**Calendar of Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:06 P.M.</td>
<td><strong>Full Harvest Moon</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>October 10</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>Special Town Meeting</strong>, at Fire Station 1, (4 The Common) to consider approval of $15,000 to create architectural plans for the Raymond Building and other historical features; and increasing the tax title revolving account to $22,500 while transferring $15,000 from the Stabilization Fund for this purpose.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 12</td>
<td>Monday</td>
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<td><strong>Columbus Day/ Indigenous Peoples’ Day</strong> – Post Office, P.S. Newton Library, all schools closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 14</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>Annual Flu Clinic</strong> will be a drive-through clinic at Town Hall. The clinic is for Royalston residents who are 18 years of age or older. The vaccination is free. Health insurance is not required. If you have insurance, please bring your card. To join the Wednesday Grab N Go meal (Breaded chicken, baked beans, mixed vegetables and a Lorna Doone), please call Betty Woodbury at 978-249-9656 before 5 PM on Monday, October 12th.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 16</td>
<td>Friday</td>
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<td><strong>New Hunter’s Moon</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>October 24</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
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<td>2 - 4 p.m. and 7 - 8 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Voter registration session</strong> at the Town Hall, On the Common in Royalston. This is the last day to register to vote in the November 3, 2020 Presidential/State election. Also, Last day to register to vote by mail. All mail in applications to register to vote must be postmarked no later than October 24, 2020.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 28</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 pm</td>
<td><strong>Last day to apply for a vote by mail application</strong> for the November election at Whitney Hall Town Clerk’s office.</td>
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</table>

**October 31** Sunday **Halloween**

10:51 A.M. **Full Hunter’s Moon**, Also called Travel Moon, Dying Grass Moon, Blood Moon or Sanguine Moon.

4 - 6 p.m. **Town wide trick-or-treating**, Residents should clearly display something to indicate they want trick-or-treaters to come. Additionally, we will have trunk or treating on the common and also in the South Village Park. Those wishing to use their vehicle for trunk or treating please email Chief Deveneau, chief@royalston-ma.gov, with your name, contact number and where you would like a spot reserved for you, due to the COVID-19 restrictions we will have to separate vehicles by distance. Please follow the state COVID-19 guidelines; wear a face covering and social distance when possible. Trunk or treat participants are asked to place the treat in the bag. Hand sanitizer will be available.

Stop by the Library for a treat too.

**November 1** Sunday **Time Changes** to Eastern Standard Time – FALL BACK one hour.

**Save the Date**

**November 21** Saturday

9 a.m. to sellout **Preorder now for Drive by Pie!**, the Ladies’ Benevolent Society’s home baked pie sale. Proceeds benefit the LBS scholarship fund. Taking pre-orders now for pumpkin $12, apple (frozen or fresh) $12, blueberry (frozen or fresh) $14, or pecan $16. Call Maureen to order 978-249-5138.

**Friends of the Library Notecard Sale**

In time for the holidays and as part of their fall fundraising campaign, the Friends of the Library are selling folded blank notecards. Local artist Amy Newland created six images for the cards that are available for purchase at the post office, on the artist’s website www.amynewland.com, by calling or emailing the Library, and at Library events, including Ginafest. You can buy by mail, but include $2.50 for postage for 1 to 3 sets. Cards with envelopes will be sold individually for $2.50 or in sets of six different images for $10.00.
Select Board Notes
Christine Long, clerk, Royalston Select Board

**Special Town Meeting**, October 10, 10 am at Fire Station 1, 4 The Common: This STM will consider three articles – a recommendation from the Community Preservation Committee for $15,000 to create architectural plans for the Raymond Building and other historical features; and recommendations from the Select Board to increase the tax title revolving account to $22,500 and to transfer $15,000 from the Stabilization Fund for this purpose.

Much has been happening at the Raymond. The removal of the asbestos has successfully been accomplished, and the new roof will be installed in early October. The Building Committee is also working to get the Raymond on the Green Communities inventory. The likely next projects are upgrading both attic and sidewall insulation and installing a new, energy-efficient heating/AC system with Green Communities money, installing one or two handicap-accessible restrooms with an American with Disabilities Act grant, and creating new office spaces while respecting historical features. The Community Preservation Fund will go toward the plan and this latter work.

The articles about the tax title revolving account will help the town address a long-standing problem: over $730,000 in unpaid taxes, a backload flagged by both the Community Compact reports of a few years ago and both recent audits. The augmented fund will allow some cases to be taken to Land Court; eventual settlements will replace the legal fees.

**Reopening Update:** With some minor adjustments, the Select Board has decided to stay the course. That is, town offices will essentially remain closed, though residents can meet with officials by appointment in either their own offices or at town hall, whichever they choose. Anyone with an appointment should remember to wear a mask. The library remains closed, but “borrowing by bag” continues.

Shields to protect both officials and the public will be purchased, including shields for the DPW office. Restrooms in town buildings remain closed to the public.

Board and committee meetings will continue to meet remotely except by vote of the Select Board. The two exceptions are the Select Board itself and the Planning Board, which are now meeting in the dining room at town hall, where social distancing is possible. Legal public hearings are also held in the dining room, with only board members and applicants present. In all these cases, the public participates remotely.

