Calendar of Events

Get Caught Reading Month: Look to www.everychildreader.net and www.getcaughtreading.org for a variety of activities for all ages.

May 5  Wednesday  Cinco de Mayo  Hugely outnumbered Mexican soldiers defeated Empire-minded Napoleon III of France in the Battle of Oaxaca in 1862 (not Independence Day)

May 8  Saturday  Bake sale  to benefit the Federation of North American Explorers in front of the Raymond School

May 11  Tuesday  New Flower Moon

May 15  Saturday  Armed Forces Day  South Village River Trails Work Day. Meet in front of the King Street Bridge. Bring gloves, rakes, shovels, pruning shears, hand-held saws, water bottle and sturdy shoes. Raindate will be posted on the Welcome to the Village of South Royalston Facebook page or call 978-249-9901.

May 22  Saturday  Flower planting at the SoRo gazebo

May 23  Sunday  Spring bird, wildflower and insect guided walk with expert birder and entomologist Ernie LeBlanc at the Birch Hill recreation area. (Meet at the parking lot off River Street in South Royalston on the north side of Birch Hill. Look for signs) Limited to first 8 who sign up by calling the library: 978-249-3572. Sponsored by the Friends.

May 26  Wednesday  Full Flower Moon

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

Coronavirus Status: As of April 19, all residents 16* and older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations (*Pfizer is the only vaccine approved for 16-18 year olds). Locally, the Athol Board of Health (978-830-0013); Heywood Health Care (978-958-9057); and Cornerstone Family Medicine at Heywood’s Medical Arts Building (978-669-0199) have been collectively scheduling thousands of people each week. Other options include local Walgreen and CVS pharmacies. Again, be patient, be polite, but be persistent. Vaccinating a large part of the population is the only way we can put this Pandemic behind us. Please also continue masking, distancing, and limiting time in enclosed spaces with people who are not vaccinated, and not in your household – a necessary annoyance until more of the population is vaccinated.

May Be Time to Prep: May tends to be a rather slow month in the Emergency Management industry, which makes it the perfect time (well, other than the fact blackflies may carry you away) to get out those generators, clean them up and properly condition them so they will be in tip-top shape when the summer storms come through and knock out power. It’s also a pretty good time – especially if you have respiratory issues or medical conditions made worse by heat and humidity - to make sure your window air conditioners are all vacuumed out, filters changed, and ready to install. Whatever you have for heat, service your heat-delivery devices, and have chimneys checked and cleaned. If you have a sump pump, have it serviced; maybe take a look at where water’s coming into the cellar, and see if there’s a way to divert it elsewhere.  

Preparedness beats panic every time. Be informed. Make a Plan
Select Board Notes
Christine Long, clerk, Royalston Select Board

Cable Anyone? The Select Board last month voted unanimously to disband the Broadband Committee and to enter into negotiations with Charter Communications to bring fiber broadband, television and phone to Royalston, with various plans offering some or all of these options. Per the requirements of the federal grant Charter won to bring cable to underserved communities, the work must be completed within two years of an agreement being reached.

After the years of work that have gone into developing a wireless network, why the change? There are two major reasons, the federal grant being one of them. Charter had approached the board about a year ago with a proposal that would cost the town $743,000, an offer the board refused. Now, with grant in hand, Charter is offering to bring cable at no cost to the town.

Some of the details: Whether there would be a hook-up charge for ultimate customers will be part of the negotiations; Charter would provide customer service, which has sometimes proved problematic in other communities; yes, if storms bring wires down, the affected areas would lose broadband, but the company would be motivated to restore service as fast as possible.

The second major reason for the Select Board vote is a consideration of what happens next. With cable, of course, Charter would oversee construction and operate the system. By contrast, Andrew West, chair of the Broadband Committee, noted at the same meeting that if the town continues with the wireless plan, the project should not go forward with a volunteer committee; instead, the town should hire a professional project manager for construction and arrange for a professional operator.

The board expressed enormous gratitude to the Broadband Committee for its tireless work over the last few years. Members gave countless hours to the project and yes, a fair measure of sweat and tears, if not blood. Residents at the meeting agreed – they gave the committee a standing ovation.

Satellite Broadband Anyone? Also at this meeting, West said Starlink, a subsidiary of SpaceX, could offer an alternative to Charter’s broadband offerings as it expands the number of small satellites in low-earth orbit. Starlink is not yet available throughout Royalston, but West said this area will likely be covered in 2021. Starlink has been charging $500 for installation of the antenna on individual houses (which may be reduced to $300) and offering plans for $99 per month.

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**Annual Town Meeting and FY22 Finances:** The Select Board has decided to offer annual town meeting “under the bigtop” again this year. Because of social distancing considerations, an outdoor tent will accommodate more voters than any of our indoor options.

