### Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 3</td>
<td><strong>Transfer station open</strong> (but will be closed on Sat. July 4). Last bag 1:45 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 4</td>
<td><strong>Independence Day</strong> – 244th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Aphelion</strong> – Earth at its farthest point from the sun; approximately 94,507,635 miles apart.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Penumbral Eclipse of the Moon</strong> with just a bit of the Earth shading the moon from the sun. The moon – about 11 hours short of full – will be fully illuminated again by 1:56 a.m. Sunday morning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 5</td>
<td><strong>Full Buck Moon</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 6 - 20</td>
<td><strong>Self guided story walks</strong> around the Library begin. The story changes every 2 weeks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 8</td>
<td><strong>Fun Trap Shoot</strong> Royalston Fish &amp; Game Club, repeats Wednesday evenings throughout the summer. Check the Club Facebook page for current information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 20</td>
<td><strong>New Sturgeon Moon</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 11 - 14</td>
<td><strong>Perseid Meteor Shower</strong> . This is THE light show of the summer, and the waning moon lends the sky to spectacular star gazing. Remnants of the Swift-Tuttle Comet will be flaming, pretty much non-stop, from the northeastern skies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 18</td>
<td><strong>New Corn Moon</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>August 26</td>
<td><strong>Women’s Equality Day</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>August 27</td>
<td><strong>First Day of School</strong> for ARRSD Grades 1-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 31</td>
<td><strong>First Day of kindergarten and Pre-K in ARRSD.</strong> To register a child, pls. call 249-2400.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Wildlife Sightings

#### What’s in your backyard? Send it along to the RCN.

**Fawning over Fawns**

White tail fawns, born in late May, were “spotted” all over Royalston recently. Joy Cutter enjoyed observing a fawn born on the edge of her field and as it began to explore, a neighbor put up signage to slow traffic on Athol Richmond Rd. Separately, Jon Hardie snapped this photo of a mother and child. Beth Gospodarek also had a fawn repeatedly in her yard, sometimes hiding, one-time nursing, and sometimes playing. In the past, early summer fawns have curiously approached toddlers or pets in her yard while the mother coughed furiously from the tree lines.

Fun fawn facts: A one-year-old mother probably will produce one baby and older does will have twins or even triplets. Fawns are born with over 300 spots. This dappling, combined with a lack of scent, protects the fawn from predators. The mother will separate siblings and visit only for nursing and to move the fawns to new safe locations in the first several weeks. Social distancing helps a fawn survive.

The baby can out run many predators begining at 2 weeks. In summer, fawns hang out with their mothers frolicking and learning which vegetation is best (like new growth on trees or hostas). They are weaned in the fall and their winter coat comes in heavy without any spots.

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*The bird feeder was empty, but this Black Bear recently visited Joy and Ralph Cutter’s W. Royalston home just to make sure.*
Annual Town Meeting: Annual town meeting will have taken place between the deadline for this newsletter and its arrival in your mailbox. As we reported last month, our spending plan for Fiscal Year 2021 is lean indeed: Most departments are level-funded, our multi-year purchases are covered by cleaning out our Capital Stabilization Fund, and the only other spending proposal in the ATM warrant is $1,600 for half the cost of a once-every-four-years cleaning of the water tank in the south village. (The South Royalston Improvement Corp. pays the other half.)

One happy note at the ATM: We discovered that the Community Preservation Fund had more accumulated than we realized, and so the Community Preservation Committee was able to recommend three very worthy projects: a gazebo for the park in the South Village planned by the South Village Revitalization Group, a new roof for the Raymond Building that will look very similar to the current asbestos roof.

One very unhappy note at the ATM: NO new capital purchases or repairs. On the list of projects recommended by the Capital Plan Committee that are not funded: rebuilding the pump on the Fire Department’s Engine 3, creating the infrastructure for a second compactor at the transfer station, replacing the rotting sills under the Town Hall kitchen, buying an integrated fire alarm system for Town Hall and the elevator, replacing two sets of turnout gear for the Fire Department, and buying a commercial lawn mower for the DPW. All these came to a modest $48,000, but none of them will happen in FY21.

Reopening the Town? The Select Board is studying state-issued guidelines for the Phase 2 reopening of offices, but for the time being here in Royalston, meetings and public hearings will continue to be held remotely.

One of the stumbling blocks is the necessity of cleaning and disinfecting shared spaces like meeting rooms. Our town custodian currently works one day a week at Town Hall and one at Whitney; the Library has its own custodian. Both the Town and the Library need to consider how to meet the cleaning requirement. In addition, the DPW is researching plastic barriers for office counters, and these should be available soon.

The situation may change over the course of the summer; the board will likely issue another Covid-19 update if it does. We encourage those of you online to check our website or Facebook page for updates. The board also wants to thank the police department for hand-delivering these updates to almost every resident in town.

