Calendar of Events

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

February 1 Monday
ARRSD ½ Day of School – Professional Development

February 2 Tuesday
Groundhog Day

February 4 Thursday
National Thank a Mail Carrier Day – Thanks to our tress, Janice Draper, and your carriers. The pandemic shown how much we need this service.

February 6 Saturday
10 am Virtual Open House at Village School. Meet teachers and graduates, learn more about the school. Email rise@villageeschoolma.org for the Zoom invitation.

February 11 Thursday
2:06 p.m. New Snow Moon

February 12 Friday
Chinese New Year 4719 – Year of the Ox
Great Backyard Bird Count begins today and continues through Thursday. Drive carefully and watch for birdwatchers.
Winter School Vacations – Begin at close of school today

February 14 Sunday
Valentine’s Day

February 15 Monday
Presidents’ Day

February 16 Tuesday
Mardi Gras – Shrove Tuesday – Fat Tuesday

February 27 Saturday
3:17 a.m. Full Snow Moon

It took a Village... (a South Village Revitalization Committee to be exact.)

New Gazebo is Up

"Roland Hamel, Dickie Lawrence, and Josh Doub work on the gazebo raising on November 8."

"Larry Trask and Rene’ Lake-Gagliardi provided beautiful music at the Dec 4 Tree Lighting. Photos courtesy of Norah Dooley-

"The gazebo will be completed in the spring. Finnish influenced trim that is now being painted by volunteers and will be put in place along with the sawn balusters and railings. Thank you to Tom Musco, Larry Trask, Tom Kellner, Dan Monette and Josh Doub for their help with this and to Robert Fairchild for many hours of volunteer work on installing the electrical service."
Select Board Notes
Christine Long, clerk, Royalston Select Board

New Faces in Town Government. In June 2020 Fire Chief Keith Newton retired from the Fire Department, after an amazing 47 years in the department and 11 years at the helm. The Select Board appointed Deputy Chief Will Rowe as the interim chief, and in late December, with the help of a seven-member search committee, appointed Eric Jack, a captain and fire prevention officer in the Athol Fire Department, as the new chief.

The board wishes to thank the members of the search committee, who reviewed six applications and interviewed four candidates: retired Philipston Fire Chief Richard Stevens (chair), Police Chief Curtis Deveneau, retired Deputy Fire Chief James Putney, Fire Lieutenants Josh Siegel and Josh Doub, Select Board member Roland Hamel, and town resident Rick Martin.

The board also wishes to thank Deputy Chief Rowe, who willingly stepped in as Acting Chief in the interim, improved certain aspects of operations, and introduced a number of initiatives. His dedication to the department insured that operations continued to run smoothly during the five-month search process.

In October 2020 Town Accountant Lori Bolasavich resigned to accept a position in the town of Littleton, NH. Lori had solved a number of problems in her 3½-year tenure this time; she was a former town accountant here too. Finance Director Rebecca Krause-Hardie stepped in as interim town accountant and helped the board in its search for a permanent replacement.

In its ad for candidates, the board specified that we were seeking someone with experience in town accounting and received two applications that met this criterion. Both were interviewed by Becky and a consultant (working pro-bono), who concurred on a recommendation. In January 2021 the Select Board appointed Kala Fisher of Athol to the position. Kala currently works as a town accountant in four towns through the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and will continue to do so.

The board thanks Becky for her able handling of our accounting in the interim, for her expert advice in the search process, and for coordinating Kala’s transition and orientation.

Finally, we express our confidence that both Eric Jack and Kala Fisher will serve us well in coming days. We wish both of them well.

The Raymond Building: As you know, fall was busy in Raymond annals: the old asbestos roof removed, a new roof installed, and preliminary drawings completed for future use. In December, the interior of the building was demolished, though one classroom on the main floor was left intact. Also in December IT Director Jon Hardie arranged for a high-speed DSL line to be brought to Raymond, and laid plans were to enable a wi-fi signal from the fire station. Both the demolition and the internet connections were paid for with funds from the town’s share of the CARES act.

In January the Building Committee was making arrangements to insulate the attic and improve the weatherization of the windows, using Green Communities funds. The committee also began the search for a contractor to install an accessible restroom on the main floor and to improve the accessibility of one of its exterior entrances, work that will be paid for through an ADA grant.

