetery plantings: Decorative planters and in-ground plantings is limited to an area of one foot directly in front of a monument, and no permanent plantings of shrubbery are allowed without prior permission of the Cemetery Commission; no trees may be planted. The Cemetery Commission reserves the right to remove any adornments on graves deemed inappropriate, or which might pose a hazard to visitors or groundskeepers. Questions may be directed to Commissioners Roy A. Smith, Jr, (Chair), Roland G. Hamel, or Sherry A. Miner. Messages may be left at 978-249-4587.

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Phinehas S. Newton Library News
Kathy Morris, Library Director
Trustees: Jeffrey Mangum, Jennifer Basso, Theresa Quinn
Pick up times Mondays: 3:00pm-5:00pm. Thursdays 1:00pm - 3:00pm Saturdays:10:00 am - 12 noon
978-249-3572  www.royalstonlibrary.org

Thank you
Jim Barclay, Emergency Management Director, and Keith Newton, Fire Chief and DPW Supervisor, for PPE supplies for the library and Gary Winitzer for disposable gloves

Donations to the Friends:
Kathleen Pirro
Richard and Rose Lawrence
Priscilla Kelley

Gordon Morrison
Mary Carnie
Deane Marchbein
Nancy Melbourne

More News of the Library World
Kathy Morris
I think I have read more reports and memos and guidelines and recommendations than at any other time in my life. And I feel like I’m back in the lab again; gloved and masked up, cleansing areas, and practicing sterile techniques. The only thing missing is the reverse flow hood, the culture flasks, and putting cells into incubators. Okay on second thought, that’s a lot different than putting books and movies into paper bags. But the two have the same common goal: not to come in contact with infectious agents, no matter how small the odds. And now that a member of our extended family has succumbed to the disease, it feels personal.

We are becoming accustomed to communicating via virtual means and I, like the rest of you, would like that to come to an end and maybe by hunkering down now, we can get there, eventually. But there is some light at the end of the tunnel. Read on.

Step-side and Picnic Table Pick Up Has Started
At the Library Trustee meeting the board decided to go ahead with Curbside Pickup once we received approval from the Select Board and the Board of Health. We were not alone and some libraries had already begun and others planned to begin on the magical date of May 18. The Boards approved our proposal and guidelines. We put the word out on Facebook and the website and on the sign board out front. Fifteen people took advantage for the first day. Of course, half way through the day, the Governor gave the go ahead for libraries to begin pickups on May 25 so we cancelled the rest of the week’s pickups. It was a good dry run and I want to thank those who picked up their items for the friendly waves and knocks on the door.

If you would like to order materials, you must either call the library and leave a message (978-249-3572) or email the library (royalstonlibrary@gmail.com). Don’t forget to leave your name and phone number or email if you call.
Give us a list of the materials you would like and then we will contact you when the materials are ready. Currently our plan is to have three pick-up days: Mondays from 3:00-5:00, Thursdays from 1:00-3:00, and Saturdays from 10:00-noon. These times may change as we learn if they are convenient. We assign a time for you to arrive and your materials will be outside in a paper bag or envelope labelled with your name and handling instructions. If it’s raining the items will be at the top of the steps. If someone else is picking up materials, you should wait until they have left the area before proceeding to pick up your items. All returned items should be put into the drop box.

For now, you can only order materials that are in our Library. To find out what we have available, you can browse the new materials list in the newsletters, all are archived on the website, or you can search the catalog at http://royalstonlibrary.masscat.org. Holds are not being processed now, so you need to email or phone in the titles you would like.

Currently, we are issuing new library cards via phone or email for online resources only, but if you would like to check out materials from the library, contact us and we will tell you how to verify your information so that we can issue you a card for all materials.

And don’t forget if you have questions or need help accessing online resources, you can contact us and we’ll try to help or find someone who can.