Elevator Update: When Town Hall does open more widely, the elevator is likely to be ready for use. The pandemic has slowed the progress of the final details, and in mid-May Kevin Flynn, our grant administrator, abruptly resigned, leaving important grant documentation incomplete. Town Accountant Lori Bolasavich stepped in to take over his work and has achieved a great deal in a short time.

Soon after Lori became town accountant, she got the free cash in order, something the prior two accountants had not managed. Thus, in just a few short years she has made two significant contributions to her former home town. Today she resides in a neighboring town, and the board and Royalston owe her tremendous gratitude.
Royalston Emergency Management

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

If we’ve learned nothing else over the past four months, it’s the value of “All-Hazards Preparedness,” the campaign the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) kicked off in July, 2010, providing guidance to help individuals, families, and businesses take care of themselves for the first 72 hours in any major event. While the concept was - is sound, SARS-CoV-2 proved that three days’ supplies are insufficient for a pandemic.

This Novel Coronavirus Pandemic, confirmed to be in the United States on January 20th, and in Massachusetts on February 1st, was killing residents by March 20th. On March 24th, Governor Baker announced a “Stay at Home Advisory,” ordering the closure of non-essential businesses, and severely restricting essential functions. Even residents prepared for FEMA’s all-hazards standard were caught off guard by shortages secondary to panic buying, followed by a limited ability to search for needed items, topped off by interruptions in the supply chains all across the U.S., which further complicated the quest for essential purchases.

In true Royalston fashion, residents stepped up and offered assistance by sharing their supplies and protecting at-risk residents by picking up and dropping off supplies so they didn’t need to leave their homes. A number of residents dusted off sewing machines and began turning out impressive quantities of face masks, using their own supplies, at their own expense, and donating the finished products to residents who needed them – along with co-workers, town employees, both Athol Memorial and Heywood Hospitals, as well as area long-term care facilities. Unique events like roadside signs for graduating seniors and birthday parades helped fill voids left by canceled ceremonies and parties.

“Pivoting” exploded as a buzzword, with school busses becoming the newest version of “Meals on Wheels,” bringing food and familiarity to families where loss of employment made school breakfasts and lunches even more vital. A pop-up free fruit stand intermittently appeared on The Common. Unemployed or under-employed residents, finally having time to read, couldn’t use the shuttered library, but it was Phinehas S. Newton Library to the rescue, with the Little Free Library in the South Royalston Park, and rapid creation of a socially distanced book and media pick-up program. Families had the rare opportunity to spend time together, but couldn’t use any of the traditional resources to enjoy that time – no school playgrounds, no Tully Recreation Area, no Bullock Park Pavilion, no travel out of the area – so they created home-grown campgrounds, playgrounds, drive-ins and movie theaters, and virtual play groups.

A drive around Royalston indicates residents are going to be “Pandemic Prepared,” in case of a COVID-19 “echo spike,” which is a very real possibility as businesses re-open, travel ramps up, and kids return to school just in time for cold and flu season. Gardens are expanding in size, and cropping up in new locations. “Eggs for Sale” signs are a more prominent roadside feature. I expect garden produce, dairy products, and meat will soon be more readily available in Royalston than before.

As we enjoy the remainder of the summer, the loosening of restrictions, and as we look towards autumn, please share your ideas, helpful hints, newly discovered resources, and thoughts on how Royalston can be better prepared – “Pandemic Prepared,” if you will – for the future. The REMA column for September will celebrate National Preparedness Month, and feature what’s been learned in 2020 about being ready for anything. Send your input to ema@royalston-ma.gov or to REMA; P.O. Box 92; Royalston 01368.

Preparedness beats panic every time. Be informed. Make a Plan. (And share what you’ve learned!)

Royalston Cemetery Commission

The Commission respectfully requests that perishable Memorial Day grave decorations be removed and properly disposed of. This will save the cemetery maintenance crews a great deal of time and energy without having to add that to their list of duties.

Board of Health News

Phil Leger, chair

We will be closed Saturday July 4th but open Friday, July 3rd 7-2 (last bag 1:450 instead. Make a note. The transfer station remains open throughout these Covid-19 times. The reusable shed will remain closed for the foreseeable future, but the metal container is back as the company has reopened. Please practice social distancing when at the facility.

This is a reminder that new fees are in effect July 1. All vehicles using the facility need to have a new black sticker on driver’s side windshield to enter. Please see attendant for windshield and bag stickers.

Although Mass. has been reopening businesses in a phased manner, Covid-19 will be with us through this year into the next. The best case scenario is that an effective vaccine would start to come out January 2021. Although wearing a mask when shopping is a pain, it’s better than the alternative. Be safe and be kind to one another.

Ticks and mosquitoes are active, so protect and check yourselves and your pets. Enjoy the summer season.