RoyalstonNet Broadband & SV Pilot Update
Jon Hardie, IT Dir & Project Lead

This past month, we have been working on the contract with our design firm, Blinq Networks. We completed the final legal review & approval by Town Counsel. Now we move directly to RBBC and Select Board Approval – and signatures!

Many of the next steps can be done in parallel – finalizing the design, bidding construction contractors, filing for local construction permits. As part of this process, we will compose the actual build-out schedule! Of course, we are pushing for an expedited construction schedule. We will give you the updated plan as soon as we have it.

We will be sending out more frequent updates and keeping you informed as we build out across-town and commission each segment of RoyalstonNet, our own Town-Wide, Town-Owned, Self-Sustaining, Fixed LTE Wireless Broadband Network. If you would like interactive updates and questions more frequently, you can sign up for the RoyalstonNet email update list serv with Jon Hardie, at jon@moonroad.com or call him at 978-790-8474.

In other news, the Governor Baker Administration announced a new initiative for connectivity for those who are using MassHire to look for employment. Realizing the need for internet use by job seekers, Governor Baker is making cell phone internet “hot spots” available for those needing internet and enrolled in MassHire. Contact MassHire at 1-800-653-5586.

Royalston continues to support WiFi hotspots outside the Royalston Library, The Village Store, Royalston Community School, and Whitney Hall.

Got brush piles?
Burn Permits are now available online. Go to the royalston-ma.gov web site and find the Fire and EMS Department. Follow the Royalston Burn Permit link which takes you to the massfire.net web site. There is a fee of $10.25

If you do not have internet access or need assistance call the Royalston Fire Department at 987-249-8138. On the day you intend to burn, call 1-844-972-4040 to activate your permit.
Board of Health News
Phil Leger, chair person

Happy New Year everyone! Royalston for most of last year was doing very well with very few Covid cases in town. However, we were hit with the holiday surge like the rest of our area and the country. We went from 1 to 2 cases to over 20 at one time. The South Village was a particular hot-spot, but there were cases all across town. The message is that we are not in a bubble or immune. People visit and go places; we are social animals. Wearing a mask is not a political statement. It is saying I care about my health and your health. Even after receiving the vaccine, we still need to wear a mask to protect ourselves from others. Don’t be selfish. Be part of the solution. Wear a mask when in public.

What’s on everyone’s mind is, “where and when can I get a Covid vaccine”. As you know, supply right now is trying to keep up with demand. MADPH has set up priority steps for distributing vaccines to those most at risk first and then others after that. Our first responders were recently given their first shot with a cooperative effort by our Montachusett Public Health Network, of which Royalston is a charter member. Because the vaccine is two part, more resources and clinics will have to be organized. Step 2 groups should start having access to clinics in February. To check on priority groups and other up to date Covid information go to http://www.mass.gov/covidvaccine. In the meantime, wear your masks when out in public, limit your access to people not in your living group, social distance when in public, and above all, be kind to one another. It will take a while, but if everyone does their part, hopefully we can celebrate the holidays later this year in a more normal fashion.

Winter operations are in effect at the transfer station. Be careful when outside around the roll offs etc. Be careful backing up. Please wear a mask when outside your vehicle. Protect our workers who are there every Saturday to keep things functioning. Remember demo is not free. See attendant if dumping in that roll off. Keep glass separate from cans and plastic. There are separate barrels for glass. Remember to take all non-paper items such as styrofoam, plastic bags, twist ties out of packaging prior to putting in paper roll off.

Deer are active with the lack of snow cover, so ticks are active too. Check yourselves and your pets when coming in from outside.

Town Clerk News
The Clerk’s office is still operating by appointment only, please contact townclerk@royalston-ma.gov or 978-249-0493 and leave a message.

Annual Census/Street List forms will be mailed soon. They will include a dog registration form that may be returned with the census; $6.00 for spayed/neutered or $10.00 for unaltered pets. Your licenses will be returned to you via the USPS. Please remember to send a COPY of the dog’s current rabies certificate, and a check payable to the Town of Royalston.