And looking to the future. We are in the planning stages for a gradual resumption of services on a restricted basis as part of the Library Phase 2 Guidelines and Recommendations. What the library will look like and how we will deliver services without jeopardizing patron and staff health and safety are all in the beginning phases of development. So for now, enjoy the ability to be able to get some books and magazine to read, some movies to watch, and some audiobooks and music CDs to listen to. And knock on the window and wave, BUT DO NOT ENTER, yet.
Free Bags of Children’s Books to Keep
During the pickup times we will be placing bags of children’s books (initially) on the picnic table for people to take. Each bag will contain a selection of books and the topics or categories in the bag will be listed on the outside. We ask that you not open or touch the bags or items in the bags but just take a bag. Sort of grab-and-go. If you don’t want the books, just put them in the drop box. But these are for you to keep. They all have the barcodes crossed out so you will know they have been withdrawn from the collection. And if you would like to ask for a collection of free books, let us know the topics and as they are available we will notify you that your bag is ready.

Some of the new materials at your library

**Adult Fiction**
- Andrews, Mary Kay *Hello, Summer*
- Baldacci, David *Walk the Wire*
- Beah, Ishmael *Little Family*
- Brown, Janelle *Pretty Things*
- Cussler, Clive *Journey of the Pharaohs*
- De los Santos, Marisa *I’d Give Anything*
- Deaver, Jeffrey *The Goodbye Man*
- Dinan, Nancy *Things You Would Know if You Grew up Around Here*
- Engel, Amy *The Familiar Dark*
- Ford, Richard *Sorry for Your Trouble*
- Godwin, Gail *Old Lovegood Girls*
- Grisham, John *Camino Winds*
- Hao, Jingfang *Vagabonds*
- Haratischwili, Nino *The Eighth Life (for Brilka)*
- Kidd, Sue Monk *The Book of Longings*
- King, Stephen *If It Bleeds*
- Lupica, Mike *Robert B. Parker’s Grudge Match*
- Morrey, Beth *The Love Story of Missy Carmichael*
- Paretsky, Sara *Dead Land*
- Patterson, James *The 20th Victim*
- Phillips, Scott *That Left Turn at Albuquerque*
- Reid, Kelly *Such a Fun Age*
- Sandford, John *Masked Prey*
- Straub, Emma *All Adults Here*
- Thomas, Elisabeth *Catherine House*
- Turow, Scott *The Last Trial*
- Weiner, Jennifer *Big Summer*
- Weir, Alison *Kathryn Howard, the Scandalous Queen*
- Wingate, Lisa *The Book of Lost Friends*
- Winslow, Don *Broken*
- Wright, Lawrence *The End of October*

**Adult Non-Fiction**
- Klein, Ezra *Why We’re Polarized*
- Safina, Carl *Becoming Wild*
- Sibley, David *What It’s Like to be a Bird*

**DVDs:** *Bad Boys for Life*, *Dolittle (DVD & Bluray)*, *The Gentlemen*, *Just Mercy, Like a Boss*, *Looking for Alaska*, *Masterpiece Mystery! Baptiste*, *Bad Boys for Life*, *PBS Kids: 15 Pet-tastic Tails!*, *Swift, Uncut Gems*

**Children’s Fiction**
- Applegate, Katherine *The One and Only Bob*
- Burleigh, Robert *Tiny Birds*
- Carter, Ally *Winterborne Home for Vengeance and Valor*
- Castillo, Lauren *Our Friend Hedgehog*
- Colbert, Brandy *The Only Black Girls in Town*
- Dahl, Sophie *Madame Badobedah*
- David, Gauthier *Letters from Bear*
- Del Rizzo, Suzanne *Golden Threads*
- Ferry, Beth *Swashby and the Sea*
- Grimes, Nikki *Southwest Sunrise*
- Haughton, Chris *Don’t Worry, Little Crab*
- Henkes, Kevin *Summer Song*
- Hernandez, Carlos *Sal and Gabi Fix the Universe*
- Howe, James *Houndsley and Catina at the Library*
- Joy, Angela *Black is a Rainbow Color*
- Kapit, Sarah *Get a Grip, Vivy Cohen*
- Kelly, Erin *We Dream of Space*
- Kirst, Seamus *Papa, Daddy, and Riley*
- Kostechi-Shaw, J. *Papa Brings me the World*
- Le, Minh *Lift*
- MacLachlan, Patricia *My Friend Earth*
- Mann, Jennifer *The Camping Trip*
- Nilsson, Ulf *All the Dear Little Animals*
- Park, Linda Sue *Prairie Lotus*
- Piper, Watty *The Little Engine that Could*
- Pippins, Andrea *Who Will You Be?*
- Rex, Adam *Unstoppable*
- Rhodes, Jewell *Black Brother, Black Brother*
- Sheffield, Heidi *Brick by Brick*
- Soosh *Mermaid and Me*
- Stone, Nic *Shuri: A Black Panther Novel*

