### Calendar of Events

**December 1**  Monday  NORAD follows Santa’s travels this month, and can be seen on-line at http://www.noradsanta.org. This special mission of the North American Aerospace Defense Command at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado goes live December 1, providing information and games to help everyone gear up for the big night.

**December 4**  Friday 6 pm  South Village Tree Lighting and Gazebo Dedication sponsored by The Royalston South Village Revitalization group. All are welcome. Hot chocolate and cookies. Music provided by Larry Trask and Rene Lake. Memorial ornaments from the Ladies’ Benevolent Society will be hung on the tree. To get yours, call Laurie Deveneau at 978-249-5807. The 120 Drawing will be held and a special guest in a red suit will visit. In case of inclement weather, the event will be held on the following Friday, December 11.

**December 7**  Monday  Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day – 80 Years

**December 8**  Monday  Town library re-opens! Outside pickup on Mondays from 2:00-6:00, with browsing from 3:00-6:00, Thursdays from 12:00-3:00 for pickup with browsing from 1:00-3:00, and Saturdays from 9:00 to noon for pickup, with browsing from 10:00-noon. Masks and physical distance required. Bathroom closed.

**December 10**  Thursday  LBS holiday basket packing: If you know of residents who could use some extra cheer this pandemic-spiced holiday or you would like to donate to the baskets, please call Laurie 978-249-5807 by 12/4/20.

**December 13**  Sunday  10 p.m.  Geminid Meteor Shower peaking between now and Tuesday. This is one of the most exciting winter light shows, with more than a meteor a minute originating in the northeastern skies. In addition, tomorrow’s new moon means skies will be unusually dark, and shooting stars unusually brilliant, and intensely colored.

**December 14**  Monday  11:17 a.m.  New Cold Moon

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<td>New Cold Moon</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 18</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>National Ugly Sweater Day</td>
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<td>December 21</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Ursid Meteor Shower continues from about a week ago, peaking this morning through tomorrow, and departing shortly after Christmas. The remains of the Tuttle Comet will produce a “shooting star” every six to ten minutes, but there have been bursts of up to 25 in a single hour.</td>
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<td>December 25</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Winter Solstice – First Day of Winter (Day-light hours begin to increase!)</td>
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<td>December 26</td>
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<td>First Day of Kwanzaa</td>
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<td>December 29</td>
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<td>January 13</td>
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<td>New Wolf Moon</td>
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<td>January 18</td>
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<td>Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day observed</td>
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<td>January 20</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 28</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Full Wolf Moon</td>
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COVID-19
I’ll live in a bubble
And keep out of trouble
To avoid catching Covid-19.

I will stick to the task
And keep wearing a mask
Until I get the Covid vaccine!

KC
Select Board Notes
Christine Long, clerk, Royalston Select Board

We Have an Elevator! On November 12, the state conducted the final inspection of the elevator at town hall and on November 17 the Select Board approved reopening the upper hall for selected events. While we can’t hold a “grand opening” celebration, we indeed celebrate.

This good news has been a long time coming – really over 10 years from the original plan, to securing Community Preservation support for the effort, to winning a state Cultural Council grant, to winning a federal block grant (in partnership with Phillipston), to going to bid, to dealing with a spike in cost due to political issues, to losing our grant administrator with paperwork unfinished, to having our town accountant step in to complete that paperwork, to dealing with unexpected water infiltration problems, and finally to the last few details and the all-important state inspection.

Whew! And hallelujah!

It is assuredly wonderful to be able to welcome all residents, regardless of mobility, to enjoy events in that beautiful upstairs hall, to host marvelous musical and cultural events there (and to allow musicians to get their heavy instruments up there without risking hernias), and to hold town meetings in a centrally located building.

All that, of course, will come slowly, as the state and the nation tackles COVID-19.

Raymond Building Update: The beautiful new roof is complete, so we move on to the next steps: improving the drainage behind the building so the lower level remains dry, doing interior demolition, and installing the attic and sidewall insulation.

The Building Committee is already at work planning how to use the building. We have received preliminary plans from the architect, plans which not only provide space for offices currently at Whitney Hall, but also space for the major committees, IT and records storage. We also conducted a survey of Whitney employees to evaluate their needs and in the near future will provide input to the architect.

That doesn’t mean the employees will be moving in soon. The estimated cost of the entire rehab is $2 million. That number will be reduced by our using money left over from the Community Preservation grant that paid for the roof, money still remaining in our Green Communities grant for some of the energy-related projects, money from the federal CARES grant to ensure broadband for the building, and money from an ADA grant to install one or two accessible restrooms.

To establish that the Raymond is indeed a public office space, we will recommend that someone be moved in – perhaps the Building Committee itself, perhaps the Emergency Management Director. Then we will do a deep dive into how to secure the rest of the funding.

NGOs and Holiday Wishes: As a public service, the Select Board is pleased to offer a listing of all the non-governmental organizations in town. These NGOs are groups of people – some fully organized, some working more loosely – that themselves offer services to the town. Many are established nonprofits. The brochure enclosed in this newsletter is also available online, appropriately, in the Community section. A spirit of community inspires all of these groups.

