Women’s History Month: It has been 100 years since the 19th Amendment to the Constitution guaranteed “the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex”. Despite this amendment, women of color still fought discriminatory practices like poll taxes, voting exams, and even being beaten by election officials until the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was enacted forty years later.

Women working to improve voting participation, spread factual information related to candidates and issues, and smooth election logistics have a long tradition. Lucky for us, the Royalston town clerk and the women who “man” the polls have taken up this mantle. The vital role of women in voting is being spotlighted nationally this month. The Library of Congress, along with National Archives, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum has gathered resources along the “Women Fight for the Vote”. The website is easy to navigate, and with age-appropriate lessons for every day of the month, makes a perfect supplement for remote learning and home schooling parents. www.womenshistorymonth.gov.

Reminder: Dog Licenses expire at the end of this month.

March 2 Tuesday
National Read Across America Day – Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss

March 8 Monday
International Women’s Day

March 13 Saturday
5:21 a.m. New Worm Moon

March 14 Sunday
2 a.m. Daylight Savings Time Begins – Change your clocks, change your batteries in smoke, carbon monoxide, and radon detectors.

March 16 Tuesday
LAST DAY to register to vote in the April 5th Annual Town Elections.

March 17 Wednesday
St. Patrick’s Day

Remember, remember, this is now, and now, and now.
Live it, feel it, cling to it.
I want to become acutely aware of all I’ve taken for granted.

—Sylvia Plath

Thank you to Michael Adams for suggesting these thoughts.

March 20 Saturday
5:37 a.m. Vernal Equinox – SPRING is here

March 22 Monday
National Agriculture Week

March 27 Saturday
7:05 p.m. Passover begins at sunset

March 28 Sunday
2:48 p.m. Full Worm Moon

March 31 Wednesday
LAST DAY to submit Monty Tech freshman seat applications for quota seat consideration.

April 1 Thursday
April Fool’s Day
Select Board Notes
Christine Long, clerk. Royalston Select Board

FY22 Budgets: The Select Board in February conducted its usual budget presentations, with the Finance Committee and the Capital Planning Committee invited to attend as well. At press time, the board had heard from the Police and Fire Departments, Emergency Management and 24-Hour Dispatch, the Library and the Town Clerk.

Two of these present budget challenges. When Fire Chief Keith Newton retired last June, the board consciously decided to move to an hourly chief rather than a stipended one. (In effect, the DPW subsidized the Fire Department because the chief did not charge the FD for fire calls he attended during work hours.) Thus, this line item rose from $4,100 this year to $26,000 in FY22 in the new chief’s budget.

In FY21 no town employees received raises, but for a few years before that the Select Board had recommended and voters approved relatively large raises for the financial team, who are also paid by stipend. This year the town clerk asked for a similar raise, from $13,400 this year to $17,000 next year.

Neither the PD nor the FD asked for staff raises for FY22, but the board expressed the hope that funds could be found for at least modest raises. The Library and the Board of Health have asked for modest raises; it remains to be seen whether these will materialize.

The board met with the DPW during the last week of February, after the press deadline.

The preliminary budget submitted by the Athol-Royalston Regional School District calls for only a modest increase in spending, but an increase in Royalston’s assessment of over $41,000, mostly driven by an increase in the state-mandated minimum contribution.

FY22 Big Picture. The town’s “savings accounts” are not robust. The Stabilization Fund has $89,000, but most of this will likely go to pay for snow-and-ice expenses. Free Cash has only $22,000 after payments for multi-year loans are taken out. The Capital Stabilization Fund was cleaned out last year and has not been replenished.

On the income side, the early projection on state aid shows a $30,000 increase, but as was the case last year at this time, the Select Board cannot yet be confident this will materialize. Preliminary numbers on what Royalston can raise locally show only the standard 2½ percent increase ($55,000); this could rise if the town had more than expected new growth.

The Select Board had hoped that the marijuana growing operation and the solar arrays at the landfill and on private land – all of which will in time generate revenue for the town – would come on line this year, but none have yet done so.

Of expenses outside the operating budget – which would appear as separate articles or in a combined capital outlays article – the Select Board knows of two, both from the DPW: $55,000 to repair water damage to the roof and rear wall of the PD/FD complex and $6,000 to replace the rotting sills under the kitchen at town hall. The latter was included in last year’s Capital Plan, but none of that plan was funded. The board has not yet received a recommendation for FY22 from the Capital Plan Committee. All in all, the big picture is not rosy.