**Children’s Nonfiction**
- Gianferrari, Maria *Play Like an Animal*
- Messner, Kate *The Next President*
- Yang, Gene *Dragon Hoops*

**Summer Reading Program**
We are pretty sure that summer reading programs are going to be very different this year. We had already made plans for several exciting programs that unfortunately can’t happen now. But don’t despair. Things can change. Our current planning is to have a similar grab-and-go crafts that you can take each week and do them at home or at a safe distance on the lawn with your family. We may also schedule a few zoom workshops to help you create the craft you have picked up that week but each project will come with complete instructions so that you can complete it without help. Due to the lack of internet or poor internet quality in areas of town, we have decided not to do any virtual programs specific for our library. Next month we’ll have more details.
That 1970s Project
Tom Musco

The Friends of Library and Historical Society are planning a project to document the history of the people who moved to Royalston in the 1970s. This was a time when interest in seeking a simpler life connected to nature was high, especially among the young. Royalston was “discovered” by many of this generation. Their arrival, like that of so many groups before them, helped to shape the culture of our town. Some left after a few years, but the majority still call Royalston home.

The project, as yet unnamed, will collect the stories of the people who moved here in the 1970s. They will be invited to write or record their stories to become part of the Town’s historical record. If you fall into that category, we hope you’ll be willing to answer some questions like: Why did you decide to move to Royalston when you did? What has kept you here? If you were already here... what was the reaction to the back-to-the-landers?

For more information about the project please contact Tom Musco (978-249-9633/ tgmusco@gmail.com) or Phil Rabinowitz (978-249-4422/ prabinow45@gmail.com).

Recipe of the Month: Strawberry Rhubarb Syrup

This month’s recipe is a creative spin on rhubarb by Jessica (Putney) Schanz, who “wanted something strawberry-rhubarb, and was making waffles,” so she created a strawberry-rhubarb maple syrup for her waffles. She later had an “ahhhHAH moment,” and discovered that when added to gin, with a spritz of soda water, the combo made for a spectacular spring spin on gin and tonic.

Jess, who serves as the office manager for the Village School, was Royalston raised, toured seven years in Germany with the U.S. Army, and returned to Royalston for keeps in 2014. She and her husband, Erich, recently finished building their home on the property where the generations-old Putney Sugarhouse sits. Jess and Erich have a two-year-old son, Gunnar, who is a big fan of Mom’s waffles with strawberry-rhubarb-maple syrup.

Strawberry-Rhubarb-Maple Syrup

To a heavy bottomed sauce pan, add:
½ cup finely chopped strawberries
1 cup finely chopped rhubarb
1-2 ounces of pure maple syrup

Heat slowly to the boiling point, stirring frequently, then reduce to a simmer. Simmer, covered, until fruits are fully cooked and, the maple syrup is infused with the flavor. The pulp can be mashed or blended and used with the syrup, or strained out. The finished product can be stored in the fridge, and is good for waffles, pancakes, ice cream, lemonade, and yes, in gin.

Congratulations and Good News

Felicitations on your Graduations! Your town salutes you and is proud. Your hard work is showing.

College Graduates

Abigail Divoll’s family is proud to announce that she has recently graduated Summa Cum Laude from Franklin Pierce University. Abigail Majored in accounting and minored in criminal justice and has just accepted an accounting job at C & S Grocers in Keene. Her parents are Becky Divoll and Randy Divoll.