**Town Hall Elevator Update:** The water sealant has been applied in the concrete foundation of the shaft, the moisture sensor installed, and most of the minor details on the final to-do list accomplished. A couple details remain and then the state will conduct the final inspection.

When the Select Board first signed the contracts for the elevator project, we anticipated a festive opening ceremony. Because of COVID-19, festivities will have to wait. When we can open the upper hall will depend on what happens state- and perhaps nationwide. It will be a joyous day when it comes.

**Town-Wide Broadband Update:** The Select Board is anticipating a major announcement from the Broadband Committee in the near future.

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**Town Clerk Notes**
Barbara Richardson

Voter Registration Session: A voter registration session will be held on September 30, 2020. This will be the last day to register to vote in the Special Town Meeting to be held Saturday October 10, 2020. Hours will be 2-4 p.m. and 7-8 p.m at the Town Hall. All mail in registrations must be postmarked no later than September 30, 2020.

**VOTER REGISTRATION SESSION**
A voter registration session will be held October 24, 2020
2-4 p.m. and 7-8 p.m
This will be at the Town Hall, On the Common in Royalston

This is the last day to register to vote in the November 3, 2020 Presidential/State election.

*All mail in applications to register to vote must be postmarked no later than October 24, 2020.

The last day to apply for a mail in ballot is October 28, 2020 5p.m. I must have in my possession the application no later than 5 p.m. This does not mean postmarked 10/28/2020.

**Road Work**
Public Works is scheduled to do some road work on North East Fitzwilliam and Doane Hill Roads at the end of the month of September and extending into October. This will certainly cause delays in travel along these roads and travelers should prepare by seeking an alternate route. It is extremely difficult to post the exact dates. Weather and schedules in other communities will sometime cause a delay. Each incident will cause a backup of a planned arrival of the contractors. Please be patient and watch for signs and construction equipment to show up and stage in these areas. The noise is something that cannot be avoided and we start early. Please know we will try to get work completed in as short of a time frame as possible.

Thank you all in advance for your understanding.
Keith R. Newton - DPW-Supt.
October Newsletter RoyalstonNet & SV Pilot
Broadband Update
Andy West & Jon Hardie

Here is a status report of our current broadband projects, and the required prep work to start building out RoyalstonNet our Town-Wide, Town-Owned, Fixed LTE Wireless Broadband Network.

RoyalstonNet Completed steps:
1. We’ve hired Westfield Gas & Electric (WG&E) as our Royalston Owners Project Manager, and Chief Procurement Officer (CPO).
2. We’ve received the first payment of $560,000 of our $1.125 million EOHED Grant, to complete the engineering specs. With the signed Contract below, we will be eligible to receive the next $360,000. Together it will trigger the Town portion of the buildout, that will be paid for from subscriptions over the first 5 years - with no increase in taxes.
3. We have vetted & selected our Vendor / Design / Engineering Services Team to complete the detailed network design specifications.
4. The Broadband Committee & the Select Board have both approved the selected Vendor Team RoyalstonNet Final Engineering Design.

The Next Short-Term Steps:
1. The Town law firm is completing its review of the contract elements with our selected Vendor / Design / Engineering Services Team (expect to complete in the next few weeks).
2. The Team will then complete a Detailed, Line by Line, Itemized RoyalstonNet Design Specification. In the process, we will validate that the Selected Final Engineering Design will perform as expected, on the ground.
3. We can then obtain all the needed local & federal approvals and permits from the FCC, State Agencies, and Royalston Town Boards and Committees.
4. The Broadband Committee & the Select Board have both approved the selected Vendor Team RoyalstonNet Final Engineering Design.

Note about the South Village Pilot Network.
1. We’ve learned a lot from each of the South Village Pilot Subscribers ...Thanks a bunch!!.
2. Over the last several months, now that more people and children are working ...and learning... from home, we have increased the bandwidth 250% to meet the dramatic increase in demand.
3. The new townwide RoyalstonNet LTE Wireless Network is much more powerful & robust than the 5 year old technology of the SV Pilot. When the new Fixed LTE network is built-out, SV customers will likely be the first to be converted and upgraded to the new Network. Then, the entire town, and all of the municipal offices, will be using and connected to the same secure, advanced, high speed RoyalstonNet Fixed LTE Wireless Broadband Technology.

If you have any Questions or want to join the SV Pilot Network now, in the South Village, or Pre-Register for RoyalstonNet elsewhere in town. Please Call Jon 24/7 at 978-790-8474 or Email Jon@moonroad.com

Board of Health News
Phil Leger, chair person

Although our Covid cases have been very low, wearing masks when in public and social distancing still remain the best way to protect others and yourselves. Please be considerate of others when out in public. With schools reopening and other activities occurring, now is not the time to be complacent. COA will be having a drive by flu clinic on October 14th. Pre-registration is available online.

Although we have had some cold night time temps recently, mosquitoes are still active. Ticks will remain active into the cold weather. So, take personal precautions when enjoying our fall weather. Check pets and yourself when coming in from outside.