Fire Department News
I would like to say to the residents of Royalston that I am excited to be your new Fire Chief. The members and I have been working hard to continue to make the town a safe place to live. We have created a few programs to help make the town a safer place. The Fire Dept. has received free smoke and carbon monoxide detectors that can be installed by the Fire Dept for no cost to the homeowner. If you or someone you know has battery powered smoke detectors (not hardwired ones) and they are missing or older than 10 years old, or are in need of carbon monoxide detectors please leave a message at the Fire Station 978-249-8178 and we will arrange to get them installed.

Also, I would like to remind everyone that Burn Permits are now online. Residents can find the link on the town website if they search burn permits. It is a two-step process to sign up, both links are on the burning permit page. One link is for the payment with unibank and a second link below on the main page is for creating the burning permit using the confirmation number given after payment is made.

Another program ongoing is the house numbering program, residents can email me at chiefrfd@royalston-ma.gov their name, address, and phone number and we can have a free house number plaque made through the Worcester County Sheriff’s Office. I have noticed in my short time in Royalston that many homes do not have a house number, visible house numbers are important as it can delay fires responders in finding a home during an emergency if no house number is present.

Be safe.

Royalston Fire Department & Red Cross are installing
FREE SMOKE ALARMS!

You Are Eligible If...
• Your home was built before 1975
• Your smoke alarms are 8 years or older
• You own/rent your home

Smoke Alarms Save Lives!

Contact Chief Jack for details 978-249-8138 or chiefrfd@royalston-ma.gov
Board of Health News

Phil Leger, chair person

The big question of the day is how to get a vaccine. Right now, the cohort targeted for immunizations in Massachusetts is people 65-years-old or older or people over 16 with 2 or more co-morbidities. Heywood Hospital is operating a regional clinic at the Polish American Country Club (PACC) at Rt. 2A Kendall Pond Rd. (north of W. Broadway Gardner). They are operating 2X per week, Tuesday and Thursday, up to a 1000 a day depending on supply. The slots open up Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 10-2. The new call center number is 978-958-9057 or online www.gardner-ma.gov/1055/covid-19. There is plenty of parking. You will be in and out, including a waiting period, in approximately 30 minutes. But you need an appointment for any clinic. There is also the state online link www.mass.gov and click on covid19. Rutland BOH will be transitioning to a regional clinic also. Gary Winitzer from COA is assisting residents to access appointments. Local boards of health are being shut out from vaccine access in order to supply the regional clinics. Demand is outstripping supply which is beyond everyone’s control. The best tactic is to keep trying and be patient. Supply will eventually catch up. Once one has received both doses, you still have to practice masking, and social distancing and handwashing. If someone has questions about the particular vaccines go to mass.gov or cdc.gov for accurate science based information. Don’t trust internet science. There is no peer review or vetting for internet science.

Winter operations continue at RRATS. Please be careful when out of your vehicles. Watch for icy and slippery conditions and be mindful when backing up. Some folks think you don’t need a current windshield sticker. THESE FOLKS WILL BE DENIED ACCESS UNTIL A CURRENT STICKER IS PURCHASED! PLEASE TAKE NOTE! Sticker fees help keep recycling services free to all! DON’T BE A FREDDIE FREELOADER! See attendant. A reminder, DEMO IS NOT FREE! Thanks.

Are you new in town? Welcome!

Just wanted to let you know that all residents are encouraged to make submissions to the Royalston Community Newsletter. We especially love your good news, classifieds, wildlife sightings, ads, recipes, art work and media reviews. The newsletter is put together and funded by the Friends of the Phinehas S. Newton Library and direct mailed to every address in town as well as out-of-town subscribers. There are 10 issues a year. The deadline is always the 22nd of the previous month. Please keep submissions community oriented and brief. Send items to chasegos2@gmail.com or drop in the library dropbox.

ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION

APRIL 5, 2021

ELECTION SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3RD, last day for selectboard to submit ballot questions to clerk
TUESDAY, MARCH 16TH, last day to register voters for the annual election
TUESDAY, MARCH 16TH, last day for Selectboard to designate polling places
MONDAY, MARCH 29TH, last day to post warrant
MONDAY, APRIL 5TH, annual election

POSITIONS TO BE VOTED AT ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELECTBOARD</td>
<td>Deborah J. D’Amico</td>
<td>3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>MODERATOR</td>
<td>George Northrop</td>
<td>3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONSTABLE</td>
<td>Roland Hamel</td>
<td>3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>TREE WARDEN</td>
<td>Larry Siegel</td>
<td>3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASSESSOR</td>
<td>Stephen Chase</td>
<td>3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASSESSOR</td>
<td>James Richardson</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(appointed until next ATE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEMETERY COM.</td>
<td>Roy Smith, Jr.</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOARD OF HEALTH</td>
<td>Randy Divoll</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBRARY TRUSTEE</td>
<td>Jennifer Basso</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLANNING BOARD</td>
<td>Amy Sanden</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUSTEE OF J.N.BARTLETT FUND</td>
<td>Gary Winitzer</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curtis Deveneau</td>
<td>1 year</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nancy Melbourne</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATHOL-ROYALSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER (ROYALSTON)</td>
<td>Carla Rabinowitz</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATHOL-ROYALSTON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER (ATHOL)</td>
<td>Joao Baptista</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deborah Kuzmeskas</td>
<td>3 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(1 seat)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William B. Chiasson</td>
<td>1 year</td>
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</tbody>
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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. Please return the Annual Census/Street List forms soon. Dog registration form 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.
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!
George Bodman for children’s programming
The Santillo family and Patience Bundshuh in memory of Werner Bundschuh
Christine and Russ Long
Halima Sussman
Tony Ferragamo and Jean McCurdy

Library Receives Grant
The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners awarded grants to 20 libraries across the Commonwealth, distributed by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the CARES Act. Royalston received a grant to provide educational materials in story walk format. We will be using books including Gordon Morrison’s book Oak Tree for one of our initial projects on tree identification along with other projects that will encourage people to learn about the natural world around Royalston. The grant provides money for educational materials, personnel, water resistant sign holders, and a laminating machine, which may be used later by other organizations in town. As the funds are from Federal sources, the projects must be inclusive and we argued that with our limited internet services in town, this was a good way to provide service to the community. Stay tuned for more information.

Craft Kits Continue
Look for new preschool craft kits weekly and older kids’ craft kits which contain crafts for the month. And coming very soon, each kit will contain a new book to keep. Don’t forget that we have bins with books that are free to take and we try to include those that relate to the season and upcoming holidays. Gina Verrelli has created a great craft kit for adults and young adults this month which will be available beginning on March 8. A Hygge craft, it is a wall hanging that is fun, easy, and attractive. All the crafts are located in bins at the top of the Library steps.

What We’re Doing Behind Closed Doors
While we really want to open to the public, we are being cautious, but optimistically cautious, and when the time comes, we are ready to be open. We’ve worked out the glitches we discovered during our brief two-day opening and we are just waiting. It’s so much easier to be open than to do pickup. And so much more rewarding. I hope everyone will take advantage of Wowbrary (wowbrary.org, type in Royalston’s zip code, click on our library). We’ve said this before but it’s worth repeating; you can receive weekly emails that let you know what has been entered into the collection during the week and you can go back and see what we’ve gotten in prior weeks. Our next project is to better organize the historic collection. We have cataloged a great deal of the collection and are now going to be systematically organizing it within the library. To that end we are applying for a couple of other grants to assist in the work. We had an exhaustive records survey done twenty years ago (thanks to former Library Trustee, Polly Longsworth and her extensive knowledge in the area and the fact that she knew of a superior archivist) and as the Archives Working Group has determined and as we realized when we saw the report, it gave us a good idea of the extensive amount of work that needed to be done but without the resources to carry out the project. In addition, Barbara Richardson has been organizing and digitizing many of the Town Clerk records so that there has been a lot going on in town in regards to preserving the extensive historical documents the town has.

Remember, we’re there to assist in searching for items and mostly to get resources, books, magazines, audiobooks, CDs, ebooks, information, and other materials into your hands.