Mount Wachusett Community College

Associates Degrees: Theo H Belmont, Tyler Boyd, Shelby Bronnes, Isabella Cooke, Destiny Parenteau, Melissa Persson, Kimberly A Watts

Certificates:

Michael G Rudy

Fitchburg State University

Loryn Killay BS
Paul Thibideau MS

MWCC and AHS at the same time

Bella Nardone Cooke is graduating from Athol High School and from the Pathways Program (a form of dual enrollment) at Mount Wachusett Community College. She has earned her associates degree in Interdisciplinary Studies while completing requirements for high school. Bella’s parents are Cynthia and Jeff Cooke.
Athol High School Class of 2020

Athol High School’s commencement, originally planned for June 6, has been rescheduled for late summer. In addition to the seniors listed here, big shout outs to Scott Barakat, Joshua Thompson, and Matthew Whihite. Watch for more details about these graduates next issue. Any graduates who would like to share their accomplishments, please send the information to chasemos2@gmail.com

Jaden Morin hopes to either join the Army or go to school for History. He is a huge WWII fan and hopes to share his love for it with others. Jaden is the son of Stephanie and Michael Waslaske.

Zachery Aldrich is attending Curry College in the fall as a nursing major, aware that he is marching into the middle of a pandemic. Zach’s parents are Jennifer and Joshua Aldrich.

Krystal McCully will be attending Norwich University in the fall semester to study criminal justice. Krystal’s parents are Tracy and Paul McCully.

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Royalston’s Monty Tech 2020 Graduates

Sadie Wright earned her high school diploma and Certificate of Occupational Proficiency in Cabinet Making from Monty Tech. She was employed by Glenwood Kitchens in Templeton as a co-op student during her junior and senior years, and an active, four-year member and President of the MT SkillsUSA Chapter. She studied a variety of dance styles for 15 years, including ballet, pointe, lyrical, tap, jazz, hip-hop, and acrobatics. She is a regular volunteer for her church’s preschool, and helped with last year’s Special Olympics. She is considering acceptances to Mount Wachusett, Fitchburg State, Franklin Pierce, Dean College, and Bridgewater State, and will study either Athletic Training or Exercise Sciences. Sadie is the daughter of Tim and Tracie Wright.

Ashley Hadmack earned her high school diploma and Certificate of Occupational Proficiency in Culinary Arts from Monty Tech. She competed in SkillsUSA during her junior and senior years, placing as a District Qualifier in Restaurant Services during her junior year, and earned a silver medal in that category during her senior year. She will attend Quinsigamond Community College in the fall for an Associate’s Degree in Hospitality and Recreation Management. Ashley is the daughter of Rebecca and Keith Hadmack.

Michael Janowicz earned his high school diploma and Certificate of Occupational Proficiency in House Carpentry from Monty Tech. He participated in SkillsUSA during his freshman year, and was employed in his trade as a co-op student during his junior and senior years. Michael will be entering the construction industry after graduation. He is the son of Jennifer and Michael Janowicz.
ARRSD Needs Your Voice in the U.S. Census

Dr. Cynthia Kennedy
Principal of Royalston Community School and ARRSD Title 1 Director

In these uncertain times, when too much seems beyond our everyday control, there are some things we can do to ensure our voices are heard and our community is counted. One very important step all citizens must take is completing the U.S. Census. The Athol-Royalston Regional School District (ARRSD), like other entities that depend on municipal, state, and federal funding, awaits fiscal determinations to know what our working budget will be. One such source is federal grant funding, such as Title 1. Title 1 is a vital part of the ARRSD budget as it allows us to provide intervention teachers, resources, and services for students who have learning gaps due to socio-economic factors. Not only does this provide extra help to kids who need it, it allows for every student in our district to receive more individualized instruction because we have additional well-trained staff to attend to all learning needs in our schools.