Upcoming pre winter work planned at RRATS, is a new pad to put the shipping containers on. It will be adjacent to the compactor area. Advance thanks to RDPW for this work. Also, the Scout bottle and can drop off will be moving adjacent to the bottles and can roll off. The reusable shed remains closed until further notice. Reminder to have the new black windshield sticker in order to access the facility.

We would like to thank our transfer station workers Tony and Steve for working through these Covid times and keeping the essential work going. Without their efforts, we would have been closed.

Drive in Flu Shots

A flu clinic clinic, sponsored by the Royalston Council on Aging, for Royalston residents who are 18 years of age or older. The vaccination is free. Health insurance is not required. If you have insurance, please bring your card. This year’s flu shot contains vaccines for the influenza A H1N1 and H3N2 and the influenza B/Washington virus and the influenza B/Phuket virus. Pneumonia vaccines, Pevnax 13 (PCV13) and Pneumovax 23 (PPSV23), will also be available, and Fluzone® High-Dose vaccine for those over 65.

For the safety of all, this year’s clinic will be a drive through clinic. Vehicles will enter The Common by the Library. Participants will be pre-screened, then complete paperwork. Next, vaccine will be administered through the vehicle window. Then you can enjoy a snack or proceed to receive a Grab N Go meal. Everyone participating is asked to wear a mask. Forms can be downloaded from Royalston’s website: www.Royalston-ma.gov

Vaccines will be provided by Athol Pharmacy, 290 Main Street in Athol. Assistance will be provided by Royalston Board of Health, Royalston Police, Royalston Fire & EMS and the Wachusett Medi-

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.
Phinehas S. Newton Library News
Kathy Morris, Library Director
Trustees: Jeffrey Mangum, Jennifer Basso, Theresa Quinn
Pick up times Mondays: 2:00 - 6:00 pm. Thursdays 1:00-3:00 pm. Saturdays: 9:00 am-12 noon
978-249-3572 www.royalstonlibrary.org

Ginafest
Join Us to Celebrate Gina Verrelli’s Twenty Years of Service at the Library
Kathy Morris, Library Director

Please, join us in saying thank you for the twenty plus years Gina has dedicated to the Phinehas S. Newton Library, on Saturday, October 10 at 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for refreshments and socially distant comradery. There will be cake!

Perennials, house plants, and rustic homegrown onion braids will be available to take home in return for a donation to the Friends.

I first remember meeting Gina Verrelli when she came to the Library with Mr. Erickson’s 5th grade class to do research. When she began high school at Monty Tech as a member of the National Honor Society, she had to do community service and began volunteering at the Library. I quickly recognized her skills and gave her more and more tasks – all of which she accomplished with great aplomb and capability. Due to her initiative, when she started college, we hired her for circulation duties but she did far more than that and started taking on more and more independent responsibilities.

At that time, she was intent on becoming a high school history teacher. I must admit I kept encouraging her to pursue a library career. While she continued through a master’s program in history, she kept working at the library. When teaching jobs were hard to find, she decided to pursue working at a library. The Heywood Library in Gardner had an opening for Reference Librarian, Gina applied and was hired and is now the Head of Reference. They were impressed by her comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of library work and rightfully so.

She has been so much a part of the library and is responsible for most of the displays, many of the programs, and all of our older kid craft kits this summer. That was all Gina.

So why the celebration? Well, due to increased hours and responsibilities in Gardner, Gina has to give up her hours at our circulation desk. She is still doing most of the Facebook posts, ordering movies, supplying the new book list for the newsletter, making all those cool craft kits, and chiming in with ideas and ways to improve.

Weekly Yoga Classes
Yoga with Charlotte Weltzin continues behind the library (for now) on Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m., but call for updates as we are looking for a winter home. The class is appropriate for all abilities. Improve your flexibility and balance (both physically and mentally).

Virtual Browsing - Wowbrary – Presenting the Library’s Newest Additions
Want to know what new items the library has added to the collection every week? Thanks to the generosity of the Friends of the Library, we are excited to offer Wowbrary, a service that supplies weekly email alerts showing you the newest books, DVDs, CDs, and audiobooks that have been added to the collection that week. Each item featured shows the cover, ratings, and reviews. It’s not quite the same as browsing but it’s a window into the library collection. Whenever you see an item of interest, you can click on it, determine if it’s available, and place a hold on it. Due to the nature of our network system, you can place the hold, but it’s best if you email or call us to request the item to ensure your hold goes on our copy. And, of course, like everything else in the Library, this service is free! To receive the email alerts, sign up at www.wowbrary.org, type in the zip code (01368), and select our library. It’s that easy. You can be the first to get that new DVD or book by your favorite author. And you can customize your newsletter to let you know when favorite authors will have a new book released or a new movie becomes available on DVD.