Tax Forms
Yup, even with Covid, you have to do your taxes. Even unemployment benefits are taxable. We have Federal forms, resident and non-resident State forms, and we will be glad to print, free of charge, any forms you may need. Call or email us and we will arrange for you to pick up the forms you need.
Some of the new materials at your library

**Adult Fiction**
- Benjamin, Melanie: *The Children's Blizzard*
- Berenson, Alex: *The Power Couple*
- Chen, Te-Ping: *Land of Big Numbers*
- Dean, Abigail: *Girl A*
- Gardner, Lisa: *Before She Disappeared*
- Goldberg, Lee: *Bone Canyon*
- Hannah, Kristin: *The Four Winds*
- Harper, Jane: *The Survivors*
- Harrod-Eagles, C.: *Cruel as the Grave*
- Hart, John: *The Unwilling*
- Hurwitz, Gregg: *Prodigal Son*
- Johansen, Iris: *Blink of an Eye*
- Kellerman, Faye: *The Lost Boys*
- Kellerman, Jonathan: *Serpentine*
- Layden, Emily: *All Girls*
- Lecott, Jenny: *The Girl from the Channel Islands*
- Lee, Chang-rae: *My Year Abroad*
- Maas, Sarah: *A Court of Silver Flames*
- Maxwell, Everina: *Winter's Orbit*
- O'Farrell, Maggie: *Hamnet*
- Thor, Brad: *American Traitor*
- Vida, Vendela: *We Run the Tides*

**Adult Non-Fiction**
- Ennos, A.R.: *The Age of Wood*
- Kendi, Ibram: *Four Hundred Souls*
- Kross, Ethan: *Chatter*
- Mackay, Moy: *Art in Felt & Stitch: Creating Beautiful Works of Art Using Fleece, Fibres and Threads*
- Nimura, Janice: *The Doctors Blackwell*
- Winchester, Simon: *Land*

**Audiobooks**
- Baldacci, David: *Daylight*

**Children’s Fiction**
- Barnett, Mac: *Jack Gets Zapped!*
- Cordell, Matthew: *Bear Island*
- De la Pena, Matt: *Milo Imagines the World*
- Gall, Chris: *ig Rig Rescue!*
- Griffin, Molly: *Ten Beautiful Things*
- Grimes, Nikki: *Off to See the Sea*
- Harkness, Andy: *Wolfboy*
- Kusel, Susan: *The Passover Guest*
- Lawson, Jonarno: *Over the Shop*
- Lobel, Anita: *Ducks on the Road*
- Platt, Lucky: *Imagine a Wolf*
- Pulford, Elizabeth: *Seeking an Aurora*
- Stead, Philip: *Follow that Frog*

**Children’s Nonfiction**
- Andrus, Aubre: *Fetch!*
- Bruel, Nick: *Bad Kitty Goes on Vacation*
- Epstein, Gabriela: *Claudia and the New Girl*
- Johnson, Katherine: *One Step Further*
- Lasky, Kathrym: *She Caught the Light*
- Martin, Ann: *Karen’s Worst Day*
- Patrick, Denise: *Lewis Latimer*
- Prelutsky, Jack: *Hard-Boiled Bugs for Breakfast*
- Roth, Susan: *Butterfly for King*
- Shepard, Ray: *Runaway*
- Weatherford, Carole: *Unspeakable*

**Library Plant Sale is Back!**
Plant a few seeds, pot few offshoots, and put aside some space in your gardens. The Friends of the library plant sale will be happening this June. Expect the usual unusual selection of high quality perennials, vegetables, herbs, annuals and houseplants, all delivered with experienced advice and a smile. All profits benefit the Friends, who use some of the money to support the library and its programs as well as produce and distribute this newsletter 10 times per year.

**Yoga at the Town Hall on Hiatus**
We are not quite ready to bring back in-person yoga. However, our teacher, Charlotte Weltzin, offers virtual classes. For more information, visit her website Trillium Ayurveda: [www.trilliumayurveda.com](http://www.trilliumayurveda.com).

**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.
Royalston Community Newsletter March 2021

Historical Society News
Peter Kramiak, president

I wish to thank Anthony Ferragamo and Jean McCurdy for the donation. We are still looking for bids for work on the ceiling of Old School House #1 and the picket fence on the Common.

Remember also that your history is important to us, so documents, accounts, photos, and other items that tell about you and your family’s life in town are needed at the Society. One can give originals or copies.