As of late January, these incumbents have taken out papers to run for office:
Deb D’Amico- Select board
George Northrop- Moderator
Larry Siegel- Tree Warden
Roland Hamel- Constable
Roy Smith- Cemetery Commission
Nancy Melbourne- Bartlett Fund
Gary Winitzer- Bartlett Fund
Carla Rabinowitz- ARRSD School Committee
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 - Thank you!
Fair Alice McCormick
Boyd Estus
Andy and Kristen West
Theresa Quinn and George Krasowski
Dana Perkins
Don and Jean Stanton
Raeann LeBlanc and Roger O’Donnell
Robert Fairchild and Norah Dooley
Jim MacPhee
Sharon and Wade Harmon
Gerry and Marie LaJoie
Mary Smith
Mary Ellen and John Scribner
Jim MacPhee
Scott and Nancy Monette

Over 750 Pickups and Craft Kits Since September!
People have taken advantage of library services even though we’ve only been open for pickup. Over 750 pickups have occurred since September. Each pickup has included from one to 25 items - books, audiobooks, magazines, and other items as well as craft kits. The popularity of the craft kits and the ingenuity of Gina Verrelli and Brooke Coleman have provided exciting projects for young kids and older kids and one adult kit. And don’t forget we have other items to borrow as well: Orion Telescope, ice cream makers, and the Kill-O-Watt electricity appliance usage unit.

The Library reopening lasted two days. It was wonderful to welcome people back into the building after more than nine months of closure and pickups. The Library looks very different inside now with most of the furniture removed, extra bookcases in the front hall and the movies moved to the children’s room and the north front room. The clear shield covers the front desk; the hand sanitizer sits in the front entryway. We were ready but so was the virus with a significant uptick in cases in Royalston. After consulting with the Board of Health, we decided it would be best if we went back to pick up. We, like everyone, are hoping for a moderation in the number of cases so that we can reopen. We’re ready!

Movie Night Bundles
Plan a movie night courtesy of the Friends of the Library. Let us know your preferences and we will put together a movie bundle containing movies, books, activities, and snacks for your movie night. All you have to return is the movies and books. The rest of the items are yours to keep. We can create a bundle for any age. So, let us know what you’d like, for what ages, and how many and we will do the rest so you can pick up your free movie bag.

Valentine’s Day Craft
There will be a craft kit for adults and young adults available in February. The kit will contain woven wheat braids which you can soak and put together to create a heart, two love knots, or a couple of other shapes. The kit will contain instructions and materials to complete the craft. It’s an easy craft (no weaving involved this time) and the results can warm a February heart.

Wowbrary!
This is a reminder to sign up for Wowbrary a weekly email list of all the materials we have added to the collection with access to prior additions, reviews, and summaries. Just go to www.wowbrary.org enter the Royalston zip code and select our library. It’s easy and a great way to browse visually virtually.

Yoga at the Town Hall on Hiatus
Until the area returns to a reasonable level of Covid cases, in person yoga classes will not be held. Our teacher, Charlotte Weltzin, offers virtual classes you can sign up for. For more information, visit her website Trillium Ayurveda: www.trilliumayurveda.com.
Some of the new materials at your library

**Adult Fiction**
- Abdullah, Kia - *Take it Back*
- Atkins, Ace - *Robert B. Parker's Someone to Watch Over Me*
- Audraigner, Ashley - *The Push*
- Benedict, Marie - *The Mystery of Mrs. Christie*
- Colt, Peter - *Back Bay Blues*
- Cornwell, Patricia - *Spin*
- Dalton, Julie - *Waiting for the Night Song*
- Dodd, Christina - *Wrong Alibi*
- Grippando, James - *Twenty*
- Hawkins, Rachel - *The Wife Upstairs*
- Krentz, Jayne - *All the Colors of Night*
- Patterson, James - *NYPD Red 6*
- Perry, Thomas - *Eddie's Boy*
- Preston, Douglas - *The Scorpion's Tail*
- Rous, Emma - *The Perfect Guests*
- Taylor, Brad - *American Traitor*
- Woods, Stuart - *Hush-Hush*

**Adult Non-Fiction**
- Black, Jeremy - *A History of the Second World War in 100 Maps*
- Comey, James - *Saving Justice*
- Cordingley, Michael - *Viruses: Agents of Evolutionary Invention*
- Dyson, Michael Eric - *Long Time Coming*
- Ehrlich, Gretel - *Unsouled*
- Ennos, A.R. - *The Age of Wood*
- Janssen, Sarah - *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2021*
- Maddow, Rachel - *Bag Man*
- Sincero, Jen - *Badass Habits*

**Audiobooks**
- Child, Lee - *The Sentinel*
- Colt, Peter - *Back Bay Blues*
- French, Tana - *The Searcher*
- Jackson, Jeffrey - *Paper Bullets*
- Rushton, Emine - *Ayurveda for Modern Life*