The U.S. Census website states completing the census is not only your duty as a citizen, but this data determines the amount of funding your city or town receives, how your community budgets for the future, and your representation in government. Some of the specific impacts are to:

Ensure public services and funding for schools, hospitals, and fire departments.
Plan new homes and businesses and improve neighborhoods.
Determine how many seats your state is allocated in the House of Representatives.

For the 2019-2020 school year, ARRSD received a little over $540,000 in Title 1 funding. In the upcoming year, the district may be looking at a significant reduction in these funds and so, it is crucial for every citizen in Athol and Royalston to complete the Census. Even if you do not have children in the school system, this affects you as school systems are paid for through taxpayer dollars.

Please take a few moments, (and truly, that is all it takes), to complete the U.S. Census at https://2020census.gov. Thank you for your support!

ed. note: Royalston is below average. Late May update from the U.S. Census: Royalston is at 51.7 % self response rate, Massachusetts 61.7% and national average is 59.6%! Keep mailing in or completing responses on-line. Schools, library, public health and safety, and arts funding are all affected by the results.

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

Monty Tech graduation ceremony planning is under way for July 29, 2020, at 6 p.m. on tm-barclay@montytech.netethe football field. The decision was based on responses by students and their families, who overwhelmingly voted for a belated ceremony in a socially-distanced version of a traditional graduation. According to the Superintendent-Director, Dr. Sheila M. Harrity, the planning will continue through the summer, and, “...we will make necessary adjustments as the [Governor’s distancing] policies change over the next few months.”

Monty Tech’s three seniors, by the date this comes out, will have gone to Monty Tech one last time as students, cleaned out their lockers and turned in any school property, graduated, and have been recognized by our community. The graduates were provided with a free yearbook, thanks to Monty Tech staff who completed production, set up a BidPal site for donations, and in less than five days, received enough $40 donations to provide each senior with a yearbook. Thanks, also, to Monty Tech staff for the yard signs placed at each senior’s home.

Families of Monty Tech students are reminded that the guidance department is working with students known to be struggling with not only academics and distance learning, but with Pandemic-associated social issues, co-op job losses, food insecurity, and grief. If your Monty Tech student needs some help with any of these (or other) issues, please do not hesitate to contact the guidance department for advice and assistance.

Regarding school finances, until the Commonwealth can provide firm budgeting figures, Monty Tech will be following DESE’s (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) guidelines on the “Interim 1/12th Budget Process,” which allows for the continuation of school services and payments while the Commonwealth grapples with the novel Coronavirus pandemic. Business Manager Tammy Crockett, working with other school business managers, has negotiated reduced contracts with the School’s four bus companies, which includes Merrifield’s in Athol, resulting in an approximate $75,000 in savings.

During the May 5, 2020 virtual SchoolCom meeting, Dr. Harrity continued to provide endless instances of the enthusiastic “can-do” attitude exhibited by her administrative team, faculty, staff, and other employees throughout the organization. “I could not be prouder... they have not skipped a beat.... all decisions have been made considering what’s best for the students.” She further applauded the Teacher’s Union for “working in lock-step” with administration, doing whatever was needed to help the students be as productive as possible. “This has been a seven-day-a-week effort,” asserted Dr. Harrity, whose remarks were generously peppered with examples of unequalled commitment, tireless work, extremely creative options, flexible attitudes, resource sharing, interactive approaches... Monty Tech earns an A in pivoting from SY2020-2021 to full Pandemic Mode Teaching in one week’s time!
What’s Happening at the Village School?
Rise Richardson, director

Due to the coronavirus shutdown, the annual Saturday Morning on Royalston Common hosted by the Village School, scheduled for May 30th this year, was cancelled. We thank everyone who helped in the past and we hope to host it again next year, bigger than ever.

Teachers visited children at home (outside, with proper social distance), to connect with them. All classes have weekly Zoom meetings. The 5th-6th graders have daily Zoom math and language arts meetings. 1st-4th graders get weekly or daily work assignments. It has been an adjustment, and both the teachers and students have risen to the occasion. As per the recommendation of the Mass. Department of Education, children are spending no more than half day learning at home. The rest of the day- the Village School recommends that children go play outside and explore nature. What a great time of year to do that!