And in the spirit of the season, we urge you to make a holiday gift to one or more of them – they will put it to very good use.

Here at the end of November, we know most of you celebrated a much quieter Thanksgiving. We don’t yet know if those restrictions will also impact the upcoming Yuletide and New Year’s celebrations, but we wish you joy in them. Reach out and offer virtual hugs to our NGOs and to your relatives, friends, and neighbors.

Board of Health News
Phil Leger, chair person

With Covid surging across the US and MA, now is the time to keep up the good work of masking, distancing, and sanitizing. Although we have had only 5 cases in Royalston since March, this could change at any time. The latest surge is coming from private gatherings and family spread to workplaces. Consider your holiday plans carefully and safely. Zoom, Skype and Face Time can be a great tool to share family time with those loved ones who can’t be with you. We do not lack technology for social contact. Be smart, be safe, enjoy the holidays.

The new pad was completed for the mattress and TV shipping containers. Thanks to RDPW for preparing and finishing work around pad and AJ Mallet for the asphalt work. This will allow for safe transfer of materials and more room to push snow. Also, thanks to Wright’s Welding for cutting 2 old dumpsters for metal recycling and RDPW for assistance. Now, just need the Boy Scouts to deliver their new returnable container and we’ll be ready for winter operations. Caution around the facility when slippery. Keep an eye on each other when backing up etc.

Still time for flu vaccines, see your local pharmacy or medical provider.

Ticks are still very active. Check yourselves and your pets.

Winter Parking Ban

Parking ban in effect until April 30. During the ban, do not park in the road, on the shoulder or in public parking lots. When vehicles are left in the way, this delays or in some cases doesn’t allow the road to be treated or cleared of snow or ice. The Town can have these vehicles towed at the vehicle owner’s expense. Also, avoid plowing or shoveling snow into the public way. This also can build into a hazardous obstruction that may result in damage to other vehicles. Please be considerate.

Thank you all for your support and understanding.
Royalston Department of Public Works Supt.,
Keith R. Newton

The DPW excavated the site for the concrete pad of the new gazebo. Graves Concrete gave a big discount on the concrete and Jeff and Jay Hopkins did the masonry. Photo by Rene Gagliardi Lake
South Village Tree Lighting and Gazebo Dedication

Hello Royalston neighbors,

Many thanks to Maureen Blasco for chairing the RSVR Holiday Fundraiser! There may be a few tickets left …call her at 978-249-5138. The drawing will be at the Tree Lighting and Gazebo Dedication on Friday, December 4 at 6:00 p.m.

Thank you also to Maureen and her loyal crew of volunteers who tended to the flower boxes by the bridge all summer and fall. Thanks to Kathy Chencharik, Rose Lawrence, Janice Trask and Nancy Monette.

Rick Martin and Kelly Dolan have put the community garden to bed for the year. Rick and Cathy are luckily staying in Royalston but are moving from their South Village abode, so he has said that he won’t continue as Chair of the Community Garden Sub-committee. So next year, we are hoping that someone will take over the coordination of the garden. Rick did a wonderful job in setting up all of the systems and has volunteered to mentor the next coordinator of that effort. Thank you, Rick!

Hoping you all have a Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah! RSVR Steering Committee -- Janice Trask (Chair), Nancy Monette (Vice Chair), Ruth Suyenaga (Secretary), Rose Lawrence (Treasurer), Linda Alger, Marlene Jarvenpa, Mark Shoul, Marie Mello, Todd Neale and Alice Leonard. The Royalston South Village Revitalization (RSVR) Group is a group of residents from all parts of Royalston whose mission is to make the South Village a vibrant gathering place for the whole town to enjoy while building community and having fun in the process. If you would like to be on our mailing list to learn of possible volunteer opportunities on our projects, please email RoyalstonSouthVillage@yahoo.com.

Royalston South Village Revitalization News

Thank you to the many people who helped build the new gazebo in the South Village

On November 6 and 8, the RSVR had a gazebo raising. After devoting his time all spring and summer to designing and cutting the intricate frame, Tom Musco supervised a crew of volunteers to fit the roof and the six posts together like a puzzle. The quality of this gazebo is notable, as it uses durable materials that are much stronger than the type used in gazebos available from gazebo kit companies, and Tom’s workmanship is superb. When the town voted to use Community Preservation Act funds, it was very fortunate that Tom, who is a semi-retired timber framer, volunteered to create a structure that will endure for many years.

The Victorian-era design of the gazebo was chosen by RSVR and townspeople at various events like last year’s Fall Fair. Tom located a company, Vintage Woodworks in Quinlan, Texas, that produces PVC railings in the style of Finnish sawn balusters used in the early 1900’s. From another company, he and Ruth Suyenaga found PVC brackets and running trim that are similar to those used in the design chosen by the community. These will be painted by volunteers Larry Trask and Tom Kellner and installed by Tom and Dan Monette this winter. The posts will be painted next spring.