**Annual Town Meeting will be held on June 26 at 10 a.m.** The board was able to breathe a sigh of relief at the end of April when we realized we might be able to squeeze through Fiscal Year 2022 without dire steps. Again there are two major reasons: First, departments made a big push to trim their budget requests, and second, the Athol-Royalston Regional School District offered $32,000 in CARES money to reduce Royalston’s assessment next year.

In a sense, this is not free money; in FY23 Royalston will have to come up with this amount in its assessment, plus whatever increase the district seeks. Thus, at the recommendation of Finance Director Rebecca Kraus-Hardie, the board agreed to “bank” the $32,000 in the Stabilization Fund.

**One bright spot:** The board is very pleased that the town will be able to fund modest two percent raises for employees, just as union employees will receive under a new contract. Last year, no one got a raise.

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**ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION 2021**

**Royalston Results**

Out of 1004 registered voters 121 voters turned out to vote; this is a 12% turnout. For vote tallies, visit www.royalston-ma.gov.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selectboard</td>
<td>Deborah D’Amico</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARRS SD School Committee</td>
<td>Carla Rabinowitz</td>
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<td>ARRS SD School Com. 3 yr. Athol*</td>
<td>Deborah Kuzmeskas, Elaine Gauthier</td>
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<td>ARRS SD School Com. 1 yr. Athol - Cemetery Commision</td>
<td>Theodore J. Mallet, III</td>
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<td>Constable</td>
<td>Roy Smith</td>
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<td>Library Trustee</td>
<td>Roland Hamel</td>
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<td>Town Moderator</td>
<td>Jennifer Basso</td>
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<td>Planning Board</td>
<td>George Northrop</td>
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<td>Assessors</td>
<td>Amy Sanden</td>
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<td>Board of Health</td>
<td>Stephen Chase</td>
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<td>Tree Warden</td>
<td>Jim Richardson</td>
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<td>Trustees of the JN Bartlett Fund</td>
<td>Randy Divoll, Larry Siegel</td>
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<td>*While Deborah Kuzmeskas won in Royalston, she did not garner the majority of votes in the two towns of the school district. As a result, Lonnie Bonnefant and Elaine Gauthier will be the 3-year Athol representatives on the ARRS SD school committee.</td>
<td></td>
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**Cultural Council News**

**SUMMER OPEN MIC!**

We know how much Royalston music fans have been missing the warmth and excitement of our Open Mic this winter. But fear not – the Royalston Cultural Council will be presenting an expanded Open Mic program this summer, in collaboration with the Royalston South Village Revitalization Committee.

Six outdoor Open Mic events will be taking place, from 1:00 to 4:00 on Sunday afternoons. On the second Sunday of June, July and August, the program will happen in the South Village, making use of the village’s beautiful new gazebo. On the fourth Sunday of those three months, the location will be in Bullock Park. Drinks and refreshments will be available. As always, performers of all ages are welcome to sign up.

The Open Mic and other Cultural Council programs are supported by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. Audience members are requested to wear masks and observe social distancing rules for outside gatherings. If cancellation is necessary because of the weather, it will be announced on the Royalston Cultural Council Facebook page.
Royalston South Village Revitalization News

Hello Royalston neighbors,

Have you noticed the addition of the beautiful cupola on the gazebo? It was designed and built by Tom Musco and we recently asked him these questions about it:

1) Could you tell me how you came upon the design for the cupola? I looked at a lot of gazebo cupolas and tried to find out if there was a formula for the size of a gazebo cupola - but I couldn’t find a formula and every gazebo cupola was unique. So I based the cupola on the size of the opening in the roof. I made the base sections a little higher than wide and the pitch of the roof was trial and error. My first roof design was too steep and someone said it looked like a witch’s hat so I modified it.

2) Is the steeple inspired by the Whitney Hall spire? The roof of the cupola is based on the church steeple and Whitney Hall.

3) Why did you choose that color for the steeple? I thought a weathered copper color would be nice.

4) Do you have any other comments? I didn’t know that the King Street Bridge was a copper color but someone noted that it was. The first design had one large window in each section, but I put in dividers because I thought it looked more traditional. I am going to make a screen for the opening into the cupola to keep out wasps and other nesting bugs. I can’t wait to see how the cupola and gazebo looks with the light inside the cupola on.

Volunteers from the Royalston Fire Department Josh Doub, Jaret Thiem, Jeff Thiem and Craig LeRay helped attach the cupola onto the gazebo on April 3. Many thanks to them and to the RFD for letting us use the ladder truck, which saved us from having to hire a crane.