**Children's Fiction**
- Auld, Mary - *How to Build an Orchestra*
- Cabrera, Jane - *Beezlebub*
- Cousin, Lucy - *This Is Your Time*
- Donaldson, Julia - *The Bear Went Over the Mountain*
- Fenske, Jonathan - *The Bug in the Bog*
- Graham, Bob - *Ellie's Dragon*
- Osborne, Mary Pope - *Warriors in Winter*
- Tharp, Jason - *Bunny Will Not Jump!*

**Children's Nonfiction**
- Abrey, Julie - *The Old Man and the Penguin*
- Batten, Mary - *Life in a Frozen World*
- Beer, Julie - *Kids vs. Plastic*
- Bridges, Ruby - *This Is Your Time*
- Crane, Cody - *The Sun*
- Davis, Jim - *Garfield Goes Hog Wild*
- Deutsch, Barry - *Wings of Fire*
- Dorion, Christiane - *Into the Forest*
- Drimmer, Stephanie - *Planet Earth*
- Florian, Douglas - *ICE!*
- Galat, Joan - *Stars*
- Jenkins, Steve - *Tiny Monsters*
- Kenney, Karen - *H is for Home*
- Smith, Emma - *The Pig War*
- Tomecek, Steve - *Moon*

**Seasonal Craft Kits**
Craft kits for older and younger kids are available in a bin at the top of the Library steps 24/7. The kits for older children contain four craft projects, one for each week of the month, and there is a new preschool kit each week. And for this month and next there will be a young adult/adult kits there too. Funding for these kits is provided by the Royalston Academy and the Friends of the Library.

**KDVs:** Death in Paradise Season 9
*Honest Thief*
*Mulan*
*Mystery Road Season 2*

**Internet to Go! - Hotspots Available for Borrowing**
Hotspot Update: Several people have borrowed the hotspots and have had success in using them. They 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. Anyone over the age of 18 with a valid library card may borrow a hotspot for two weeks.

**Borrow a Digital Projector, Sound System, and Screen from your library**– You can have a home movie night at home or practice your power point presentation with this equipment. It is compatible with a DVD player (which may also be borrowed) or a computer.

**or how about the moon and stars....?**
This is a reminder that the library has a fool-proof Orion Star Blast-er Telescope to loan to anyone with a valid library card. Bundle up and take advantage of the clarity of a relatively early winter’s evening looking at the stars, planets, and moon.
First of all a Happy New Year (we hope) for 2021. I wish to THANK Kristen West for sending her dues to us and to Theresa Quinn and George Krasowski for their generous donation to our fund raising efforts along with Robert Hendrie and Janace Wamboldt. The holiday wreath sale was a huge success. Thank you to Michael Adams and all who purchased unique home-made wreathes to make their homes festive.

Robert and Lorraine Casinghino have donated a valuable ledger from the Estabrook Establishment dated between 1838-1848. It has accounting information concerning the hat industry in Royalston. The palm leaf hat business was a major source of income for town residents, especially women, who had few other sources of cash income in the 19th century. Items such as this are extremely important to document our history. If you have any documents or artifacts important to Royalston history, please consider donating them to the Royalston Historical Society. Our existence is important to preserve so that we can show that we were here and contributed in some small way to the history of the world.

We still have more work to do in our efforts to preserve Old Schoolhouse No. 1 and its contents. Thoughts of how to put heat in the building are still being considered. We still are asking for bids on repairing and painting the fence in front of the Bastille, which is on town property and belongs to the society. We also need someone who is a plasterer to give us a bid on redoing the cove ceiling on the second floor. If you know of anyone who can aid us, please contact either me or Steve Chase.

Please consider becoming a member of the RHS (annual dues are $25). Send a check to PO Box 23, Royalston MA 01368. To join us, reach out through our Facebook page, our website royalstonhistorical.org, call Stephen Chase, 978-249-0358, Peter Kraniak, 928-249-7625 or email this newsletter.

Laurie Truehart came to Royalston in 1994 and lives with her husband, Mike, in their Jacobs’ Ladder home. The house was built in 1890 using beams from an old barn built in the 1700’s. Their Royalston-raised boys, whom she homeschooled from fourth and fifth grade on, are now grown and on their own. During the past two decades, Laurie has gained international acclaim for her exquisite wildlife woodcarvings. She also creates custom ornaments featuring paintings of wildlife or loved pets, and offers group and private woodcarving lessons.