Royalston Energy Committee

Virtual home energy assessments available

Paul Duffin, chair

Recently, I was contacted by Ms. Aimee Graeber, Outreach Coordinator for HomeWorks Energy, Inc. This company is primarily a home insulation company as well as a MassSave program partner providing no cost home energy assessments for resident across the state. (The contacts are aimee.graeber@homeworksenergy.com or 781 305-3319.) During these unprecedented times, HomeWorks Energy shifted to conducting virtual home energy assessments. This is new for them, but allows residents to still take advantage of MassSave rebates and incentives during the Coronavirus shut down. During a phone call, a specialist will ask the homeowner a series of questions about their home. Instant saving measures such as LED light bulbs and water saving fixtures, will be shipped directly to your home for the residents to install themselves.

This is just one of many home energy incentives that residents can take advantage of. The National Grid energy rebate and incentive page has a wealth of information for those interested in updating appliances, home heating systems and the list goes on with many incentives. Please take advantage of these programs to save yourself some money as summer is fleeting and winter is just around the corner.

Royalston Community Newsletter July/August 2020 Page 3
Phinehas S. Newton Library News
Kathy Morris, Library Director
Trustees: Jeffrey Mangum, Jennifer Basso, Theresa Quinn
Pick up times Mondays: 3:00-5:00pm, 6:30-8:00pm. Thursdays 1:00-3:00pm Saturdays:10:00 am-12 noon
978-249-3572 www.royalstonlibrary.org

Thank you
To Valuing Our Children for a grant to support children’s pro-
gramming.
The Council on Aging for a grant to purchase books.

Donations to the Friends
Norah Dooley and Robert Fairchild
Antonia and Jack Petrash

Come and Get It!
All the books, movies, CDs, magazines, audiobooks, and other
materials are available to borrow. Just go onto the catalog (http://
royalstonlibrary.masscat.org) and browse for what you would like
to order. Then you can sign in and place a hold (but only on things
that we own in Royalston) or you can send us an email at royal-
stonlibrary@gmail.com or call the Library at 978-249-3572 and
leave a message. Or you can even mail us a request at P.O. Box
133, Royalston, 01368 or put a list of items into the drop box.
Don’t know what you want? We can select items for you; you just
can’t hold it against us if we don’t get you what you want though.
There are plenty of print and online book and movie reviews and
suggestions that you can peruse as well as checking out what we
have in our collection by looking at old newsletters, either print or
on the library website: www.royalstonlibrary.org.

And remember you can also borrow:
*Coolpad Surf Mobile Hotspot: Sprint Boost Model
*Orion Starblaster Telescope and stand
*Ice Cream Makers (the ball type, pint or quart)
*Kill A Watt Meter – electricity usage monitor for individual
electric appliances and devices

After you’ve put in an order, we will contact you to determine
when you can pick it up. Currently, pick up times are sched-
uled on Mondays from 3:00-5:00 and 6:30-8:00, Thursdays from
1:00-3:00, and Saturdays from 10:00-12:00. Due to some
people letting us know they can’t get there during the day, we have
added the Monday evening pick up time. We let you know your
order is filled and set a time for pick up. When you arrive, you
will see a bag labelled with you name and safe handling instruc-
tions sitting on the steps. If no one is there, you can take your
bag and that’s it. Returns can be put into the drop box. The bags
we are using are new. The most recent studies have shown that
library materials are virus-free after three days. We are following
the guidelines established by Northeast Document Conservation
Center and the latest information from the REALM project.

Story Walks
Thanks to Valuing Our Children, we will be having story walks around the library this summer. Beginning the first week of July, you
can stroll around with a book and enjoy a story. The book will be in an envelope by the front door of the library. Take one and follow
the path for the story walk. When finished, return the book in the envelope to the drop box. We are planning at least two story walks
and may continue into August.

What Occurred in the Library in June
Kathy Morris, library director
More webinars, more discussions. No open doors. At our last
Trustee meeting (a Zoom meeting), we discussed our plans for a
partial reopening. First, it’s not going to happen anytime soon.
Second, we’re getting prepared. I walked around the Library with
the computer and the trustees while discussing how we can get
people back into the library when the time finally arrives. We
looked at each room and discussed the possibilities. After much
discussion, we decided to limit the number of people inside at any
time to seven but that seven will have to be evenly distributed in
the rooms. All tables and chairs will be removed opening up much
of the floor space. Movies will be moved from the front entry area
and into the South and North room. The new book area in the front
will be expanded as there will be no access to the stacks behind
the desk. When the library first opened, there were two reading
rooms, one of which housed the ‘museum’ as well. People came
to the desk to request items which were retrieved by the librarian.
So we’re back to the beginning. We had planned on having a com-
puter available for 15 minute sessions, with time in between to dis-
fect the device and area. People will be able to print from their
own computers and phones (as they have been doing) remotely.
You do not need to enter the library to take advantage of this ser-
cvice. You may also fax items as well. Just let us know and we will
take the items and fax them for you and then return the originals
while you wait. The circulation desk has been measured for the
shield, which will cover the length of the desk. Hand sanitizer and
wipes will be available for use. The bathroom will only be avail-
able on an emergency basis.