Library News
The shield for the circulation desk has been ordered, but we still don’t have a reopening date. The furniture needs to be moved and removed and the air quality checked and other maintenance issues addressed. When we do open it will be by appointment, a maximum number of people allowed in at any one time. It shouldn’t be too difficult and it will be wonderful to have people see the multitude of books and movies and audiobooks and magazines. We have a trustee meeting on September 28 where we will again be reviewing all our options. The main issue is the touching of items and that is one of the discussion items. The options are for people to use hand sanitizer upon entering and/or gloves and allowing unlimited browsing with people being aware that these are high touch areas, much as it is in supermarkets and other stores. Policies vary from library to library, so people should be aware of the situation. The other option is to have people who peruse an item, place it on a cart where it can be isolated. So many issues that were rarities in the past. And all of us keep our eyes on the numbers and cross our fingers.
New Pickup Hours and Emergency Computer Usage
As we fine tune the best hours for people to pick up items, we have found that not many of you are coming in the evening. Therefore, effective, October 1, we are increasing and altering the hours that we are open for pickup. We will be open Mondays from 2:00-6:00, Thursdays 1:00-3:00, and Saturdays 9:00-noon. And if these hours don’t work, let us know and we will arrange to have the items available at a convenient time for you.

Do you need to file an application, renew your driver’s license, apply for something and need to use a computer? Call the library and we can set up an appointment for you to use one of the library computers. And remember you can remotely print from outside the building. We can also copy and/or fax items. Just call, email, or knock on the door and we will take the items and copy them for you.

Some of the new materials at your library

**Adult Fiction**
- Backman, Fredrik: *Anxious People*
- Brown, Sandra: *Thick as Thieves*
- Bruno, Anna: *Ordinary Hazards*
- Burton, Jeffrey: *The Finders*
- Clarke, Susanna: *Piranesi*
- Cleeves, Ann: *The Darkest Evening*
- Cole, Alyssa: *When No One is Watching*
- Cook, Diane: *The New Wilderness*
- Ferrante, Elena: *The Lying Life of Adults*
- Foley, Lucy: *The Guest List*
- Follett, Ken: *The Evening and the Morning*
- Galbraith, Robert: *Troubled Blood*
- Gordon, Mary: *Payback*
- Griffiths, Elly: *The Lantern Men*
- Gyasi, Yaa: *Transcendent Kingdom*
- Hiaasen, Carl: *Squeeze Me*
- Johansen, Iris: *Chaos*
- Johnson, Iris: *Sisters*
- Kline, Christina: *The Exiles*
- Lupica, Mike: *Fool's Paradise*
- McCree, Kimberly: *A Good Marriage*
- McDaniel, Tiffany: *Betty*
- Miller, Sue: *Monogamy*
- Mina, Denise: *The Less Dead*
- Mizushima, Margaret: *Hanging Falls*
- Nunez, Sigrid: *What Are You Going Through*
- Palahniuk, Chuck: *The Invention of Sound*
- Picoult, Jodi: *The Book of Two Ways*
- Robb, J.D.: *Shadows in Death*
- Simses, Mary: *The Wedding Thief*
- Spera, Deb: *Call Your Daughter Home*
- Tobar, Hector: *The Last Great Road Bum*
- Walsh, M.O: *The Big Door Prize*
- Ware, Ruth: *One By One*
- Watson, S.J.: *Final Cut*
- Williams, Niall: *This is Happiness*

**audios:**
- Clancy’s Jack Ryan Season 2
- The King of Staten Island
- The Trip to Greece
- Tom Clancy’s Jack Ryan Season 2

**Children’s Fiction**
- Barnes, Derrick: *I Am*
- Becker, Aaron: *My Favorite Color*
- Blackall, Sophie: *If You Come to Earth*
- Brown, Dan: *Wild Symphony*
- Brubaker, Brady: *Fighting Words*
- Clanton, Ben: *Happy Narwhalidays*
- Cousins, Luc: *Let’s Play Monsters!*
- Creech, Sharon: *One Time*
- Dargent, Nathalie: *The Christmas Feast*
- Fan, Terry: *The Barnabus Project*
- Grabenstein, Chris: *Mr. Lemoncello and the Titanic Ticket*
- Lam, Thao: *The Paper Boat*
- Litchfield, David: *Lights on Wonder Rock*
- McDonald, Megan: *Stick and the Hairy, Scary Spider*
- Nayeri, Daniel: *Everything Sad is Untrue*
- O’Leary, Sara: *Maud and Grand-Maud*
- Pierce, Lincoln: *Big Nate: the Gerbil Ate My Homework*
- Pilkey, Dav: *Grime and Punishment*
- Rylant, Cynthia: *Motor Mouse Delivers*
- Savara, Lorelei: *The Circus of Stolen Dreams*
- Shannon, David: *Mr. Nogginbody and the Childish Child*
- Stilton, Geronimo: *The Battle for Crystal Castle*
- Tarshis, Lauren: *I Survived the California Wildfires, 2018*
- Wahl, Phoebe: *The Blue House*
- Wiesner, David: *Robobaby*
- Futures: *Squeeze Me*

**Adult Non-Fiction**
- Cassedy, Edward: *Dear Friends at Home: Civil War Letters*
- Frey, Sarah: *The Islam Book*
- Hager, Jenna Bush: *The Growing Season*
- Hunt, Lindsay: *Everything Beautiful in its Time: Sons of Love and Loss*
- Marchant, Jo: *Help Yourself*
- MacDonald, Helen: *The Human Cosmos*
- O’Reilly, Bill: *Vesper Flights*
- Raz, Guy: *Killing Crazy Horse*
- Seager, Sara: *How I Built This*
- Sobo, Jacob: *The Smallest Lights in the Universe*
- Smith, Zadie: *Separated*
- Young Adult*
- Chambers, Veronica: *Intimations*