A small “pond” is forming at the entrance to the museum building, and we will try to address the issue. We hope that within 2021 we will be able to open the building for viewing. Once the weather warms up I will start to get things straightened out, ready to open.

Please be safe.

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

Coronavirus Status: Ongoing. Vaccinations are continuing, but given the hundreds of thousands of people trying to schedule appointments across the Commonwealth, an unpredictable (thank you, Mother Nature), and somewhat limited (but improving) supply of vaccine, it’s a slow process. Please be kind, be patient, but be persistent, and remember, every person who receives a COVID-19 vaccination (even if it’s not YOU) means we’re one person closer to putting this Pandemic behind us. Until then, please continue masking, distancing, and limiting time in enclosed spaces with people who are not in your household.

Food Insecurity is a problem compounded and increasing as a result of the Pandemic. Please be aware there are a number of resources available. The Athol-Royalston Regional (ph. 978-249-2400) or Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical (ph. 978-345-9200) School Districts are both providing meals for remote students and families. Senior citizens (60 years and older) are eligible for “Brown Bags” of food on third Wednesdays of each month, supplied by the Food Bank of Western MA. (Betty Woodbury is the COA Chair – ph. 978-249-9656.) Marion’s Food Pantry, which opened in the spring of 2018, is “intended to help families get through a rough patch.” They’re open Saturday mornings, and are located in The Parsonage, 3 On The Common. (Contact Deb Conrad at 978-895-3505.) The Athol High School Food Pantry is open to Royalston residents of all ages, Mondays 2:30-4:00 p.m., and Wednesdays, 4-5:30 p.m. (Contact Tammy McBride, ph. 978-249-2436 ext, 314.) The North Quabbin Community Coalition maintains a list of food pantries (Contact them by e-mail at info@nqcc.org or ph. 978-249-3703.) If you are either isolated or quarantining due to the Pandemic, and can’t go to pick up necessities like food and medications, there are volunteers willing to pick up and drop off, contact free. (Leave your name, address, and phone number with Carla Rabinowitz at 978-249-4422, Laurie Deveneau at 978-249-5807, or via e-mail RoyalstonLadiesB@outlook.com. If you are fortunate enough to be healthy, have plenty of food, and are safely able, please consider volunteering, or providing donations to food pantries during these challenging times.

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

I would like to become a member of the Royalston Historical Society Inc.

___ Enclosed are 2021 dues of $25.00
___ I would also like to contribute to the Building Restoration Fund with a tax deductible donation of ____________

Name:
Address:
Email:

Checks payable to the Royalston Historical Society may be mailed to PO Box 23, Royalston MA 01368 or deposited in donation box at School House #1

Mud Season at Old School House #1 in the 1930s.
Under the Ground:

Long ago, the Creator gave many gifts to help the people. There was plenty of food to hunt, grow, and gather. At that time, the sap from the maple tree was thick and sweet as honey and flowed from any broken maple twig.

In these days, Gluskabe would go from village to village to keep an eye on the People for the Creator. He came to village in disrepair. The gardens were overgrown. The fires had gone out. He heard a strange moaning sound and followed it to a magnificent stand of maple trees. The People were lying on their backs on the ground under a broken branch while the maple syrup dripped into their mouths, moaning with contentment. Gluskabe told the people to go repair the village and rekindle the fires, but they refused and kept right on moaning happily as the sweet maple sap trickled into their open mouths.

When Gluskabe reported to the Creator about the lazing villagers fattened on maple sap, the Creator decided the People needed a lesson. He instructed Gluskabe to add a measure of water for each of 30 days between the moons to the sap in the trees.

Gluskabe made a bucket from birch bark and went to the river. He added, and added more water to the trees until the sap was like water. After a while, the people stood up and went back to the village because the sap was no longer thick and sweet.

The People asked Gluskabe, “Where has our sweet drink gone?” He replied that this was how it would be from now on. To get the sweet syrup they were so fond of, the People would need to build buckets from birch bark, gather wood and boil for many days. Gluskabe informed them that they could only get sap for a short time each spring from now on.

And so it is each spring, the Abenaki remember Gluskabe’s lesson to honor the Creator’s gifts and work hard to gather the maple syrup they love so much.

CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD

Allen Young of Butterworth Road is one of several 1960s anti-war activists who appear in a new documentary film entitled “Under the Ground: The Story of Liberation News Service.” He was interviewed by filmmaker Dorothy Dickie and the movie was released in January 2021 by Rhode Island Public Television. It can be viewed at no charge at this internet link: https://watch.ripbs.org/show/under-ground-story-liberation-news-service/.

Allen commented, "Anyone interested in the history, politics and culture of the 1960s will enjoy this film, which is much more than a bunch of 'talking heads.' It's fast moving with interesting images and commentary that is relevant in today's world."

Recipe of the month - maple pecan shortbread

Do you ever stop and consider the bounty of living in a town that oozes maple syrup in spring and bursts with wild blueberries in the summer? Sapping season, when the days are above freezing but the nights are not, is now up and running. It takes 30 - 40 gallons of sap and a lot of boiling to get 1 gallon of maple syrup. There are several small scale commercial producers as well as backyard sugarers in town shaking off the winter right now and capitalizing on a trees urge to unfurl the power of last year’s photosynthesis, bringing us all a little sweetness, right when we need it. (See the classifieds on page 9 of the RCN to find where to buy your local maple syrup.) So good with pancakes and a sweet partner to salty bacon, maple syrup is the center of cozy breakfasts. However, there are many other times for eating and snacking in the day, and maple is delicious at all of them. Some ideas:

End of winter salad dressing: Combine 1/4 cup red wine vinegar, 1 tbsp maple and 1 tbsp mustard. Pour over rice (warm or cold) mixed with root vegetables, greens, or whatever vegetable needs to be used up in your fridge. Toss.

Summer maple - (Another great thing about maple syrup, it doesn’t go out of season!)

Roasted cherry tomatoes: Toss garden cherry tomatoes, 3 tbsp maple syrup, 2 tbsp olive oil and 2 tbsp mint. Roast at 400 degrees until carmelized (about 15 minutes). Use mixture to top some crusty bread slathered in goat cheese.

Maple glaze for grilled chicken or salmon: 3 tbsp maple syrup, 1 tbsp soy sauce, 1 tbsp lemon juice, 1 mashed clove of garlic, 1 1/2 tsp mashed fresh ginger, black pepper.

Maple pecan shortbread

1 cup all-purpose flour  
1/3 cup packed brown sugar  
½ cup softened butter  
1 egg  
1/3 cup packed brown sugar  
3 tablespoons pure maple syrup  
½ cup chopped pecans

Directions
Step 1: Preheat an oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
Step 2: Combine the flour and 1/3 cup brown sugar in a mixer. Mix in the softened butter until a dough has formed. Press into an ungreased 8x8-inch baking dish, and prick with a fork.
Step 3: Bake the shortbread in the preheated oven until golden brown, about 20 minutes. While the shortbread is baking, beat the egg in a mixing bowl along with 1/3 cup brown sugar, maple syrup, and pecans. Pour the pecan mixture over the hot crust, and return to the oven. Continue baking until firm, 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from the oven, and immediately run a knife around the edges to prevent sticking. Cool completely, then cut into 1-inch squares to serve.
ARRSD

Since the beginning of the school year in the ARRSD, students can come to in-person school if families choose. The rest are expected to attend school remotely. While every teacher has zoomed ahead in their ability to engage classes through technology, it is undeniable that to teach well in two modes at once involves an abundance of planning and support. To create more planning time, the district recently began a new schedule, in which in-person students only attend for a half day on Wednesdays, but all students are expected to complete assigned work in the afternoon remotely. Students who need the child care can make arrangements to stay in the buildings to complete this work, but the busses leave on a half day schedule.

The district is moving ahead with plans for a new (mainly grant funded) Family Center, which should open in September. Many wraparound services, trainings, and peer liassons will be available in one place to support parents who are in turn supporting their children in our schools.

Delayed fall sports including girl’s volleyball, co-ed indoor track, and football are just starting at Athol High. By the time these seasons end, the school committee should have made a final decision on a new mascot and moniker. After taking in the data from the community survey, 2 groups - one consisting of current AHS students and another consisting of current staff and alumni of AHS- narrowed the field to three candidates. The choices are “Bears” because the Bearsden Woods is shared by both Athol and Royalston and this animal is strong and resilient; “Ravens” because they are smart and after an absence for any years in Massachusetts rebounded in this area along the Millers River, or “Knights” because they are loyal, strong, and committed to doing what is right. The decision is expected in mid-March.