A webinar for small libraries had us feeling like we were actually
ahead of many other libraries in planning and providing materials
to patrons. Interlibrary materials have begun to flow and interli-
rary loan should start up once the backlog is cleared.

Like other departments, we put off ordering items that we wanted
due to budget concerns. Our hope is to in the near future acquire a
museum-type metal storage unit for our historical materials to bet-
ter organize them rather than having them sit on top of each other
in the current cabinet. We also hope to begin digitizing many of
these records so that they will be readily available to the public for
perusal. Maybe this coming year. We can always look forward.

We will post all new information on the website, Facebook®
Summer Reading Happenings

The theme for this summer’s reading program is ‘Imagine Your Story’ and that is exactly what we would like everyone to do. Write up a little something, anything you’d like to write, and submit it to the Library by emailing or putting it in the drop box. Don’t forget to include your name. We will select a few to include in the newsletter and retain the rest for the scrapbook.

Summer Reading Grab & Go Kits: For older kids, the Library, thanks to Gina Verrelli, will be offering a wide variety of crafts including Japanese fans, sand mandalas, and Zappy Zoomers. We also have more of our fantastic kaleidoscopes that will only require minimal assembly (for a change!). These bagged kits for older kids will include crafts, stories, and fun activities from around the world.

And there is preschool story time at home! We will have bags, put together by preschool coordinator, Brooke Coleman, with an activity and a book to go with it to enjoy with your young children. When you’re finished just return the book!

These great activities will be available during our pick up times on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays beginning Monday, July 6. You can call or email to reserve a kit, the first one for older kids is a Japanese fan kit, and the preschool kits vary depending on the accompanying book. If you don’t reserve a kit you can stop by and pick up one (until they are gone).

Some of the new materials at your library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Fiction</th>
<th></th>
<th>Adult Non-Fiction</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bennett, Brit</td>
<td>The Vanishing Half</td>
<td>Berry, Oliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertino, Marie</td>
<td>Parakeet</td>
<td>Ehrenreich, Barbara</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brooks, Max</td>
<td>Devolution</td>
<td>Hohn, Donovan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chiaverini, Jennifer</td>
<td>Mrs. Lincoln’s Sisters</td>
<td>Kearsse, Bettye</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clancy, Christina</td>
<td>The Second Home</td>
<td>Kojima, Yoshiko</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coetzee, J.M.</td>
<td>The Death of Jesus</td>
<td>The Complete Guide to Drawing for Beginners</td>
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<td>Connelly, Michael</td>
<td>Fair Warning</td>
<td>The Universe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delinsky, Barbara</td>
<td>A Week at the Shore</td>
<td>Had I Known</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dunn, Casey</td>
<td>Silence on Cold River</td>
<td>The Other Madisons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endicott, Marina</td>
<td>The Voyage of the Morning Light</td>
<td>The Inner Coast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giffin, Emily</td>
<td>The Lies that Bind</td>
<td>The Other Madisons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hilderbrand, Elin</td>
<td>28 Summers</td>
<td>The Secret Rhino Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignatius, David</td>
<td>The Paladin</td>
<td>The Universe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jance, J.A.</td>
<td>Credible Threat</td>
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What Happened at Town Meeting?
Beth Gospodarek
About 70 voters gathered in family units, six feet apart, under and on the outside edges of an event tent on the Common on Saturday morning, June 27 to decide the Town’s funding for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Voters approved over $2,500,000 in expenses and the transference of most of the existing funds from the Stabilization Fund and Free Cash accounts to keep the Town running.

As always, voters valued education. The ARRSD schools and Monty Tech garnered the biggest share of the budget (over $700,000). The DPW was allotted around $600,000, (including snow and ice) Police over $110,000 and Fire Dept. over $90,000, with all three having contractual payments on ongoing equipment leases approved as well. The Library expenses and wages were around $70,000. The Broadband Enterprise will raise $174,000 from user fees once the service is up and running, which is projected at the earliest to be in 6 months according to the committee chair, Andy West. Funds from the Community Preservation Act will be used to build a gazebo in the South Village and to replace the asbestos roof tiles on the Raymond School. An Assessor’s Dept increase of nearly $30,000 was approved so that a local private company will be taking over the field work (while voters can still contact local board members to request abatements or challenges.) All sewer expenditures were approved. As usual, the Keeper of the Clock earns $52/ year.