**Got Kids at Home?**
The craft kits are still there – a new one each week – available at the top of the steps 24/7. And books. Homeschooling or just filling time, there are some wonderful books waiting for you. Again, just ask for a collection and we’ll put it together for you. That goes for adults and all ages. Now that I have a grandson, I look more carefully at the children’s board books and there are some wonderful ones. I just cataloged a new one by Aaron Becker, who happens to live in Amherst, called *My Favorite Color*, which made me remember his prior book, *You Are Light*. These beautiful books are a joy to behold and to share with young children and there are many, many more.

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- Wiesner, David: *Robobaby*
- Futures: *Squeeze Me*
Historical Society News
Peter Krania, president
This year is certainly one for the history books. The Society is interested in documenting how it has affected the townspeople. How you are coping and what you are doing to keep on top of things? YOU are the history of our community. Please send a note to the society and tell us about it.

We are still looking for someone that does plastering to work on the ceiling on the second floor. If your know of someone, ask them to contact me at 978 249 7625.

Thanks to all our dues paying members. Dues are $25. Fund raising is ongoing. There is still alot of restoration work planned. If you have not donated for awhile send a check to PO Box 23, Royalston MA 01368. To join us, reach out through our Facebook page, our website royalstonhistorical.org or call Stephen Chase, 978-249-0358, or email this newsletter.

Royalston South Village Revitalization News
Hello Royalston neighbors,

The Gazebo Project under chairperson Linda Alger is officially underway as we received our building permit on September 16th. Tom Musco has had the compression ring made by Wright Welding and has purchased the various needed hardware. The timber has been upgraded to Douglas Fir and has been ordered. Graves Concrete has graciously offered to donate the concrete for the slab foundation. Our DPW has agreed to help with the excavating that will be needed. Richard Brown is assisting with pursuit of an electrician if he is unable to do the work himself. Roland Hamel is organizing the volunteers and we hope the slab work will be completed by the end of the month or the beginning of October. It is our hope to hire Jeff or Jay Hopkins for the concrete work. We very much see this as a community project and we hope to use all local contractors in each phase of the project.

We would like to Thank the Community Preservation Committee and the voters of Town who have supported the project. Tom has worked tirelessly on this project, all on a volunteer basis. We appreciate his expertise, energy, and enthusiasm he has for this endeavor, we couldn’t have done this without him. I hate to put a timeline on this but wouldn’t it be nice to have our first official event on the Gazebo during the holidays?

We’ve been really glad to see the picnic area by the bridge that was cleared by volunteers last July being used by lots of people going to the store. Many thanks to Dickie Lawrence, Rene Lake-Gagliardi and Richard Martin who have been keeping that area trimmed. Also, thanks to Maureen Blasco, Nancy Monette, Kathy Chencharik, Janice Trask and Rose Lawrence for tending the beautiful flower boxes by the bridge.

Rick Martin and Kelly Dolan worked hard on establishing the first annual Community Garden next to the store. The gardens have been thriving and they are looking for more participation next year.

A new committee to help the town’s Building Committee work on how to preserve Whitney Hall is forming and will meet soon… thanks to Peter Gagliardi for consulting around this effort. If interested in participating, please contact Nancy Monette at 978-249-3694.

The River Clean-up on Sept 26 was a great success. Thanks to Todd Neale for heading this up and to the many volunteers who helped. Information about the Clean-up was on the Royalston town website and on the RSVR Facebook page coordinated by Jessica Spring, Chair of the Social Media Sub-committee…it is a good way to find out what is happening in town. Here is the link: https://www.facebook.com/Welcome-to-the-Village-of-South-Royalston-109177197269651/?modal=admin_todo_tour Thank you to Cathy Martin who took photos of the Clean-up for our Facebook page. Jessica is always looking for town news that can be put on the page.

Thanks go to Heather and Rob at the store for being a stalwart source of food during the pandemic, and for promoting the River Clean-up on their Facebook page and participating in it.

The Christmas Tree Lighting Committee is looking for volunteers -- please call Nancy Monette or email RoyalstonSouthVillage@yahoo.com if you are interested.

Maureen Blasco is Chair of the RSVR Holiday Fundraiser, a 120 Drawing — $20 per ticket (1 $500 winner, 1 $200 winner, 2 $100 winners, 3 $50 winners, 5 $20 winners). The drawing will be at the South Royalston Christmas tree lighting on Dec 4 at 6:00 p.m. If you are interested in selling tickets or buying them, call Maureen at 978-249-5138. We are raising money for a “Welcome to the Village of South Royalston” sign with artwork created by Gordon Morrison to supplement a Royalston Cultural Council grant. Gordon is a Royalston resident and illustrator of nationally known wildlife guidebooks. It is an honor to have his artwork as part of a new sign as people enter our town from the south.