Gazebo Sub-committee Chair Linda Alger and members Marlene Jarvenpa and Roland Hamel have been working hard coordinating many volunteers and the mostly local contractors and suppliers who have given us discounted rates. Many thanks to the following volunteers at the gazebo frame raising: Kevin Killay, Josh Doub, Lydia Musco, Scott Monette, Dick Lawrence, Tom Kellner, Becky Krause-Hardie, Robert Fairchild, Maureen Blasco, Todd Neale, Deb D’Amico, Nancy Monette, Roland Hamel, and Linda Alger. Food, water and ice were donated by the Ladies’ Benevolent Society, Subway and Linda Alger. CAD drawings for the design were donated by Josh Doub. The DPW excavated the hole for the foundation and moved the flagpole and bushes, which will be relocated in the spring. Local masons Jay and Jeff Hopkins supervised the pouring of the slab. Ron Wright of Wright’s Welding in Athol created the compression ring for the roof. Graves Concrete of Templeton gave us a big discount for the cement. The pegs for the frame were donated by Scott and Judy Northcott of Northcott Pegs in Walpole, New Hampshire. Kevin Killay arranged for Monty Tech students in the sheet metal shop to work on the metal roof for the cupola. Robert Fairchild has been donating many days on setting up the electrical system. Steve Chase is going to make the electrical panel enclosure. Rene Lake and Marc Poulin moved the Little Library.

There is a great video by Norah Dooley of the gazebo frame raising that captures the moment when the crane drops the roof onto the posts on the RSVR Facebook page coordinated by Jessica Spring, Chair of the Social Media Sub-committee at https://www.facebook.com/Welcome-to-the-Village-of-South-Royalston-109177197269651/?modal=admin_todo_tour

It takes a South Village as the gazebo goes up: Tom Musco, who designed and built the frame, Gazebo Sub-committee member Roland Hamel and Chair Linda Alger at the raising.
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

Donations to the Friends
Don and Marlene Jarvenpaa
Benny and Susan Gronowicz
Richard and Rose Lawrence
Bob and Lorraine Casinghino
Diane Lincoln
Tempo and John and
Stephanie McClure
Pat Kelley
Rev. Phil Jacobs
Brenda and Jeff Hopkins
Tom and Lynne Kellner
Dan and Cheryl Mahoney

Weekly Yoga Class
Back at the Town Hall!
With the completion of the elevator, yoga has moved from the lower level of the First Congregational Church to the second floor of the Town Hall. Participants must wear a mask at all times, bring his or her own mat, and remain in one of the designated spots during the class. The number of participants is also limited and will be on a first come, first served basis. Yoga is a wonderful way to relax during these very stressful times. No prior experience is necessary and all levels of skill are accommodated.

Free kids’ crafts and book give-aways continue on the Library steps
Seasonal craft kits will continue to be available 24/7 outside the library for preschoolers and older kids. I am grateful to Brooke Coleman and Gina Verrelli for their creative talents to provide a new craft each week. There will also be a bin of holiday books and cookbooks outside the library that are free to take.

Wowbrary – Sign up to get the Library’s Newest Additions in your in Box!
Wowbrary is a great way to see what is new and to read reviews of the materials at the library. You can also program it to alert you when your favorite authors have books that have been added. It’s easy. Just go to www.wowbrary.org, type in Royalston’s zip code (01368), select our library, enter your email and enter. If you don’t receive an email confirmation, and use gmail, check in ‘Promotions’ and your email may be there. If it is, just move it to the inbox and after that the alerts will come to your inbox.

GRAND REOPENING !!!!
The trustees and staff have decided to reopen the library beginning Monday, December 8. The library will be open for outside pick-up on Mondays from 2:00-6:00, with browsing from 3:00-6:00, Thursdays from 12:00-3:00 for pickup with browsing from 1:00-3:00, and Saturdays from 9:00 to noon for pickup, with browsing from 10:00-noon. Please be aware that this is subject to change at any time depending on Covid directives.

Masks are mandatory for anyone over the age of two and hand sanitizer will be available at the door and must be used before entering the building. The number of people entering at any time is limited and a sign will be posted that will let people know when they are allowed in the building. Each patron or family group will be allowed 15 minutes to find and check out materials. There will be a computer available at a stand-up desk. Those needing to be seated to use a computer will be accommodated. The bathroom will not be open to the public at this time except for emergencies. We will be doing contact tracing (entering names, contact information, and date and time of attendance) in accordance with State guidelines. After three weeks, the lists will be destroyed and prior to that will not be released unless there is a covid-related reason.

Internet to Go! - Hotspots Available for Borrowing
Hotspots have been extremely useful for people who have no internet service, for others who have been traveling, and for some with limited data who wanted to update devices and download large files. They seem to work best with the leaves down. Anyone over the age of 18 with a valid library card may borrow a hotspot for two weeks.

Custodian Position Available – The Phinehas S. Newton Library is looking for a responsible person to assume the duties of custodian at the library. The position is 2 hours per week and entails vacuuming, mopping, cleaning the bathroom, taking the trash and recycling to the basement, dusting all horizontal spaces, indoor window cleaning when necessary, sweeping the front steps (but not snow shoveling), and various other light tasks. The position pays $14/hour. If you are interested, please contact the library by phone or email.