Throughout the meeting, several voters made their way to a frequently sanitized microphone to question or explain the background of the items on the warrant. All but a small handful of voters wore masks to protect themselves and in consideration of others. It was a pretty summer morning. The gavel banged and bells chimed on the hour. Democracy was at work up close and personal.

Royalston Fire Department
Chief Newton Retires
This newsletter article will be the last for me as a Fire Chief and member of the Royalston Fire Department. I have made an announcement to the Select Board that as of June 30, 2020, I will be retiring from the Fire Service. This comes after 47 years of commitment and dedication to an organization that has been in the Newton family for generations. This is not easy to reach this moment and walk away from something that has been in my blood my entire life. I have many stories and experiences that I will keep in fond memory as time moves forward. To be part of a group that helped and made many families and individuals safer from my actions is quite rewarding.

The tremendous quality of people that I met over the years in this department and other agencies will not be forgotten. The interaction with our Police Department has been a great part of my career. We have had several opportunities when the need presented itself to respond and carry out a mission that resulted in a good ending. The mutual aid we provided to surrounding communities has been very exciting and also resulted in many friendships for life.

I want to thank the Town for the support it showed by their votes at Town meetings and their tremendous generosity for our fund raising efforts. Please remember my focus is on public safety. Make well thought out decisions. Burn safe and be well.

Royalston South Village Revitalization News
The RSVR would like to thank the following people for helping with beautifying the riverside: Dick Lawrence for weed-whacking, the DPW for mowing, Bob Curley for working on the bamboo, Gabe Jarvenpaa for building the flower boxes, Maureen Blasco and Nancy Monette for putting in the flowers, and Kathy Chencharik, Maureen and Janice Trask for maintaining them.

The Gazebo Sub-committee thanks the Select Board for their unanimous support for the gazebo project expressed at the June 2 Select-Board meeting. If the Annual Town Meeting approves the Community Preservation Committee’s grant, the project will proceed (as of the Newsletter deadline, the Town Meeting has no yet been held).

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. If you are interested, please contact Nancy Monette. We can’t wait to meet again on this and other projects.

Plants are sprouting in the Community Garden! A big thank you to 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.

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.
CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD NEWS

Got something to crow about? Let us know at the RCN. Drop at the library or email chasesgos2@gmail.com.

Athol High School 2020 graduate Mathew Willhite played 4 years of ice hockey and volleyball and has been accepted into the 4+1 Criminal Justice program at Fitchburg State University.

Scott Barakat of Winchendon Rd is a proud graduate of Athol High School. A ceremony will be held in August to mark his accomplishments.

William C. Deveneau was recently recognized by the Bennington Banner and Manchester Journal as the 2020 Bennington, VT Readers’ Choice “Best Lawyer.” The Law Offices of William C. Deveneau, now with branches also in Albany, NY, and Athol, MA, focus on estate planning and administration, as well as elder, tax, and business law. An Eagle Scout and Monty Tech graduate, Bill earned an A.S. in Criminal Justice with a concentration in Law Enforcement from MWCC, a B.S. from SUNY Empire State College, a graduate level certificate in Foundations of Business from U-Mass Lowell, and his J.D. from Albany Law School Union University. Bill is the son of Laurie M. (Clark) and Police Chief Curtis A. Deveneau.

Royalston Fish and Game Club
Royalston F&G dinners, meetings and other events are canceled for now. Trap shoots are returning. Club leaders thank you for your understanding, and encourage you to direct any questions or concerns to them via Facebook messenger.

Memorial Day Takes a Village

When you see them, be sure to thank Memorial Day Committee member Brenda Putney, who, with her Grandson, Gunnar, ensured each and every veteran’s grave in Royalston was decorated with a new American Flag. Thanks also to Committee member Beth Hastings, who decorated cemeteries, The Park, and The Common with memorial wreaths, and who, along with a small, socially-distanced delegation of family, friends, and community members including Royalston police officers, saw to it all Town of Royalston American flags were restored to full staff Memorial Day afternoon. Yet another thank you to the First Congregational Church for their display of American flags for the Memorial Day observance.

Socially Distanced Graduation Gift Drops

Thank you to Fire Chief Keith R. Newton, Lt. Craig LeRay, Lt./EMT Josh Doub, and “Probie” Firefighter Sean Kennedy for their assistance via RFD’s ladder truck, and for Firefighter/EMT Becky Krause-Hardie’s musical participation, providing “Pomp and Circumstance” during the drop for Monty Tech grads Michael Janowicz and Sadie Wright and to Jim Bennet for his sax rendition of the graduation march for Ashley Hadmack.

Gunnar Shanz places a flag at the remote grave of Revolutionary War veteran Nahum Greene, who fought in the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Scott Barakat
What’s Happening at the Village School?
Rise Richardson, director

We finished the school year on an upswing. Teachers visited all students at their homes, outside, with masks and proper social distancing. Children were excited to see teachers, and teachers were equally enthusiastic. Our last day was a Drive-By Goodbye event. Teachers gathered at the front of the school and waved and hooted as families drove by in cars to wish all a good summer. A bubble machine added to the fun.