This rich soup is one of Laurie’s delicious and comforting winter meals, which she reports can be made with mashed potatoes, but the “baked potatoes lend better flavor.”

LOADED BAKED POTATO SOUP
Recipe of Laurie Truehart
Ingredients:
- 3 medium or 2 large baked potatoes
- 3 strips of cooked, crumbled bacon
- 3 tbsp. butter
- 1 stalk green onion, sliced
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 3 tbsp. flour
- 1 ½ cups chicken stock
- 1 ½ cups heavy cream
- ½ cup cheddar cheese
- ¼ cup sour cream
- Salt and pepper to taste

I start by removing the potato from the skins and lightly mash the potato. (The skins can be used for other recipes). In a heavy saucepan, melt the butter over medium-low heat and sauté the onion and garlic. Add in the flour, stirring constantly to make a roux. Once the flour and butter are thoroughly combined, slowly add the stock, stirring constantly, cooking over medium-low heat until it begins to thicken. Add in the rest of the ingredients, stirring constantly. Season to taste with salt and pepper; garnish as desired.

Using information gleaned from these authors, talk about ways to stay warm when there’s no heat (something likely to happen if power is interrupted or fuel can’t be delivered in a major event). Prepare “to go kits” (vital if evacuation is necessary) with survival gear appropriate for winter. Stress the importance of ensuring someone knows where you’re going, if you’re going into the woods or out onto water (giving a starting point to look if you’re not back when expected), and make a list of people to contact in an emergency. Learn how to track animals (a way to locate food or a source of food) by the prints and scat left behind. Build survival shelters using man-made materials at hand, snow or fallen tree limbs, or combinations. Build a family cooking fire (be sure to contact the FD to let them know what you’re doing) and dine on “foil pack meals.” Experience a properly-prepared, sleep out under the stars in your backyard on a crisp, clear night, for valuable learning and memories that’ll last a lifetime.

Preparedness can be investigated, practiced, and is awfully useful in any of a number of situations and, as always...
Colleen E. (Smith) MacManus, born on August 20, 1935, died at home after a long sickness on January 1, 2021 at the age of 85. She was a 58 year resident of Royalston, MA. She was predeceased by her husband, Leslie G. MacManus, to whom she was married for 31 years. She is survived by her daughter, Wanda (MacManus) Young and husband Sam of Rutland, VT; son Kevin MacManus of Fitchburg, MA; son Jeffrey MacManus and wife Mary Fadel of S. Deerfield, MA; and son Keith MacManus and wife Valerie of Columbiana, OH; as well as her own siblings, Sandra (Smith) Bush of Orange, MA and David Smith of Gardner, MA. She is also survived by numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Fiercely independent, she strived to live independently even with the coming of advanced age and failing health. She loved her home, full with a lifetime of memories and family photos, and remained living there to the end. Colleen was the daughter of Stanley A. and Jeanette C. (Cloutier) Smith and spent her youth living in North Orange, graduating from Orange High School in 1953.

Her early adult years began with nursing school in Gardner, MA, followed by marriage and moving to Bremerhaven, Germany where she started her family with her new husband who was assigned there as a MP (Military Police) with the U.S. Army. Returning stateside with her husband and 2 children, she lived in Newport News, VA and in Florida, ultimately returning with her growing family (by now, 3 children) to Massachusetts, settling in Royalston in 1963, where she had her 4th, and final child (Keith).

Colleen worked much of her life caring for others in health care: working in the 1960s and early 1970's at the Eastern Star Home in Orange, MA and later providing in-home health care to home-bound people in the Athol/Royalston area. Colleen loved vegetable gardening; canning and preserving her successes for many years. She was recognized for years by many as an expert at making jams, jellies, fudge, and a host of other delicacies; and gifted, as well as sold those wares at flea markets, tag sales, and local fairs. Colleen was extremely proud of her children and grandchildren, always eager to share tales of their successes and accomplishments with anyone she met. Never one whom achieved great wealth herself, she shared what she had and freely offered what she could...a few dollars here and there, birthday and Christmas gifts, jam, jelly, fudge, zucchini bread and always... love.