Stocking stuffer? There are still a few copies of last year’s 20th anniversary of the Royalston Community Newsletter Cookbook. Stop by the library or call ahead to get yours.
Support the Friends -
Two ways to give local art this holiday

Paintings: Gail Os-wald has donated framed original paint-ings of scenes from the North Quabbin area to the library as a fund-raiser for the Friends. They are on display in the children’s room of the library and may be viewed during open hours.

Some of the new materials at your library

**Adult Fiction**
- Amis, Martin
- Archer, Jeffrey
- Baldacci, David
- Beaton, M.C.
- Cameron, Bruce
- Cameron, Marc
- Child, Lee
- Clíne, Ernest
- Coelho, Paulo
- Connelly, Michael
- Connolly, John
- Cussler, Clive
- Evanovich, Janet
- Evans, Richard Paul
- Evans, Danielle
- Flagg, Fannie
- French, Nicci
- Gregory, Philippa
- Haddam, Jane
- Horowitz, Anthony
- Jewell, Lisa
- Joyce, Rachel
- Kinsella, Sophie
- Krauss, Nicole
- Lethem, Jonathan
- Macomber, Debbie
- McCall-Smith, A.
- McDermid, Val
- Nesbo, Jo
- Roberts, Nora
- Stuart, Douglas
- Steel, Danielle
- Walter, Jess
- Washington, Bryan
- Yang, Susie

**Young Adult**
- Reynolds, Jason
- Rowling, J.K.
- Sedaris, David

**Adult Non-Fiction**
- Acho, Emmanuel
- Alter, Jonathan
- Clark, Josh
- Haedrich, Ken
- Howard, Vivian
- Jackson, Jeffrey
- Kiernan, Denise
- May, Katherine
- McGee, Harold
- Obama, Barack
- Patterson, Kermit
- Payne, Les
- Safitz, Claire
- Sedaris, David
- Winspear, Jacqueline

**Children’s Fiction**
- Aerts, Jef
- Brett, Jan
- Camper, Cathy
- Denos, Julia
- Dewdney, Anna
- Gutman, Dan
- John, Jory
- Kane, Diane
- Kinney, Jeff
- Lakin, Patricia
- LaRocca, Rajani
- Miles, Ellen
- Morris, Lucy
- Nainy, Mamta
- Pinkney, Jerry
- Raschka, Christopher
- Waechter, Philip
- Yolen, Jane
- Yonezu, Yusuke

**Audiobooks**
- Sedaris, David

**Adult Non-Fiction**
- Guinness World Records 2021
- Acho, Emmanuel
- Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man
- Haedrich, Ken
- Pie Academy
- Howard, Vivian
- This Will Make It Taste Good
- Jackson, Jeffrey
- Paper Bullets
- Kiernan, Denise
- We Gather Together
- May, Katherine
- Wintering
- McGee, Harold
- Nose Dive
- Obama, Barack
- A Promised Land
- Patterson, Kermit
- Fossil Men
- Payne, Les
- Dessert Person
- Safitz, Claire
- The Best of Me
- Yonezu, Yusuke
- Sharing

**Children’s Fiction**
- Aerts, Jef
- Brett, Jan
- Camper, Cathy
- Denos, Julia
- Dewdney, Anna
- Gutman, Dan
- John, Jory
- Kane, Diane
- Kinney, Jeff
- Lakin, Patricia
- LaRocca, Rajani
- Miles, Ellen
- Morris, Lucy
- Nainy, Mamta
- Pinkney, Jerry
- Raschka, Christopher
- Waechter, Philip
- Yolen, Jane
- Yonezu, Yusuke

**Audiobooks**
- Sedaris, David

**Children’s Fiction**
- Bigger than a Dream
- Ten Ways to Hear Snow
- Stardrissed
- Llama Llama Loose Tooth Drama
- Mrs. Bacon is Fakin’
- Couch Potato
- Don Gateau
- Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Deep End
- Seven Golden Rings
- Max & Mo Makes a Snowman
- Miki
- The Song for Everyone
- Sadiq Wants to Stitch
- The Little Mermaid
- The Blue Table
- Jacob’s Fantastic Flight
- How do Dinosaurs Show Good Manners?

**DVDs**
Creative Writing Class

Michael Young, the Current Royalston Poet Laureate, has been signed to lead a non-credit class entitled “Writing Your Way Back Home” at the Mount (MWCC) during Spring Semester 2021. It is part of the Lifelong Learning program. The course description reads “We will learn how to write what we see, what we hear, and what we feel. Finding the right subjects and the words that work are only the beginning. Along the way, we will discover how that reflects our own journey and our own being. Open to writers of all levels, no experience necessary.”

For more course descriptions, to register, and to pay online visit mwcc.edu/noncredit, phone: 978-630-9525

Winter Simple


Winter frosted trees play crystal tunes with icy fingers.

Birds dine at bird feeder, squirrels on the ground.

Cotton clouds drift above.

Winter simple.

Michael Young
Current Royalston Poet Laureate

Town Clerk and Election Workers - Thank You!

In the 2020 presidential election in Royalston, there was a nearly 80% turnout and multiple times and ways to vote during the pandemic. Barb Richardson, town clerk, and our election workers handled it all cheerfully, quickly, and accurately. In the end, the Biden and Harris ticket won in town, garnering 404 of 783 votes.