Summer Programs are cancelled, due to the difficulty of keeping sanitary protocols with children outside playing.

Hopefully, in mid-August, the 5th-6th grade class will perform the play they wrote on Zoom together, based on the mind 1800’s westward expansion. It’s about bank robbers, the gold rush and the reviled immigrants of the day, with healthy dollops of humor.

We are waiting for state guidelines for opening safely in the fall. In the meantime, we are identifying all the outdoor open spaces on our campus that can be used by classes. We are lucky to have so much outdoor space.

For the fall, there is one opening in preschool, and a few openings in 5th grade. Please email rise@village-schoolma.org to set up a visit and find out about the admissions process.

School begins again with preschool and kindergarten orientation on Sept. 8, and the first day of school is Sept. 9. We hope for a more normal school year, but are also preparing for adaptive changes to keep everyone healthy and safe!

Fall enrollment
As coronavirus restrictions ease, interested parents should contact Rise as soon as possible about fall enrollment. The admissions process can begin in June.

Royalston Shakespeare Company 2020 Season
Cancelled But...

Players are still hoping to find a way to get some Bard and theater friends in their summer.

This summer’s Royalston Shakespeare Company workshop is cancelled due to our inability to maintain social distancing in a theatre environment. Some RSC members have expressed interest in finding alternate ways to connect with past members over the summer. For kids middle school aged and older who are looking to connect, contact RSC castmember Mia at elsamiabarboza@icloud.com. Adults who have any questions, feel free to contact Grace at belgra3@gmail.com.

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

Well, school’s out for the summer, but Friday the 13th (appropriately enough) was the last day local school were open, thanks to a highly infectious virus, SARS-CoV-2, AKA: COVID-19.

Since the June newsletter, 334 graduating seniors – 100% of whom had passed MCAS – returned school property, and are now in possession of yearbooks; caps, gowns, cords, and stoles; as well as their lockers’ contents. They have been feted in many ways, and with any luck, you’ll read in September that Royalston’s three Monty Tech grads were awarded diplomas and State Certificates of Occupational Proficiency on July 29, during a severely-restricted attendance, socially distanced ceremony.

Underclassmen have turned in their Chromebooks and other school property, have retrieved locker contents, unused medications, and (hopefully) reclaimed some of the many items in the lost-and-found collection.

As far as summer traditions go, MCAS Academy is not going to happen. A modified summer school is planned, with remote programming for those able to advance that way, and on-site tutoring program for students who need face-to-face (masked, of course) instruction.

On June 3rd, the School Committee voted unanimously that Superintendent-Director Dr. Sheila M. Harrity receive an “Exemplary” rating for the 2019-2020 school year. She received a summative score of 93.3% “Exemplary,” with the remaining 6.7% in the “Proficient” category.

The June 17th conference call meeting was a somber one, with realities of the Commonwealth’s pandemic-related deficit hitting home, and hitting hard. Dr. Harrity requested, and the SchoolCom agreed, to hold off on discussing her contractually-expected raise for an “Exemplary” rating until there is a firm budget resolution. She then proceeded to explain that the only guidance from the State thus far is to, “prepare for the worst.” In anticipation of anywhere from a 5%-20% reduction in State funding, no positions open due to retirements or resignations have been filled; the School Resource Officer position has been temporarily eliminated, and numerous staff and faculty have received contractually-mandated notices of “intent to not rehire.”

To offset some of the blow, an additional $150,000 has been taken from the $1.1m (D.O.R. certified) Excess & Deficiency Fund, and added to the $400,000 originally committed. The Finance Subcommittee explained the reason more was not earmarked for this school year, is a great deal of concern exists regarding finances for SY2021-2022, especially if there is a COVID-19 “echo spike.”

August 26th is the intended start date for students, but at present, just what SY2020-2021 is going to look like is a mystery. Administration is working with staff and faculty to develop a variety of options, with the expectation the year will begin with a greatly modified model that includes elements of remote learning, in-school distancing, the potential for varied attendance days and times, and particularly aggressive daily sanitization, and frequent deep cleaning.

Monty Tech employs a dozen or so Royalston residents, and that number is even higher for the Athol-Royalston Regional School District, and Royalston also boasts a number of Village School employees. This has been a harrowing time for all of them. Please be extra kind, extra appreciative, and extra supportive to all of our schools’ employees. Please extend that same consideration to the many parents who have – under duress – had to join the ranks of educators this year. In many cases, it’s been an equally tough year on them!