Royalston Fish and Game
Royalston F&G trap shoots continue, using the social distancing guidance and rules from the State. Club leaders advise patrons to follow the Facebook page for changes in event schedules, and thank you for your understanding. Address questions or concerns to them via Facebook messenger.

The last, lazy, brown oak leaves
drift aimlessly on the fall breeze.
they float on the autumn air
like a boat,
sans rudder,
sans sail,
that could be headed anywhere.
Insects do a dance,
dipsy-doodle,
up-and-down.
Last chance for
a romantic night on the town.

As my snoozing dog naps in the fading noon,
A chickadee changes his tune,
“These seeds, these seeds are
MINE, mine, mine!”
A blue jay retorts,
“oh Yeah, oh Yeah?”
Chipmunks scramble across a stone wall.

Michael Young
Current Royalston Poet Laureate
Summer is in the rearview mirror and winter is fast approaching — that means it’s prime hurricane season, and this year has already been one for the books. The Atlantic Hurricane Season begins the first of June, and winds down November 30th. We are not even at the end of September as of this writing, and we’ve “blown through” the 21, 2020 hurricane names using the alphabet, and have moved on to the Greek Alphabet, and are on Beta – the second letter in the Greek alphabet, and according to the National Hurricane Center, this is the first time we’ve gotten this far since 2005, when six Greek letters were used.

Special Coronavirus considerations. If you can, make arrangements in advance with family or friends outside of the area in the event you need to evacuate due to hurricane damage; shelters are going to be more difficult to access, and higher risk than staying in someone’s camper or guest rooms. In addition to the usual items, make sure you have some masks for each family member, hand sanitizer, and cleaning materials in your “grab’n’go bag, in case you need to leave in a hurry. If you go over to www.cdc.org, they offer a link to “Going to a Public Disaster Shelter During the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

Get warnings and alerts. Download the FEMA Mobile App. By texting your device type – ANDROID or APPLE to 43362 (easy to remember as 4FEMA) for real-time alerts from the National Weather Service, for up to five locations of your choosing; the ability to share real-time notifications via text, e-mail, and social media; the location of shelters and disaster recovery centers in your area; and for some basics of planning, like emergency kit checklists, family plans, and reminders.

Make sure personal documents like insurance policies, social security cards, passports, etc. are in a protected location like a water/fireproof safe; have electronic copies in password-protected digital space. Review (or create) your family plan, which includes a contact list for anyone you may need to reach in an emergency. Keep a three-day supply of clothing and medications in a suitcase or “go bag.” If you have pets, be sure to have three days’ worth of food and any medications for them, too. Ensure fuel is topped off in all vehicles, and make sure there’s a flashlight with fresh batteries, some nutrition bars and water, and phone charging cords in each vehicle.

Around the house, bring in or secure outside furniture, trash cans, and items that might be moved by gusty winds. Declutter drains and gutters, and make sure your sump pumps are working in case of torrential rains, and that generators are given a test run, in preparation for inevitable power failures. Make sure there’s at LEAST three days’ worth of non-perishable foods, and plenty of bottled water for drinking – as we learned with the Coronavirus Pandemic, more than three days’ supplies can be beneficial.

If hurricanes are in the forecast, keep your cellphone charged, draw a tubful of water for flushing toilets, place flashlights strategically around the house, and fuel up your generator in case of power outages. Of course, if you are using a generator, make sure the breakers are off so power doesn’t back feed and injure line workers, and use them only outdoors, in open spaces, away from windows and doors. (Oh, and when you’re buying batteries, buy enough to replace those in your smoke, carbon monoxide, and radon detectors on November 1st!)

As always, if you have an EMERGENCY, CALL 9-1-1 – but if you’re prepared, you’re less likely to need emergency assistance. Preparedness beats panic every time. Be informed. Make a Plan.
What’s Happening at the Village School?
Rise Richardson, director

Our Reopening Plan is working and all the children (and parents) are happy to be back at school. With the Tent and the Pavilion, and lots of other open spaces, students are outside 60-90% of the day. When the persistent cold weather hit in September, with frosty mornings, children were wearing winter parkas sitting outside!

Lunch, snack, science, art, music and most classroom activities are outside. It’s a great time of year for science outdoors, with classes investigating the local insects. This month, the K-6th classes will go on canoeing field trips at Tully Lake.

When the persistent cold weather hits, we’ll move inside. The new building has a state of the art ventilation system, with lots of fresh air moving into the classrooms, and exhaust air moving out.

The Village School is following all of DESE’s (Mass. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) health recommendations for schools, which are based on Mass. Dept. of Health and CDC guidelines. For more information, go to www.villageeschoolma.org and click on Reopening Plan on the home page.

ARRSD -
In person students are beginning to trickle in

First day of in-person 8th grade 2020 at ARMS.

Students and teachers have been adjusting to remote learning with noteworthy flexibility. By pretime, RCS teachers should be back in their building with decent WIFI!, but the opening weeks of remote school were mostly spent sharing the Athol Community Elementary media center in a scene that was not un-reminiscent of a call center. Still, they persisted and the students’ experience was (new) normal on-line schooling.