Royalston Emergency Management

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

Yup. The Coronavirus is still with us, along with the flu, and the other usual viral suspects found between now and late spring. MASK-UP whenever you go out – and the current guidance says, face covering are to be worn EVERYWHERE when you’re not on or in your own property. Go to enclosed populate places (like grocery stores, pharmacies, etc.) only if necessary. Keep your distance from others. Limit your time in enclosed spaces that aren’t your own. Wash, wash, wash your hands frequently. Do our health care workers a huge favor, and do your very best to stay healthy this winter!

Speaking of winter, it’s time to review some preparations for what’s likely to hit during December and January: Cold and Snow. Prepare all of your vehicles for winter road conditions and possible stranding. Ensure you have jumper cables, flares/warning triangles, a small shovel, and a bit of sand or kitty litter in the trunk or storage area. Keep a small supply of non-perishable food, a warm blanket, and a flashlight with fresh batteries in the passenger compartment. Oh, and be sure to keep the fuel in your vehicles topped off throughout the winter months.

Prepare your home for power outages and confinement (Most of which you’ve probably done, thanks to the Coronavirus.) Make sure you’ve set by at least a couple of weeks of non-perishable food, sealed drinking water, medications, for the people and pets in your family. If you have wood heat, make sure chimneys are cleaned, and you have some dry fuel set aside for your wood, wood pellet, or coal stoves. Fill your generator with fuel and some fuel stabilizer; give it a test run. Make sure you have sources of lighting (LED lanterns, kerosene lamps, candles, matches) in easily accessible locations.

Prepare all of your vehicles for winter road conditions and possible stranding. Ensure you have jumper cables, flares/warning triangles, a small shovel, and a bit of sand or kitty litter in the trunk or storage area. Keep a small supply of non-perishable food, a warm blanket, and a flashlight with fresh batteries in the passenger compartment. Oh, and be sure to keep the fuel in your vehicles topped off throughout the winter months.

Prepare a “go bag” with necessities should you have to evacuate your home due to weather-related issues. Include your updated emergency contact list with names, addresses, and phone numbers for family and important connections. Add in clothes, toiletries, and (thank you COVID-19) masks, and hand sanitizer. Don’t forget medications for you and the pets.

During a weather emergency, stay home and off the roads. Keep any heating, cooking, or dryer vents cleared of snow at least three feet in all directions. Don’t use charcoal in your fireplace, gas ranges, or gas grills for heat due to potential carbon monoxide poisoning. If you’re outside, wear appropriate clothing, and do not overexert yourself while moving snow or sanding walkways. Don’t be the (reasonably preventable) fire, police, or EMS emergency that puts others at risk.

Within three weeks, the hours of daylight begins to increase. Seed catalogues will be arriving in the mail. We can see spring on the horizon, along with warmer weather, outdoor activities, and with any luck, a better understanding of SARS-CoV-2, a vaccine, and the return of life closer to that we were experiencing the year before!
Henry P. Cole Jr. died on October 14, 2020 in Fairbanks, Alaska from complications of Covid-19. He was a beloved baritone, mountain climber, purveyor of poetry and song for all occasions, ultimate master of ceremonies, hockey player, math, physics and public policy professor, and kind friend to so many. Henry had just celebrated his 83rd birthday in September. Henry was the last of the influential Bullock/Cole family to own property on Royalston Common. His forebears include Hugh Bullock who moved to Royalston in the mid 1770s and ran a successful farm. His sons moved to the common and became teachers and shop owners. The next generation included Alexander Hamilton Bullock who served as Governor of Massachusetts from 1865 to 1867. He resided at The Bullock Mansion on Royalston Common now known as The Maples. Henry’s grandfather moved to Denver and became a wealth financier. Returning to his hometown of Royalston in 1917, he found a poor town where property was cheap. He built up his estate over the next twenty years buying up many of the houses on the common. He famously hosted the Empress Zita of Austro-Hungarian Empire in exile during WWII at “The Bastille”. Henry’s mother Katherine and uncle Hugh sought to turn the estate into a private boarding school however the financing fell through. The properties were slowly sold off over the last 50 years, Henry holding onto his house until a few years ago. The proceeds became the Royalston Academy trust, which provides enrichment activities and scholarships to children in our town to this day and into the future. Many older residents of Royalston remember attending festive garden parties at Katherine’s house on the common with live music, puppets and even elephant rides. (Pictured: A Royalston Bullock family gathering from summer 1940. Empress Zita is in black in the front row. Henry would be 3-years old at this time.)

Wilfred "Bill" Cloutier, 96, passed away on Saturday, November 7, 2020 in Sebring, Florida. He was born October 21, 1924 in Guilford, Vermont to the late Wilfred J. and Blanche (Gates) Cloutier. He was a resident of Sebring Florida since 1980, formerly living in South Royalston, MA. Wilfred was of Catholic faith. He served his country as a Sergeant in the US Army Air Corp during WWII. He was a member of the American Legion and VFW. Bill was a salesman for many years, then in 1971, he owned and operated Pete & Henry’s in Royalston. He also started the Boys Donut Shop in Athol in 1978. Bill retired to Florida in 1980 where he was an avid golfer, playing into his 90’s. He will be missed by all who knew him. Bill is survived by his loving wife of 72 years, Virginia M. (Harris); six children, Christine Taylor of Waxhaw, NC, Suzanne Strong and her husband, Kent, of Athol, Sandra Allard and her husband Edward of Ossipee, NH, John Cloutier and his wife Terry of Royalston, Gene Cloutier and his wife Beth of Orange and Robert Cloutier of Sebring, FL; as well as 10 grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren. There are no services at this time.