LBS, Laurie Deveneau, co-president

The Royalston Ladies’ B would like to thank everyone who helped make our Drive By Pie Sale a success. At a time when things are so uncertain it was nice to be able to do something as simple as Drive-by-Pie. Don’t get me wrong. The Ladies put a lot of time and effort into making the perfect pies, but it was something that felt a bit normal (with only a few covid adjustments). Holiday baskets were delivered to twenty residents.

We also held our Remembrance Ornament sale. Thank you to all who participated. The ornaments were placed on the tree in the South Village. The Remembrance Ornaments were bought in memory of: Frank Gorham, Evelyn Gorham, Vera, Adelaide & Raymond, Keith “Papa” Debruin, “Mom” Eleanor, Mom Whittemore, Dad Whittemore, Dodi Ricko, Dean & Earl, Bill Clark (dad, grandpa), great grandpa), Phyllis Clark (mom, grandma, great grandma), Pauline & Charlie Richardson, Leigh-ann Deveneau Martinelli, Palma Sandrelli, Richard Lawrence, Frances Lawrence and Chet Hall. We are hoping as the weather starts turning nicer, we will be able to meet again. Until then we will keep having on line meetings. As always, we welcome new members. Please contact Laurie Deveneau, President, at royalstonladiesb@outlook.com or call 978-249-5807 for more information. Stay safe and have a happy 2021!!
ARRSD
The holidays brought increased confirmed cases of Covid-19 in both Athol and Royalston. Consequently, the week before the December break, school went remote for all students and teachers. Returning in the new year were all teachers along with students who had educational plans which prioritized in-person instruction and students whose families benefitted from the child care school provides. On the 25th of January, all families could choose to send kids back to school and many did. Students came back giddy to see each other. There are almost no discipline issues related to students following safe pandemic protocols. Many families have decided to ride out the pandemic remotely and some remote students are hugely successful, but others struggle. Parents, students, and teachers are all working hard to make these testing times a positive experience of empathy, academics, and independence, mixed with a bit of grace and a lot of support.

Basketball season (with masks and no fans) has begun. The players are over-the-moon thrilled. Games are broadcast at arrsd.org. The process of changing the mascot in the ARRSD is in full swing. All of the community had an opportunity to suggest a new mascot, moniker and rationale via survey in December. The final 10 choices have been selected by a student panel and a group made up of teachers and parents. Current students, alumni, and community members are encouraged to go to the district web-site or the AHS Facebook page to fill out a final survey by Feb 7 to help rank choice the new symbol of AHS school spirit.

The ARRSD was sickened in December when a community Zoom meeting was “bombed” and racial hate speech and sexual content inserted. The Royalston and Athol communities stood up loudly, clearly, and publically to state that this is not tolerated.

A community food pantry has opened at Athol High School. It is open Mondays 2 - 4 and Weds. 4 - 5:30. Call Tammy at (978) 249-2436 ext 314 for more information.

Scholarships Available
Royalston Academy Scholarships: Deadline April 16, 2021
Forms are available through your high school guidance counselor, Royalston Library, or Kristen West c/o Royalston Academy Scholarship Committee, PO Box 35, Royalston, MA 01368.

The Katherine Seymour Bullock Cole Memorial Scholarship (up to $1000) is available to graduating high school resident of Royalston going on to a higher education.

The Judy Jenkins Musco Scholarship is available for Royalston residents interested in pursuing educational activities including college, home schooling, educational travel, and educational and literacy programs.

The Ladies’ Benevolent Society Scholarships are open to all residents (regardless of age or gender) pursuing higher or continuing education opportunities. Forms are available from high school guidance counselors and the Phinehas Newton Library. For more information, contact Theresa Quinn 978-249-3819, theraquinn@aol.com. Deadline for submissions is April 16, 2021.

Chet Hall Memorial Scholarship is open to those who attended ARRSD schools past and present. Applications are with guidance counselors or call Royalston Community School 978-249-2900. Deadline: April 16, 2021.

The 2021-2022 FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) Form is available now at https://studentaid.gov. This form is the basis for many public and private scholarship and student grant opportunities.

Monty Tech
Mary C. Barclay, Royalston Rep., m-barclay@montytech.net
Despite Pandemic, school life goes on. Here are some examples:
A focus visit by NEASC (New England Assoc. of Schools and Colleges), a highly-respected accreditation agency was recently completed

Monty Tech winter sports have begun on an extremely limited basis, using pods to decrease potential exposure to COVID-19. Hybrid learning students may participate in their pods; remote-only students are not participating in sports. No fans – including family members – are allowed at any games.