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, the Library 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

COVID-19 is still a serious concern at Monty Tech, but thanks to dedicated staff, faculty, and Administration, and a slow, but steady improvement in local rates of Coronavirus infection, there have been relatively few, and relatively brief interruptions of the hybrid model of learning.

Monty Tech is one of two vocational schools highlighted in a February 3rd, Wall Street Journal article, speaking to the challenges of providing hands-on learning experiences during this Coronavirus Pandemic (Rural Schools Innovation Zone Collaborative in South Texas is the other school). The article discusses the various strategies adopted by Monty Tech to reduce chances of infection, which included four fully-remote periods when infection numbers were rising. To view the article and images: https://www.montytech.net/cms/lib/MA02212741/Centricity/Domain/4187/Wall%20Street%20Journal%20Article.pdf Go to www.wsj.com/podcasts for an interview on the topic with Superintendent-Director Dr. Sheila M. Harrity.

The FY’21 Coronavirus Relief Prevention Fund provided $69,550 to Monty tech. A highly-restricted allocation of supplemental funding for Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER II Fund) is also coming - $651,823, with 75% ($488,867) going to offset District community assessments that see an increase from FY’21 to FY’22.

Monty Tech is represented on the MassHire North Central Workforce Board’s “COVID Taskforce” to assess the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on business and education. During a recent meeting, it was announced an anonymous donor provided seed money to fund start-ups and workforce training efforts specifically designed to help communities recover from the effects of the Pandemic. Also at a recent meeting, newly-elected Senator John Cronin (representing Monty Tech communities of Fitchburg, Gardner, Lunenburg, Sterling, and Westminster) presented the three pillars of his platform: Early childcare, vocational education, and adult workforce training.

Monty Tech is wrapping up an application for a one-year, $500,000, FY’22 Skills Capital Grant. The focus is the Welding/Metal Fabrication program (under the direction of Royalston’s own Tim Wright) seeking funding that will enable instructors to create 16 new welding booths with all new equipment for TIG, MIG, and stick welding applications. Evening welding workforce training programs will also benefit from these new booths.

Monty Tech has begun the “Fall II” sports season, with football, boys/girls soccer, field hockey, cross country, golf, and indoor track & field. This delayed start, and modified schedule allows for participation in sports during the Pandemic.

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 turnout, watchful care 24/7. Black Horse Farm is near Birch Hill Dam by horseback. $400 per month. Training or any number of lessons $575 per month. Text Susanne at (978) 424-8580. Current email: cobbsuzanne4@yahoo.com.

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, creating their own ‘illuminated manuscripts.’ 3rd-4th students are studying Native Americans and learning about local animals. 1st-2nd students are learning about the seasons and cycles, and are writing poetry and acting out stories. Kindergarten is exploring fire and heat. Preschool is outside all morning, enjoying imaginary play in the woods. We’ll put in taps on the maple trees, checking them daily. We look forward to quenching our thirst with fresh sap at snack time.

We are taking names for preschool, kindergarten and 5th-6th for next fall, email rise@villageschooarma.org if you are interested. We are scheduling visits this spring, with masks on and safe distancing.

for sale:


Custom thermal travel cups by Swank Kreation. Single pieces or sets; totally cool 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); 978-249-7778; jessputney1989@gmail.com.

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.

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.


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.
There were few in the way of gardening notes in the February newsletter; there are less still this time around. Fish tanks covering the parsley and spinach are visible, if barely, but nothing within was green. The snow bank atop the parsnip bed is prodigious. When finally accessible, they will be alive, which is more than I can say in respect to the parsley and spinach.

There is the matter of seed. The doomsday folks, many of whom have never gardened before, have swamped the seed companies with orders, motivated by the notion that they’ll beat the collateral damage from you-know-what by growing their own food. Makes sense in theory. In theory. The last time this seed-boarding insanity occurred was the millennial turnover from the twentieth to the twenty-first century when it was predicted that a glitch in computer-speak was going to result in civilization’s crash. Those seeds, like the current ones, will be largely unused. Heretofore, turn-around from seed ordering to seed delivery has been about three weeks. We ordered six weeks ago and there is nary a sign. It is not currently an issue but will be in two weeks when onions and leeks must be started.