Rodney (Stumpy) Cleveland, 80, of Homosassa FL passed away Sunday, November 22, 2020 after a 4 year struggle with heart issues. He was born in Gardner, MA on June 24, 1940 to Merritt and Rita Cleveland. He resided in Royalston most of his life until he retired and moved to Florida. Rodney worked as a truck driver. Then worked many years for the Royalston Highway Department. His real enjoyment was his stump grinding business R&A Stump Grinding. He also enjoyed wood working, metal fabrication, fishing, and competition shooting as well as his computer. He was a life member of the NRA and the Franco American club. He is survived by his wife Anita of Homosassa. His children Robyn Cleveland and Willie Cleveland both of Athol. Grandchildren Erik LaMar of Orange and Jessica Cleveland of Winchester NH. 4 great-grandchildren Alarna and Jesse LaMar of Athol, Lillian Rose and Tomy III Pace of Winchendon, MA. A sister, Carol Bender, of Winchendon, MA (who unfortunately passed 4 days later on November 26, 2020.). He was predeceased by both his parents. There will be no services at this time.

With sincere thanks
My brother and I would like to thank you all for the friendships you had with our dad. Many of you had years of hunting adventures snowmobiling golf outings shared meals holidays and lots of conversations. You all meant the world to him. He loved this town and all his friends here. While we are feeling the loss of our dad we know you are too. Thank you for being a big part of his life and all the wonderful things you all did for him. We too are sorry for your loss as we ALL will miss him dearly.

With much love and gratitude
Michelle and Norman, Norman Carlson Kids

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**What’s Happening at the Village School?**

Rise Richardson, director

We are open, continuing to follow Massachusetts health and safety protocols. Everyone wears masks at school and we are all used to it. It’s good to be together.

See the new video about the Village School on the home page of the Village School website (www.villageschoolma.org), made by one of our graduates, Isaac Richardson.

Before Thanksgiving, everyone at the school pitched in to collect a mountain of food for the Orange Food Pantry.

All classes began Winter Gardens in late November, beginning with rocks and sand, adding moss and then adding miniature animals. They take the gardens home for the holidays, adding a candle to honor the light in all of us.

1st-6th graders start cross country skiing in January.

Saturday February 6th is the next Open House from 10 to noon, probably virtual! Watch the website home page for details. We are taking names for preschool, kindergarten and 5th-6th for next fall, email rise@villageschoolma.org if you are interested.

**ARRSD**

As of Thanksgiving, families in the ARRSD can still choose in-person or remote instruction for their students. The air flow issues at Athol High School are almost all resolved and students in grades 9 - 12 who choose to are back in the building. In all schools, teachers are extremely flexible teaching the students in the classroom and on the screen simultaneously to cover grade level standards. With a quarter of the ’20-’21 school year in the books, the schools are somehow managing to maintain pandemic safety, teach rigorous curriculum, care for staff and students’ social and emotional health, and reach out to families. Students and families choosing remote learning are largely stepping up to be independent learners, but these demands are daunting all around. If your student is struggling, please contact your schools. Teachers want to work with you so your child is happy and academically successful.

**Free lunch and breakfast** are available for all children 18-years or under in families in the ARRSD. For remote learners, food is dropped daily at central locations or can be picked up at school. Call the schools for specific information. Huge kudos to Royalston’s Carolyn Brown who has been supervising the feeding of our students throughout the pandemic beginning last March, continuing through the summer, and within the daily changes of the in and out school model.

Eight graders at ARMS are organizing a walk-a-thon on Dec. 11 to raise money for local and global causes. Proceeds raised will be distributed to Athol food pantries, and in solidarity with a Honduran family in the district, to hurricane relief through the Internation Federation of the Red Cross. Please consider sponsoring a walker. Donations can be dropped at ARMS or email bgospodarek@arrsd.org for info or brought to the holiday trunk or treat planned for Dec. 12 at ARMS, where socially distanced families can get small gifts from each decorated car and enter to win themed gift baskets - all for free.

The school committee has unanimously decided to discontinue the “Red Raider” mascot. In December, the caricatures will be removed from the building. There will be opportunities for students and the community to provide suggestions for a new mascot early in the new year.

**Monty Tech**

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

As of late November, the Monty Tech Communities of Fitchburg, Lunenburg, Sterling, Templeton, and Winchendon were classified as “high risk” for Coronavirus spread. Many of the remaining 13 communities are in the “moderate risk” categories, and thankfully, Royalston remains one of the only two Monty Tech communities (the other is Phillipston) in the “lowest risk” category. There have been a couple of interruptions of the in-person learning component of our current hybrid plan, but they’ve been brief, and done in consultation with the Director of Public Health for the City of Fitchburg, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The latest decision to shift completely to remote was during the week of Thanksgiving, due to the numbers of students and staff who would have to be quarantined. As of this writing, the plan is to restart the in-person component on November 30.