The Village School website, under Curriculum, has recordings of Rise’s Story of the Week and the All School Sing seasonal songs, for anyone to enjoy.

Summer Programs? For children ages 3-10. More info at https://www.villageschoolma.org/programs/summer/ We are still waiting to get explicit directions from the state about how to open. As soon as it’s clear, we will announce summer programs, starting in late June and going into July. Email Rise at rise@villageschoolma.org if you are interested.

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.

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: cobbsuzanne4@yahoo.com.

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

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

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

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

for sale:


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.


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

Fresh Eggs: $3/dozen in the cooler in the driveway of 185 North Fitzwilliam Road. Contact Brenda Putney at 978-249-7787 to order ahead.

Jarvenpaa Farm Eggs. $3.00/dozen. 17 River Rd, So. Royalston. Come by anytime. Cooler at the bottom of the driveway next to road.


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

Garden Notes
May 22, 2020

The garden progresses at a pace as sluggish as that of a resolution to you-know-what. But, as soon as the weather behaves a bit more, the garden will respond accordingly and I cannot make that claim for a resolution to you-know-what. What weather? Wind. Still. March winds will blow. In March. In April. In May. There was a ten-day stretch in early May when the calendar notations for eight of them reported ‘windy’ (or ‘very windy’). Three sub-freezing temperatures during the same period, including a record low on the morning of the thirteenth. The peach blossoms had just begun to open but it is too early to determine whether they were damaged. If tiny fruits begin developing at the base of the flowers, they were not. If tiny fruits do not begin developing at the base of the flowers, they were. At any rate, we’re currently in an extended stretch that can only be described as summer-like. Somehow, we missed spring.

The garden has required little time and little effort thus far. Its requirements are about to change dramatically. From the beginning to the middle of June, I will direct seed eight different crops and transplant eleven more. It's a bit of a juggling act, transplants preferring a period of overcast skies to assist in establishing themselves and each type of seed requiring a different optimal soil temperature in order to germinate. I would be eternally grateful if this was undertaken as an effective barrier. Cucumbers are spared the cucumber beetle. I repeat, not white spunbonded polypropylene. But. They do serve shades of green and flowers reflecting a full spectrum of color. Not, my sense of the aesthetic. I want to look out at plants of all different types. And they are susceptible to snags and rips and such, discount their value as row covers. The principal reason, however, for the perishable stuff, the cukes and summer squash and beans of the corn (we've never grown it for market), or the root crops and tomatoes and such, will be reduced dramatically, pretty much growing only to satisfy our personal needs. I will not cut back on the brassicas (we never seem to have enough), much growing only to satisfy our personal needs. I will not be participate this year. After years of mumbling about cutting back on my garden activities, I have been provided with a golden opportunity. The perishable stuff, the cukes and summer squash and beans and tomatoes and such, will be reduced dramatically, pretty much growing only to satisfy our personal needs. I will not cut back on the brassicas (we never seem to have enough), the corn (we’ve never grown it for market), or the root crops (a well-stocked winter root cellar is money in the bank).

I continue my I-love-you-I hate-you affair with row covers. They are a devil to lay down and a devil to keep down (a section flutering in the breeze twenty-five feet up in a birch tree is testimony to that). And they are susceptible to snags and rips and such, discounting their value as row covers. The principal reason, however, for the I-hate-you side of the affair is the jarring effect their presence has on me. I would be eternally grateful if this was undertaken as summer-like. Somehow, we missed spring.

Last call for getting a garden started. Anything. A couple of tomato plants. A row of beans. A wee bit of earth which can serve as a refuge. Need I tell you from what?

Larry Siegel

Sylvia and Company

We have begun to name our hummingbirds.

Tom and I see this as an indication of how wisely we are using our otherwise-unoccupied time these days, rather than evidence of dangerously-advancing senility. With so much time spent at home, things around us that we thought we knew have suddenly become worthy of a closer look. The hummingbirds are a case in point.