OTHER SRVR NEWS: This month, Robert Fairchild has been donating many hours to complete putting in the electrical service in the gazebo in preparation for the summer Open Mics sponsored by the Royalston Arts Council. Thanks to Tom Kellner and Mark Shoul for digging the trench for the electrical cables.

Also this month, Larry Trask and Tom Kellner painted the running trim and brackets, which Dan Monette will be putting in place. Thank you to all the volunteers who have made the gazebo a place that the whole town can enjoy. We will be purchasing some benches so that you can buy sandwiches or coffee in the General Store and enjoy them in the gazebo!

Reminder: Please come to the Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, June 26, to support two proposals from the RSVR that were supported by the Community Preservation Committee and the Selectboard to improve the South Village. The first proposal is to recommend that the Town purchase the site of the former Cloutiers Pete and Henry’s Restaurant (the intent is to eventually develop restroom facilities since there is sewer and water in place and possibly a playground). The second proposal is requesting funding for railings for the gazebo which were not included in the engineering plan of last year’s gazebo grant.

Police Department Updates

Chief Curtis Deveneau

The Royalston Police Department was recently awarded two competitive grants with a combined total of $43,679. These grant funds will allow for the department to upgrade and modernize the departments computer system, allowing us to log into the system from multiple terminals and enhance the documenting in our records management system, payroll system and state and federal reporting requirements.

Two additional electronic speed monitoring signs have been purchased and will be installed in the South Village in the very near future in preparation of the upcoming summer tourism season. That was with the two speed signs approved last year at the annual town meeting, we have again joined forces with the highway department and they will install the support pole structures for the signs. Please ensure when passing by the staff installing the signs you drive at a very slow speed as numerous injuries and fatalities occur every year with workers along the nations streets and highways.

Motor vehicle enforcement campaigns are also part of the grant funding which includes a May click it or ticket campaign, a summer speed enforcement campaign and a summer impaired driving campaign. These enforcement campaigns typically run two weeks at various times throughout the months of May, June and August. These funds will enhance the department current traffic enforcement duties and as always we encourage motorist to drive at a safe speed for the existing road conditions in the posted speed signs. Stay safe and enjoy the summer.

Board of Health

Phil Leger, chair person

Vaccines continue to be available in our area with clinics operated by Henry Heywood Hospital. Athol has a satellite site at the senior center. Check the hospital website for sign up info. Rutland has a regional site operating also. CVS and Walgreens have clinics operating too. You also can go to ma.gov/covid to sign up for state regional sites. The pandemic is not over and won’t be for a while as a new strain is circulating the country. Mask up, social distance, and wash hands whether you have been vaccinated or not. Above all be kind to one another.

Beating the pandemic takes everyone to do their part. It’s not a political statement not to do so. It’s common sense. Deaths continue to rise (560,000+ as of this writing) as well as hospitalizations.

Ticks are everywhere this year. Take precautions when coming in from outside. Check yourselves and your pets.

We have been getting requests to open the reusable shed. We will discuss this further at our next RBOH meeting in May. Concerns to be discussed are policing the amount of people and time one can be inside the building. The fact that many people dump junk in order to avoid paying disposal fees. Broken and or non functional items. Arguments on who saw it first etc. We know that it’s popular to get something for free. We also have some flea market folks looking for items to sell etc. In the end, do we actually divert items from disposal? Probably, but is it worth the effort, is the question. Looking for comments prior to the May 5th meeting. Send comments to boh@royalston-ma.gov.

Also, demo is not free, and one needs a current windshield sticker (black) to use the facility. Don’t be a freeloader!
Phinehas S. Newton Library News
Kathy Morris, Library Director
Trustees: Jeffrey Mangum, Jennifer Basso, Theresa Quinn
Open and Pick up hours Mondays and Thursdays 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Saturdays: 9:00 am-12 noon
978-249-3572 www.royalstonlibrary.org

Donations to the Friends - Thank you!
Glenn and Beth Hastings
Stephanie and John McClure
Mary Williams
Deb and Joe Nunes
Ken and Andrea Lively

Thank you
Jeff Mangum for great patience and expert construction ability in assembling our new metal historical document storage cabinet
Maureen Blasco and Beth Gospodarek for help with kite flying and flower and herb planting on Earth Day and to Teresa Valliere for clean up.

Better WiFi Signal
We have installed a new mesh router for improved WiFi signal in the far corners inside and further outside the building. While the speed will not increase, the strength of the signal is greatly improved and you won’t have to be right at the steps to connect. There will be two signals and you will be able to select the strongest signal when you connect.