Blue jays and grosbeaks continue to dominate the bird feeders. A relatively-rare recent arrival has been a small flock of redpolls, northern finches who occasionally migrate south. Similarly-sized to a goldfinch, the redpoll is identified by (guess what?) its red poll (another term for head). Compare that to our largest suet-feeding woodpecker, the red-bellied, who, in one of life’s mysteries, does not have a red belly. Even rarer, has been the occasional appearance of an opossum wandering among the ground-feeding birds. The opossum, a southern mammal, has been extending its range north with varying degrees of success. We’ve seen a few winter opossums over the years but this is our first live one. Strange goings-on indeed when an opossum is more visible at the feeders than a gray squirrel. As the world turns. After forty-five years of residency in Royalston, I caught sight of my first bobcat and Kathy, occupying the car with more frequency than I, has spotted three. Tracks abound, probably attracted to the opossum.

It’s a bit of a stretch but we are about to harvest our first ‘crop.’ Maples will be tapped in the next day or two and there is a relatively small time lapse between sap and syrup. It is a start.

Maybe we’ve made some progress in our selection of hoarded material. A year ago it was the great toilet paper grab. Now it is seed. There are innumerable alternatives to toilet paper; there are no alternatives to seed. And, if only a few ordering for the first time actually embrace gardening, it will represent a step in the right direction (in a world where few steps seem to be heading in the right direction.)

On stormy days our birds huddle close to the trunk. When the storm is over, they sip the snow from its branches before flying off. In the morning it is a safe spot to eat a seed or two from the nearby feeders. In the afternoon it is an apartment house shared by titmice, chickadees and jays. From my second-floor office window I am eye-to-eye with birds who seek out the topmost branches for a moment of late winter sun. After dark I imagine it a cozy inn where our birds spend the night, head tucked under wing, warm and safe.

It is late February and our Christmas tree is still up. How can this be? Because, in a holiday season of isolation, we entertained ourselves with something completely different: we put our Christmas tree outside.

In December Tom scouted our woods for the perfect tree, and we took turns dragging it home across the frozen ground. We tucked the tree in the southwest corner of our house, secured it to a tree stand and tethered it on three sides with strong twine. Tall enough to reach our second-floor windows the tree settled its branches and seemed completely at home. We wove its lowest branches with a length of colored lights that winked back at us cheerfully. But we were not finished. Our plan was to make this a Christmas tree for birds.

We covered pinecones with peanut butter and birdseed, hung them in the tree and waited. Before long the flocks arrived: woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice and jays. The smaller birds ate on the fly, only stopping long enough to grab a seed or two. The larger birds – the woodpeckers and jays – dined at their leisure, spending long moments pecking and eating before flying off.

Then the squirrels arrived and the once-sedate dining experience became a raucous free-for-all. The squirrels spent long minutes latched to the pinecones, swaying precariously as they devoured peanut butter and seed. They gnawed at the electric cord and the cheerful lights went dark. Soon the pinecones disappeared completely, their existence marked only by forlorn lengths of string. This shocking lack of decorum was too much for the birds, and they abandoned the tree for the relative calm of the feeders nearby.

It was only when we neglected to replenish the store that the squirrels lost interest in our tree and the birds returned. It would seem that, for our birds, the food was never the point. The tree itself was the draw. Nestled in its corner, the tree has its own climate. Its branches sway gently in a breeze that blows nowhere else, and an afternoon snowfall clings to its boughs long after our other trees are bare.

It is months now since the holidays but our tree remains in place, its base buried under drifts of snow. When spring comes we will snip the twine, remove the base and return to the woods the best Christmas tree ever.

--

Larry Siegel

Christmas Tree

Deb D’Amico
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Lie the most brilliant colors of winter,
Over there where the
Vee of trees converge
At the corner of the field
Where a solitary pine
Punctuates the maples.
One cup of tea,
Two cups complete
My morning meditation.
Surprised by the show
Out my kitchen window,
I sit at table,
Drinking the dawning light
As the world turns
Away from the night.
The wheel of seasons
Spins toward the East
And Spring is up next on Natures agenda.
Let the time turn slowly
That I may savor
The colors of Winter,
A blaze surprise
A feast for the eyes.

Michael R. Young
Current Royalston Poet Laureate

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