Kathleen Hanson, Monty Tech Social Worker, led an effort to provide 32 Christmas baskets to Monty Tech families experiencing food insecurity. A reminder to all Monty Tech families: If you’re having difficulty ensuring there’s enough food for your family, please contact the school. Care packages of a week’s worth of free, nutritious breakfasts and lunches are being delivered to families of about 350 of our 1,400 students.

A Career Technical Initiative (CTI) Grant of $125,000 was recently awarded to Monty Tech to support no-cost training opportunities for adult learners in both Welding and HVAC/Oil Burner Technician trades. The 250 hour training programs will be in collaboration with the North-Central Career Center, which will assist with recruitment of participants, and placement of graduates.

Monty Tech has filed a letter of intent, and is currently working on a FY22 Skills Capital Grant, which could mean as much as $500,000 in FY22, and up to $1.5m for multi-year, FY22/FY23 awards.

Monty Tech School Store sells student-made items and donates the profits to the scholarship fund.

Superintendent-Director Harrity continues to participate in a Career/Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) Equitable Access focus group being conducted at the State are identified, and addressed.

Eighth graders who intend to apply for the 2021-2022 School Year need to have the application process completed no later than March 31. Late applications aren’t considered until unclaimed quota seats are up for grabs. Public, private, and home schooled students are welcome to apply. Application points are earned up to 25/100 for scholastic achievement; up to 20/100 for attendance; up to 20/100 for discipline/conduct; up to 15/100 from the sending school’s recommendation; and up to 20/100 from the Monty Tech interview. The Admissions Policy and 2021-2022 Application are available at www.montytech.net.
Classifieds

Services Available


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 turn-out, 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.

Wildlife woodcarvings and hand-painted ornaments by Laurie Truehart. Three-dimensional, life-like carvings of various animals and habitat, and glass bulbs (singles or sets) featuring wild birds, ducks, other animals available. In-stock, or custom-designs available. Contact by Facebook messenger or text 978-939-3262.

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.

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

Learning is still in-person, wearing masks. Children (and parents!) are happy to be in school.

On Friday afternoons when there is snow on the ground, 1st-6th graders are cross country skiing around Camp Caravan. 5th-6th students are studying the Middle Ages and cutting out ‘stained glass’ windows with exacto knives and using tissue paper for the glass. 3rd-4th students are studying Native Americans and are learning weaving. 1st-2nd students are learning about the seasons and cycles, and are tracking in the snow and learning about animals in winter. Kindergarten is exploring water and ice. Preschool is outside all morning, enjoying imaginary play in the woods.

Virtual Open House Saturday February 6th at 10 a.m. Meet teachers and graduates, learn more about the school. Email rise@villageschoolma.org for the Zoom invitation.

We are also taking names for preschool, kindergarten and 5th-6th for next fall, email rise@villageschoolma.org if you are interested. We’ll figure out visits this spring.

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for sale:


Custom thermal travel cups by Swank Kretations. Single pieces or sets; totally kool kids’s cups. Krys and Keith Swan at swankkreations@gmail.com.

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.

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

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

Pork Cut Packages available. Variety packs. 10 lbs - $55 20 lbs - $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.


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 suzannagaits@gmail.com

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


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.
Garden Notes

Once again, the annual challenge: writing a February Garden Notes column for north central Massachusetts, where gardens are either fond memories or fervent hopes. There is, believe it, at least some activity. For yucks, I thought I might be able to stave off winter with materials-at-hand. In November, I retrieved the ever-present fish tanks and covered parts of the spinach and parsley beds. They persist, if barely so, and provide the only touch of fresh greens in our winter kitchen. Also covered, with generous quantities of hay, was a portion of the parsnip patch. It, too, was successful (at least for now), the ground under the mulch not yet frozen. Spinach. Parsley. Parsnips. Each will make a notable contribution to this evening’s meal.

A case could be made that the garden season persists as long as there are foodstuffs to prepare, cook, and consume (and excrete, but let’s not go there). A week or so ago, we were still eating the remnants of the tomatoes and peppers hauled in last October. They were not a pretty sight, bordering on compost-worthy, but… the tomatoes tasted like tomatoes and the peppers tasted like peppers.