In October, families who have chosen in-person learning will return to RCS and other ARRS schools, and teachers will metamorphasize yet again so that they are able to teach in person and remotely at the same time. Physical distancing, masks, handwashing, reduced passengers on busses, and other precautions will be in full effect.

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

Although things change minute-to-minute, at this minute, Monty Tech’s 2020-2021 school year is successfully underway, having opened using a hybrid (part remote, part in-person) model, with 93% of students returning for in-person instruction. Coronavirus policies and procedures have been established. All of the recommended procedures have been adopted, including one-way travel, distancing, and extensive deep cleaning schedules. Fifty-two rooftop units were upgraded to hospital surgery-quality air filters, and 25 air purifying devices were installed in air condition ductwork. An isolation room for anyone exhibiting suspicious symptoms has been set up.

Monty Tech, in an effort to relieve some of the pressure on faculty members with children learning remotely, established a daycare program in the auditorium in conjunction with the Boys & Girls Club of Fitchburg, where teachers can pay $10-$15 a day to have their child(ren) overseen by childcare instructors and a recreation advisor. Lunches are provided on a pre-pay, pre-order basis. The agreement will be revisited each term.

To help with all that’s gone on, Monty Tech applied for, and was granted more than a half-million dollars in competitive and allocation grant funding to support School and District need related to the Coronavirus. Funds included Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) of $200,565 to help with the technology upgrades necessary for hybrid learning and increased traffic on the School’s network; the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CvRF) of $330,975 to pay for personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff and students, along with building ventilation upgrades; and a Summer and Vacation Learning Program Grant of $11,600 to purchase technology to support summer instruction for students who were academically behind, or who had missed core instruction during the abrupt closure of school, and to support students considered to be either socially or emotionally “at risk”.

Exciting news for members of the two-year old Veterinary Sciences program: The first-ever articulation agreement with Becker College has been signed! Monty Tech Vet Sciences students may be awarded up to 13 college credits towards Becker’s Animal Studies Associate’s and Bachelor’s Degrees, which include animal care, vet tech, pre-vet, biology, equine studies, as well as dual degrees, including psychology, criminal justice, forensics, and business, along with the specific animal studies degree. Eligible students with a GPA of 2.7 and higher are guaranteed $15,000/year merit scholarships.

The Administration, along with the staff and faculty, deserve high praise for their summer long, seven-days-a-week efforts to begin this school year with some in-person instruction, and for investing in an extensive, ten-day, 46-hours of professional development aimed at improving instruction and student achievement under the hybrid model. A Memorandum of Agreement between Administration and the Montachusett Regional Teachers’ Association (MRTA) has been accepted by the SchoolCom. Also deserving of praise are the students and their families who are doing their level best to make this all work.

Details regarding Monty Tech’s “COVID Operations” are easily accessible on the front page of the website. And it can’t be said often enough – this is a difficult year for all concerned. Be kind. Be considerate. Be thankful for so many people, in all of our school districts, willing to go the extra mile for OUR children!
Classifieds

Services Available


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


Horse Help! You and your horse may find an extra pair of hands, another pair of eyes & experience useful. I can assist at your horse’s home space or my farm, working with your equipment or mine. Book by the day. Call or text Suzanne: (978) 424-8580.

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 Suzanne at (978) 424-8580. Current email: cobbsuzanne4@yahoo.com.

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

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

Book Reviews -

Fifty Things That Aren’t My Fault: Essays from the Grown-up Years
Cathy Guisewite; Published by G.P. Putnam’s Sons (April, 2019)

Now a full-fledged, card-carrying member of the “Sandwich Generation,” Cathy Guisewite looks back at her youth when, via the medium of cartoons, she opened conversations on a number of women’s taboo subjects. She continued her taboo-trashing tradition as an unmarried, 41-year-old woman, when she adopted a little girl. It’s with humility and self-deprecating humor she reflects on coming to grips with the body image issues that affect so many women, how she reconciles the parent she wanted to be vs. the parent she is, and how she is coping with caring for the parents who once cared for her. There are lots of laughs and more than a few tears in her essays; for women readers in also sixty plus, many situations will hit home. There is a logical progression to the essays, but, as essays, each one can be enjoyed as a stand-alone.

Mary C. Barclay

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 kool 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 $10.00 Cash preferred. Please add self serve on porch (#350 Route 32) or call 978-249-4000.

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

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

Garden Notes  

September 22, 2020

It’s been a wee bit nippy these past four mornings, a touch of mid-October in mid-September. I have no doubts that some of you, especially those residing in low-lying areas, experienced frost, but here, on the south slope of Prospect Hill, we did not. We hauled out the blankets, our first priority being the peppers, growing magnificently and generously adorned with fruit, many of which ripening to red and orange, a rare event for us. We also covered the basil and one bed of tomatoes, more for the challenge than anything else. A month ago, our jet star tomatoes were all but expired, hardly a leaf remaining. Wouldn’t you know, they started re-growth, flowered, and set fruit. The basil was lush and it seemed a shame to abandon it (notwithstanding the fact that our winter’s supply of pesto was already safely ensconced in the freezer). The late plantings of beans were in full production and would have appreciated some attention as well. But, since I have far more beans than people to consume them, they remained uncovered. Some leaves were frost-damaged but the plants survived and beans will continue to be picked (consumed or otherwise).