Our resilience – our capacity to rebound from difficulties – is one of Royalston’s noteworthy traits. This pandemic has been a beast to deal with on many different levels, but Royalston residents, and all of the employees and students in our schools, are dealing remarkably well with every challenge as it comes. We’ve managed to cope with the health issues, distancing, remote work and learning with itty communications, disruptions in supply chains, loss of employment, and the challenges of quick pivots into new endeavors. The end result of this turmoil will be individuals, families, employees and schools made stronger for the struggles.
EGGS-citing Information
Mary C Barclay

As evidenced by the signs popping up all over town, chicken eggs are one of the most easily, and closest of locally sourced foods... and that’s a good thing, given the fact eggs are nutritious, with approximately 75 calories, an impressive 7 grams of protein, 5 grams of fat (1.6 g of that saturated) and no sugar or carbohydrates in one large egg. Each egg contains a number of trace minerals as well as 11% of the RDA (recommended daily allowance) of Vitamin D, 10% of B-12, and 5% of B-6. (Sources: USDA and American Egg Board) Local eggs can be a challenge where baking and cooking are concerned, given the variation in sizes, but it’s easy to make it work, with the following information about egg sizes:

- Small – 1.5 oz
- Medium – 1.75 oz
- Large – 2 oz (1/4 cup – most recipes based on large)
- Extra-Large – 2.25 oz
- Jumbo – 2.5 oz

More eggs than you can use? Freeze them! First, make sure egg shells are clean. Crack the eggs into a bowl, beat until just blended, then pour ¼ cup into greased muffin tins, cover with plastic, and freeze. Pop out and store in an airtight container for up to a year. You can also freeze hard-cooked egg yolks for toppings and garnishes, but hard-cooked whites tend to get rubbery.

Royalton Community Newsletter July/August 2020 Page 9 for sale:


Fresh eggs and Royalston maple syrup from Putney’s Sugarhouse -$6.50/half-pint; $8/100 ml. glass maple leaf bottle; $10/pint; $18/quart; Eggs $3/dozen. Contact 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: Custom options by experienced graphic designer. Glassware etching and custom thermal travel-style drinking vessels. Single pieces or sets; even really cool kids’s cups! Krys and Keith Swan at Swankkreations@gmail.com.

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, are available when the cooler is at the end of the driveway at 185 North Fitzwilliam Road. Contact Brenda Putney at 978-249-7787 to reserve eggs for pick-up.

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 Eggs, (first come, first served) for $3/dozen at the home of Tim and Tracie Wright, 6 Morse Road. Available eggs will be in the cooler by the roadside.


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


Support the Store
The Royalston Country Store, while closed for dining in, is still offering great deals on delicious breakfasts, lunches, and dinners from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Orders should be called in at 978-249-9798, and it will be ready for pick up when you arrive. Please observe social distancing and face masking when picking up your meals. Be sure to help these new owners make it in Royalston by supporting this business.
Garden Notes

The operative word here is rain (or, more precisely, the lack there of). Prevailing wisdom suggests that garden plants require one inch of rain for optimal performance. That’s each week. We’ve recorded one-half inch. In the past five weeks. For the arithmetically-challenged, that represents ten percent of requirements. Weeks ago, we were obliged to haul out and set-up our irrigation system (our ‘system’ comprised of several hundred feet of hose with a wand attached to the end). We started out watering once a week, increased it to every five days and currently go at it every three days. Since not all the garden is dealt with at one time, we are out there most every evening (evenings being preferred with the hope that, over the course of the night, the water will penetrate the soil rather than being drawn into the air by the relentless rays of the sun). June plantings have required special attention. In the absence of moisture there will be no germination. So I seed the bed, generously water, and cover with mulch. Every couple of days the bed is uncovered, re-watered, and re-covered, until such time as seedlings emerge (and they, then, will require their own special care). I harbor no illusions in respect to this undertaking. My watering is akin to placing a band-aid over a gash that might more appropriately be stitched up. It may (or may not) prove of value.

Surprisingly enough, with one (especially notable) exception, plants appear to be weathering the storm (if you can pardon the pun), that notable exception being a much reduced rate of growth. It is as if the plants were in a holding pattern, awaiting the inevitable (?) return of rain. The sugar snap peas have begun flowering. In prior times, this occurs when the vines are six feet up the eight-foot pea brush. This year they are four feet. There is an old saw in respect to corn: “knee-high by the 4th of July”. Come July 4, I’d settle for my shins.

Okay, so all is not well in the world (you think?), but something is: it is strawberry time. One week in and I’m expecting at least two weeks more. A day does not go by when we haven’t consumed a quart or so. Leftovers are gifted or frozen. Each of our fruits and berries has its season. The timing may vary from year to year but the sequence will not. Rhubarb. Then strawberries. Summer raspberries. Blueberries. Peaches and melons. Fall raspberries and grapes. Apples. And, like our strawberry consumption, we pretty much dedicate ourselves to the fruit of the moment.