Seed catalogs have arrived, with their pomp and gloss and hyperbole and promises of a soon-to-be-realized bright future, sort of like what you’d expect from politician-speak. The proliferation of varieties is staggering. Johnny’s, out of Maine, lists 108 lettuces. We ought not have a choice of 108 anythings in life. Alas, we seem to have a choice of 108 everythings.

In the absence of many other diversions, I’ve been spending an inordinate amount of time watching the birds consume an inordinate amount of sunflower seeds. The feeding area is dominated by two ordinate amount of time watching the birds consume an inordinate amount of sunflower seeds. The feeding area is dominated by two.

Garden notes having been exhausted I suppose I can fall back on that time-honored topic of conversation occurring when two people run into each other. (Remember when two people ran into each other?) The weather. Still waiting on winter. It will arrive of course (forecasts suggest imminently), but, by the time it does, it will be half-over. There have been but fifteen readings below 20º and none below 10º. Feeble quantities of snow, but, alas, feeble quantities of sun as well. (We’ve just concluded a twelve-day stretch of clouds.) It is what it is.

In November, I retrieved the ever-present fish tanks and covered parts of the spinach and parsley beds. They persist, if barely so, and provide the only touch of fresh greens in our winter kitchen. Also covered, with generous quantities of hay, was a portion of the parsnip patch. It, too, was successful (at least for now), the ground under the mulch not yet frozen. Spinach. Parsley. Parsnips. Each will make a notable contribution to this evening’s meal.

Midwinter

Midwinter! Perfect!

The dark descends just after 4, the pre-dawn light returns at 7. To my surprise I find myself welcoming winter’s dark and cold. My favorite days are the ones where the sun barely shines - a white disk of feeble light. Grey-blue, pale purple, and silver-white are the colors of a midwinter sky. They bring a quiet mystery to an otherwise ordinary day.

In this time of limited contact and days that run together, the cold and dark of winter support my desire to slow down and watch. Some days it seems that everything has come to a halt which, in mid-winter, seems just right. I am most at peace when my time outdoors is on these quiet days of soft light.

Activity in the woods that surround us has also slowed to a near stand-still. I see an occasional squirrel and hear the cry of a blue jay or two. A pileated woodpecker calls from somewhere deeper in the forest but does not come near. Mostly the woods hold the silence of hibernation and rest.

For some, however, the cold and dark do not bring rest. In recent weeks an owl has taken up a sentry’s position at the end of our driveway. Twice I have seen her perched on a low branch in late afternoon. She is a barred owl and her unremarkable coloring of grey and black are in keeping with the season’s neutral tones. She, too, is paying attention, spending her time in silence, looking down at the ground with intense concentration. As I walk to the road the owl gives me the most casual of glances before returning her gaze to the ground.

Last week I saw the owl further down our road, again perched low on a roadside tree. As I approached she looked up and, this time, held my gaze. For a long moment we stared at each other, human and bird. Though I would like to think that there passed between us some connection of significance, it is more likely that she was simply calculating the level of threat I posed, deciding where I fit in her world. After a few moments the owl returned her gaze to the ground, but to her work of watching and waiting. But, as I moved on, she looked up and, twisting her head around completely, followed my departure. Was she having second thoughts? Or was this her way of asserting her territory? Or was this her way of asserting her place in the world of squirrels and finches? For some reason I wonder still.

It is because this time of year is so stripped down that I notice this owl at all. This opportunity to slow my walk, to take the time to watch and notice what is there in the dim light of day is another of midwinter’s gifts.

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Above your grave I saw a star come forth.
It shown to tell me true, that love endures.
And then my heart began to beat again,
as if to say that you were on your way –
above the moon, beyond the star. Shine far
into the dark, my dear. Have faith, no fear,
for thou art near beside me now. I feel
thy hand in mine. Thy breath, thy scent surround.
I have not lost thee to the grave so cold,
but have thee close beside me, near and dear.
And it shall be so, now and then. So long
as I will think to mend the gulf between
the seen, the past, and you and me, from time
until eternity shall be a bridge
for Love.

Michael Young
February, 2017

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

Wildlife Sightings
Kathy Morris saw two bobcat in January near the Com-
mon. One was just south of the powerlines on Athol Rd. The other was just north, prowling the old DPW site
across the street from the very bottom of Frye Hill.

Aracelli Medina Gonzalez, visiting from Mexico, was
thrilled to have her first ever experience sledding punc-
tuated by a Barred Owl that was casually resting near-
by, turning its head 300 degrees now and again to assess
the frolics.