Then there is the matter of rain. Or, more accurately, the lack thereof. Rainfall in August barely exceeded one and one-half inch, but that is not unheard of. It is the dog days of August, after all, hot and dry being the norm rather than the exception. But September? September is the month of tropical storms, hurricanes even. I expect to be dodging puddles, not hearing the grass crunch underfoot. I am turning beds and clouds of dust emerge. Finally, I have a need for a facemask. Six-tenth of one inch of rain has fallen this month with none forecast in the foreseeable future. It remains perplexing, but with the exception of the brassicas (poor things) everything else still growing in the garden is thriving. The carrots, beets, and leeks continue to bulk up, lack of moisture notwithstanding.

Lettuce. My pet project for the fall has been lettuce. Heretofore our consumption of lettuce has been limited to a four-week period from late June to late July. For the rest of the year, we do without. I planted some seed in early August, and, since, have assiduously tended to them. Cultivating, thinning, transplanting, watering and watering, and, now, harvesting individual leaves from the plants. (They have not yet headed up.) All this for a vegetable significantly lacking in both flavor and nutrients. For the diet-conscious, it does contain virtually no calories but that is because you are eating virtually nothing. Lettuce.

What is ahead? The raspberries are frustratingly late in maturing, great numbers of green berries exhibiting no indication that they might ripen. Combined with an apple yield which approached zero, we are currently fruit-deprived, but haven’t given up on an ultimate raspberry crop. Garlic will be planted mid-month and I need to set aside a portion of the potatoes to set out in the spring. I see no indication that you –know-what will be significantly less disruptive next summer and have reduced my plantings of both by about one-third. The new normal.

Coming or Going?

Our mother had an expression she used to say in moments when she was particularly overwhelmed: “I don’t know if I’m coming or going!” This was always uttered with a sort of bemused surprise, as if tending to a family of eight should be anything other than hectic.

I thought of her expression recently on a walk down our road. Some tiny roadside flowers, white and star-shaped, had caught my eye. They seemed fresh and alive at a time of year when so much is fading. I stooped to examine them more closely and wondered: were these an autumn-blooming plant just coming into their prime, or was this summer’s last gasp? Are you coming or going?

My walk continued. I noted roadside ferns, lush and green in summer, now edged in yellow and brown: going. But the asters, abundant in clusters of white and purple, were definitely coming. Autumn is their season and they are joined by the bright yellow goldenrod just bursting into bloom.

Back at the house I looked around our yard with my mother’s question in mind. Coming or going? Our hummingbirds seem to be doing both. The ones we see now in early autumn are not our summer birds but birds in transit, coming south from Canada, stopping off at our feeders for much-needed refueling. The frantic activity of late August, when a dozen raucous hummingbirds competed for a moment at the feeder, is quiet now. The males have long since departed, leaving the females and their summer offspring to follow at a more leisurely pace. They come in ones and twos, perching for a quick drink before continuing on their way. Coming and going.

The songbirds are gone. Their absence seems an abrupt disappearance rather than the gradual departure that must have been happening for weeks. The silence in the woods and fields around our home forms a melancholy backdrop to our autumn days. The robins, who hopped all summer in our grass and splashed in our birdbath, have gone south until spring. Their Canadian cousins with brighter red breasts are the ones we will see in late winter. Recently, however, we have been surprised by a pair of phoebes who visit our kitchen garden. In June a pair raised a raucous brood of seven before disappearing from our yard. But we are not fooled that this pair is coming. We know they will soon be going, heading south to a warmer winter home.

Are you coming or going? This is a question autumn cannot answer definitively. But no matter. In this time of silence and softer light, the departures are easy to forgive. Autumn is not so much a season as a shift. A waystation between light and dark. A time when coming and going are, magically, one and the same.

Larry Siegel  

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Jumping Clouds of Carolina Grasshoppers

A few weeks ago as I walked into a scraggly field, a bunch of dull colored grasshopper jumped up together and seemed to turn into butterflies. They soon sat back down on the ground and turned into grasshoppers again. When I asked friends what they were, I got many answers: locusts, grasshoppers, cicadas! But what are they, really? As near as I can find out I think they are Carolina Grasshoppers (Dissasteira Carolina) also known as Carolina Locusts, black-winged grasshoppers, road dusters and quakers. Their description said that the grasshopper is a dull brown/gray, but when it jumps up and flies its lower wings are black with a wide yellow fringe. That’s what I saw! They are found all over the continental United States and southern Canada. You may have noticed that they are called both the Carolina Grasshopper and the Carolina Locust. So, what’s the difference? Apparently a locust is a kind of grasshopper. The difference between them is that a true grasshopper remains solitary, while a locust can irrupt (grow in population rapidly, “swarm”). So the insects I saw were locusts, because they have documented irruptions. Most of the articles I read said that they irrupted infrequently, but they all mentioned the times it happened in Saskatchewan in 1933 and 1934. No, they are not the “every 17 year invasion bugs” (those are cicadas!), but they are pretty when they move, in our neighborhood, and easily seen. Look at a dirt road or a weedy field.

Maureen Blasco