For several summers we have encouraged hummingbirds to visit our yard, but this year we were even more eager for their return. Tom put out his collection of feeders at the end of April and filled them with sugar water – a carefully-researched concoction. He hung two feeders just outside our window, giving us a close-up view. So, as we sat at our dining table, we watched and waited.

The first one, a male, arrived in early May. A second male came a few days later. They visited the feeders from time to time, but mostly they kept watch from nearby trees.

Then the females arrived and things became interesting. Unlike their male counterparts, the females spent long moments perched at the feeders drinking their fill. With time on our hands, we watched closely. The closer we watched the more we saw each bird as an individual. We kept watching and personalities emerged. Why had we not noticed this before now? Might it be possible to distinguish one female from another? Before we realized it, we had set ourselves the task of telling them apart.

Our first candidate for individual recognition was long and slender. We watched her perch at the feeder and stretch her neck tall, checking out her surroundings before eating. We call her Sylvia because the name just fits. Another one, short and broad, is really feisty. One morning we watched her lift her left wing to swat at a bee without raising her head from the feeder. She is Rosie, named for another iconic feisty female. One bird with pale green feathers quivers from head to tail as she drinks - an excess of energy even for a hummingbird. She is Carmen, of course.

Although there are more, as yet unnamed, females, these three are our girls. When a bird arrives at the feeder we ask aloud, “Is that Sylvia?” and we watch carefully to find out. We like the idea that, out there in the hummingbird world, otherwise indistinguishable birds are in fact quite different. And that it’s possible that we can learn to tell them apart. A good use of our otherwise-unoccupied time!

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Media Review

*Read or watched anything good lately? Let us know at the RCN*

**The Beantown Girls**
*By Jane Healey; Published by Lake Union Publishing (February, 2019)*

Boston-born Fiona Denning provides a compelling, first-person account of her decision to serve, and the considerable service she and her close, Bostonian friends provide as WWII Red Cross Clubmobile Girls. The “girls” are bright, single women, college graduates older than 25 years, chosen specifically for their looks and social manner. They must be capable of meeting a number of physical challenges, and have the capacity to offer a respite to overseas military personnel. Early and strong character development allows the reader to be one of the Beantown Girls’ crew, and witness the emotions of the team dealing with concerns for front line personnel, and then be along for the ride as the girls themselves inadvertently end up on the front lines. The reader witnesses, along with the Beantown Girls, both the horrors of war, and the kindness of strangers. Author Healey seamlessly incorporates fictional elements of raw emotion, romance, drama, suspense, hope, and heartbreak into this brief slice of WWII history. The exceptional quality of writing, the Massachusetts references, and the historical perspective make *The Beantown Girls* a must-read.

*Mary C. Barclay*

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

**Poetry contest winner:**
*Michael Young*

*New Royalston Poet Laureate: the Friends shall be bringing some laurel to your doorstep shortly. Soak it in. Congrats!*

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Royalston Resident
Star Route 80
Royalston MA 01368

**Look around, Look around..**

Your neighbors are selling eggs, the store has bread and milk and take-out suppers, Rep. Susannah Whippens Lee is leaving free fruit on the Common for all, and Larry S may have vegetables for sale. The library continues to put out plants, come see the selection. Take some home and leave a donation. All of this is right in Town, meaning putting off the trip to the big store a bit longer... Social distancing at its best.

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**A LittleFreeLibrary on the South Village Common**

In addition to the Phinehas S. Newton’s May creation of a “on demand library” for insatiable readers, there’s also a great little stash of books, open 24/7, in an enclosed “library” in the Park in South Royalston. It’s part of the www.LittleFreeLibrary.org program, and features a decent array of books for all ages. The CDC’s guidance: “For paper products, we’re really not concerned, and you don’t have to worry about finding ways to disinfect those materials. The virus, if it’s present, would be present in very low quantities and would die off quickly. If you were really concerned, you could wait for a 24-hour period if in an area of high-transmission.”