Monty Tech hosted a Walgreen’s Flu Clinic, providing free flu immunizations to any faculty and staff who wanted one – at no charge. It was described as, “...an extremely efficient process, providing a much-needed service.” Students will all be expected to have immunizations no later than December 31, 2020.

The free meals (breakfasts and lunches) program was expanded to offer drop-offs at all bus stops in the current schedule. Food Services has been using an assembly line model to fill the bags with nutritious foods for the current 343 students taking advantage of this program, which include nutritious meals for the week, for students learning remotely.

COVID-19 is responsible, at least for the 2020-2021 school year, that schools may choose to either cancel a day of school (to be made up at a later date) or conduct a remote learning school day when school bus travel is deemed unsafe. Monty Tech has decided to use remote learning in place of snow days, “...as the infrastructure and framework are already in place for a successful transition to remote learning.”

Virtual parent conferences are being held December 8 & 10, from noon – 1:30 p.m. and 4:30 – 7:30 p.m. Meetings are scheduled every ten minutes, using the “Pick-a-Time” app.

Monty Tech submitted a grant application for $60,000 which, if successful, will provide a 250- hour training program for adults interested in entering the welding trade. The program was developed in consultation with Lincoln Electric and Tooling-U, and will grant 12 adults with the necessary certifications to enter the welding industry, and in collaboration with the North Central Career Center, which will work on placing the grads.

Royalston’s Monty Tech representative Mary C. Barclay again served as the voting delegate at the Massachusetts Association of School Committees’ annual meeting, attending this year’s virtual conference. The featured speaker was Dr. Kalise Wornum, on “Understanding the Connection between Cultural Proficiency and Equity. Those wishing a copy of the conference report are invited to request one by e-mailing m-barclay@montytech.net.

Anyone wishing any updates regarding Monty Tech and COVID-19 are encouraged to go to the website, www.montytech.net.
Consider shopping locally this holiday. Give the gift of music lessons, garden manure, fresh cookies, kids’ books, coffee, eggs, art, maple and honeyed sweetness, warm firewood and more!

Tenuto Studios: Music Lessons and Professional Recording Studio, located in beautiful Royalston, MA (617) 752-1372. Lessons for all instruments, all levels. Run by professional musicians with extensive performance and teaching experience, trained and freelanced in New York City. Please visit www.tenutostudios.com for more information. tenutostudios@gmail.com


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

Horse Help! You and your horse may find an extra pair of hands and a different set of eyes & experience useful. I can assist at your horse’s home space or my farm, with your training or 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. 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

Foods for your feasts

Fresh eggs: $3/dozen, as available, in a cooler at the end of the driveway of Nine Oak Farm, 185 Bliss Hill (north side). Sean & Amanda Judge plan to include duck eggs at a later date.

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); 978-249-7778; jessputney1989@gmail.com

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 978-249-7778 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.

Dean’s Beans Coffee You can get yours delivered, fresh, once a month to the Village School, whole beans or ground. Around $10/pound. Find the order form at www.villageschoolma.org and order online. You’ll pick up the coffee in the Village School hallway.

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for sale:

Sharon A. Harmon has just published a new children’s book Horatio Mortimer Loved Music for children ages 3-8. Delightful illustrations done by Siiri Paton of Orange. Makes a great Christmas gift for the little ones on your list. Price $12.00 Call Sharon to order one at 978-249-3040 or go to saharmon@hughes.net Also on www.Amazon.com/Horatio-Mortimer-Loved-Sharon-harmon/dp/1735460419/

Hand Painted Christmas Ornaments by Laurie Truehart. White, glass bulbs featuring wild birds, ducks, other animals; can custom-design ones with beloved pets. Singles or multiple image sets. Contact by Facebook messenger or text 978-939-3262.

Custom Thermal Travel Cups by Swank Creations. Custom options by experienced graphic designer. Single pieces or sets; totally kool kid’s cups. Krys and Keith Swan at swankkreations@gmail.com.


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


Ashley of Livi Farm is selling cookies by the dozen, loaf breads, and Hot Chocolate Bombs. Large bread loaves-$8, $15 for 2 Small loaves-$5 Banana, Pumpkin, Blueberry Lemon, Cranberry Orange and English Toasting Bread. If there is a specific flavor you would like, just ask. Cookies-$5/dozen: Coconut macaroons (lemon and orange chocolate), Chocolate Chip, Chocolate Gingerbread, Soft Sugar Cookies (decorated for $1 more), and Peanut Blossoms. Again, special requests are accepted. She can be contacted via email at aslivi45@outlook.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

Local, raw honey from Squier Davis Farm. One pound jars $10.00 Cash preferred. Self serve on porch (#350 Route 32) or call 978-249-4000.