More and more of our freezer space is allocated to fruits and berries and less and less to vegetables. They do not require the time-consuming tasks of blanching and cooling. Rinse. Drain. Pack. Freeze. Strawberries require a little more attention. They need to be hulled. Fortuitously, there is a nifty little device (imagine a tweezer with small cups at the tip). Coincidentally enough, it is called a huller. One could use a knife but too much strawberry is removed. Fingers work but after a gallon or so, you’ll feel it. Regardless of method, the strawberries are laid out on a cookie sheet to freeze individually before they are bagged.

The newsletter is on vacation next month. The garden, of course, is anything but.

Larry Siegel

Edges

It is midsummer, and I find myself drawn to the edges of each day. As night falls I walk outside bearing witness to another day’s end. It is nearly 9:00, yet the shift from day to night is still in progress. The western horizon holds onto the light while our yard is already bathed in soft grey. I watch as fireflies appear and the night sounds begin. After the day’s heat the cool of this night is welcome and I almost envy the creatures that will haunt its corners long after I’ve gone in.

On the other side of these short nights, I am pulled out of sleep by the lightening sky. Often, well before dawn, I am up to watch and listen as the night recedes. And I am not alone. A recent morning’s stillness was broken just at four by a phoebe calling from the oak tree to the west of our house. His call was raspy and insistent, taking advantage of the cool morning air to send his song far and wide.

As I listened I began to wonder about this bird. Was this one of the pair nesting on the eastern corner of our house? I thought of that nest, filled to overflowing with beaks and feathers. Though a pair of phoebes tends this nest all day long, there must be room for only one parent come nightfall. So, perhaps this oak tree is where the male spends the short summer night, head tucked neatly under a wing. I imagine the female huddled in the nest on the other side of the house, just now waking to her mate’s song.

But birds sing to claim their territory as well, so as this phoebe called to his mate, he also reclaimed his domain. Over and over he called, this first bird of the day, setting bird-boundaries for anyone out there who may doubt his claim. With his family nested on the opposite side of our house, it would seem that this phoebe has claimed our entire yard.

Within minutes a robin began to sing and I wondered about the edges of each bird’s territory. Do they overlap? Does this robin care that a phoebe shares his territory? Perhaps birds of different species can peacefully share the same turf.

To some degree we all pay attention to edges – humans and animals. They mark transitions in space and time. They signal the end of one thing and the beginning of another. Day and night. Phoebe territory and robin territory. Yours and mine. Here in Royalston our home’s edges are defined by lines on a map. Maybe, in nature, edges are more fluid and permeable. I like the idea that this robin and this phoebe have reached a sort of avian detente.

As the sky lightened more birds joined in. A mourning dove, a chickadee, – everyone is up now, ready for the business of another mid-summer day.

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Recipe of the Month
Gramma Pauline’s Summertime Soufflé, submitted by Mary C. Barclay remembering her beloved neighbor on NE Fitzwilliam Rd, Helen Pauline (Crumb) Smith 1903-1991. Mary remembers, “Gramma Pauline always had a little garden just outside her porch’s back door, and would use whatever was in season for this quick and easy, egg-based dish”. Serves 6

Preheat oven to 350°F; butter a non-metal, deep-dish pie plate or two-quart casserole.

Ingredients:
6 large eggs (1 ½ cups of eggs)
½ cup milk
½ cup cream
Salt and pepper to taste
± 1 cup shredded cheese
± 2 cups add-ins
Shredded cheese for top

In a medium-sized bowl or large measuring cup, break up/gently beat the eggs (don’t overdo it – it’ll make the finished product rubbery), stir in the milk and cream, salt and pepper (and feel free to toss in whatever fresh or dried herbs that go with your add-ins.) In the buttered dish, evenly spread the add-ins (zucchini, onion, and cherry tomatoes were the prolific commodities in July and August, and went well with the mushrooms she generally added) and the cheese (she generally used cheddar, but would toss in whatever she had on hand for hard and semi-soft cheeses), mix it a bit, then pour the egg mixture over the top. Scatter some grated cheese across the top (again, any kind) and, as an homage to Gramma Pauline, sprinkle some crispy bacon bits on top of that.

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


In late June, Royalston’s self response rate to the US census stands at 54%, much less than all neighboring towns in Massachusetts and well below the state average of 63.7%, which is surprising in a civic-minded town with a low tax rate and lean coffers like ours. The results matter. Data from this census will affect state and federal funding for infrastructure, the library, our schools, health care availability, public safety, and the arts for at least the next decade. Our political representation in the state and federally are also influenced by this census as districts are drawn using this information.

You can respond by phone, on-line or by mail. Information is at my2020census.gov. If you are having trouble with getting or completing a census form, you can call the library and leave a message to ask for assistance.