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

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

November 22, 2020

We did not ease into a killing frost. After a couple of nights in the low 30s, we woke on October 31 to a bone-chilling reading of 22°. (To hammer the point home, it was 16° a week ago.) To suggest the garden remains a hub of activity would be a stretch. Neither would it be accurate to suggest that the gardening season has come to a close. Well, of course, it did for the frost-sensitive plants. But others exhibit varying degrees of frost-insensitivity. Broccoli and celery did not survive but carrots, beets, and rutabaga will remain in place until frozen ground threatens. Parsley and spinach offer a touch of green. Leeks, Brussels sprouts, and kale, tougher than nails, can be freshly-harvested through the month. But the poster-child of frost-insensitivity is the parsley. Left to its own devices, un-mulched and unattended, it will survive the most rigorous of winters, providing the first of next-year’s crop come March. As a bonus, deep freezes convert the starches in parsnips to sugars.

Raspberries survive temperatures a few degrees below freezing, but 22° is more than a few degrees. The reality of full raspberries is that regardless of how early the harvest began and how long it has proceeded, at killing frost, large numbers of unripe (read: never to be ripened) berries remain. In this year of apple deficiency, it would have marked the end of our fresh fruit season, but Patti Stanko gifted us a couple of bushels of pears from a neglected tree in Westminster. Most have been processed into sauce, but a few will provide fresh eating for a couple more weeks. When exhausted, it will be my last fresh fruit until the onset of strawberries next June.

The continuing saga of the lettuce. In act one, the lettuce was planted, thinned, transplanted, watered, and kept free of weeds. In act two, the deer ate the crop. Act one took eight or so weeks; act two, one night. And, now, an encore. We always permit a few of the summer lettuces to send up flower stalks and mature seeds, and, always, are rewarded with lettuce seedlings the following spring. This year they appeared in October, and, with the not-insignificant contribution of the fish tanks, have grown enough to provide a modest supply of leaves. Fact is, a dozen or so combined with a dozen or so spinach leaves will fill a couple of salad bowls (and we expect no dinner guests for the indeterminate future). Throw in a couple of scallions and radishes (both still in the garden) and a handful of cherry tomatoes and chopped pepper (brought indoors before frost) and we are rewarded with a (really) fresh salad, frigid temperatures notwithstanding.

It has been said that nothing is what it was, that life has been compromised in every way. Not so. The garden is precisely the way it was, not compromised in any way. Virus be damned; you can find me in the garden.

Larry Siegel

Winter Woods

The crisp air of early winter beckons me out of doors. I put on my coat and my bright orange vest and venture out for a walk down our road.

Over these days and weeks, I have watched the woods change. A short while ago, the trees were a riot of color. As days passed the reds became copper and the yellows turned brown. The light became misty gray as it filtered through shrinking foliage, casting shadows of silver and black. A wind storm or two brought more leaves down until there were none left to obstruct the light. Now as I walk I am surrounded by tree trunks that stretch toward the horizon and branches that reach for the sky.

This is how I prefer the woods: a twisted mass of leafless branches interspersed with the soft green of hemlock and pine. My eyes are drawn upward into this network of pencil-line branches. They seem laced together, this web of limbs, joining forces against the winter ahead. Now I see not only the shape of trunk and branch but the secrets they hold, hidden from view all summer long. Here a burl, there a mass of leaves packed tightly together. I am reminded of a poem by Richard Wilbur in which he sees the summer trees as massive ships whose leaf-sails billow in the wind. Now in winter, he tells me, these leafless trees are no longer under sail but are moored safely at harbor with “naked mast and spar/ hin which we now see where the crow’s nests are”. Another reason to love these leafless woods.

Nearer the ground, now stripped of foliage, I can clearly see the stone walls that stretch and stretch into the woods and beyond. They are everywhere, and I think of the back-breaking work of clearing pasture land that happened all around us two centuries ago. As I walk I follow one wall with my eyes, trying to see its end. But I lose it on the other side of a hollow and wonder if the wall I see further on is the same one come back into view.

In late afternoon, as the sun sinks low behind the trees, the silence is like a presence. It invites me to pay attention, and I do. I have learned the difference between the startled chirp and scurry of a chipmunk and the confident hop of a squirrel. I recognize the calls of birds I know – chickadee, titmouse, jay. One afternoon the distinctive call of a pileated woodpecker drew my attention. I often hear their cry near our house, but they rarely come into view. This time I stopped and peered into the woods as the bird swooped through the branches and landed on a tree just in front of me. These are astonishing birds - large with black and white feathers and a bright red crown. To have one so close was a gift, so I stood a long time watching as it hopped around the trunk, tapping out great holes and flinging chunks of bark in its search for dinner.

In the cold dark winter ahead, the woods will continue to change. So, I will add a hat and scarf and mittens to my walking gear and venture out. Even in the dark of winter the woods will have something to show me. And I will be ready to learn.

Deb D’Amico
Marion’s Food Pantry Grand Opening
Food insecurity is surging along with the Coronavirus. Marion’s food pantry is open on Saturdays in the Parsonage on the Common. If there is anyone in need or knows of anyone in need or if you would like to help, please contact Debbie Conrad - 978-895-3505.

Wildlife Sightings
Kathy Chencharik snapped this photo of a Great Blue Heron near her home on the Millers River.

Skip Ciccarelli had a bobcat sighting in West Royalston.

Seen any interesting wildlife lately? Let us know at the RCN.