Craft Kits Stimulate Creativity
The popular craft kits will continue to be offered in the next couple of months. The May kit for older kids will be focused on birds and bird identification. This will tie in with the bird walk and will hopefully stimulate an interest in the myriad of birds returning for the summer months. Creative craft kits, many based on growing things, will be offered weekly for preschool children as well. There is also a kit for older kids and adults. You can create your own felt book mark. These kits will be available during May until supplies are depleted.

Summer Reading Programs Will Resume in July!
We are excited to offer some exciting programs for summer reading for older and younger kids this year. It will be nice to be able to get back together again. Most programs will occur outdoors, weather permitting, or in larger spaces such as the Town Hall. We have already booked the Caterpillar Lab for July 15 and old and young are looking forward to that and many other programs.

Spring Bird Walk (and wildflowers and insects)
Join expert birder and entomologist Ernie LeBlanc for an informative walk around the Birch Hill recreation area on Sunday, May 23 at 8:00 a.m. Meet at the parking lot off River Street in South Royalston on the north side of Birch Hill. We will have a sign there directing you to the parking lot. There will be maps available at the Library for anyone not familiar with the area. Ernie will follow the trail toward the beaver pond and if people are interested can then proceed to the river. Wear appropriate clothes for black flies and ticks and bring binoculars if you have them. Please bring masks as a precaution. The walk is limited to 8 people and pre-registration by calling or emailing the Library is required. Ernie is also a beetle expert so expect to learn a lot on this spring walk sponsored by the Friends.

Library Plant and Book Sales are Back!
Saturday, May 29 from 8:30 - noon come to the famous Friends of the Library Plant and Book Sale at the Post Office (Old School House #1). Expect the usual unusual selection eclectic books for all ages and of high quality perennials, vegetables, herbs, annuals and houseplants from local gardeners delivered with experienced advice and a smile. Fill a bag with books and make a free will donation. All profits benefit the Friends, who use the money to support the Library and its programs as well as produce and distribute this newsletter 10 times per year. Why not donate some diggings, sow a few seeds, and put aside some space in your gardens and bookshelves for the Friends? Donations of plants can be dropped outside the Library the week before the sale.

Yoga Classes
We are delighted to be back in the upstairs of the Town Hall for weekly yoga classes on Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. Join expert yoga instructor, Charlotte Weltzin, as she guides us through a gentle yet thorough succession of poses. The class incorporates breath work for increased stamina and stress reduction. Bring your own mat. Masks, covering the nose and mouth, must be worn while in the class. Class size is limited and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Story Walks
With the advent of beautiful spring weather, there will be children’s books on the Story Walk at the library for children and people of all ages to enjoy. Diane Kane of Phillipston will have her heartwarming book Don Gateau The Three Legged Cat of Seborga on display from April 28th until May 14th. Then on May 14 to June 11th, Sharon Harmon local resident of Royalston will have her book Horatio Mortimer Loved Music there for people to read. For a fun, free event to do, go on a Story Walk.
Some of the new materials at your library

**Adult Fiction**
- Archer, Jeffrey: *Turn a Blind Eye*
- Berry, Flynn: *Northern Spy*
- Dray, Stephanie: *The Women of Chateau Lafayette*
- Freitas, Donna: *The Nine Lives of Rose Napolitano*
- Garcia, Gabriela: *Of Women and Salt*
- Greenidge, Kaitlyn: *Libertie*
- Harvey, Kristy: *Under the Southern Sky*
- Jackson, Joshilyn: *Mother May I*
- Kelly, Martha Hall: *Sunflowers*
- Koontz, Dean: *The Other Emily*
- Marakami, Haruki: *The First Person Singular*
- McCracken, E.: *The Souvenir Museum*
- McLain, Paula: *When the Stars Go Dark*
- Quade, Kirstin: *The Five Wounds*
- Sandford, John: *Ocean Prey*
- Sathian, Sanjena: *Gold Diggers*
- Scottoline, Lisa: *Good Company*
- Sweeney, Cynthia: *What Comes After*
- Tompkins, JoAnne: *The Night Always Comes*
- Vlautin, Willy: *The Rock from the Sky*
- Vlautin, Willy: *Rowley Jefferson’s Awesome Friendly Spooky Stories*
- Macleary, Kyo: *Hello Rain*
- Martinez-Neal, J.: *Zonia’s Rain Forest*
- Pham, Nguyen: *My First Day*
- Pilkey, Dav: *Captain Underpants: Tyrannical Retaliation of the Turbo Toilet 2000*
- Rudd, Maggie: *Sometimes it’s Hard to be Nice*
- Scott, Jordan: *I Talk Like a River*
- Wilson, Karma: *Bear Can’t Wait*
- Yoon, Helen: *Sheepish*

**Children’s Nonfiction**
- Anand, Shelly: *Laxmi’s Mooch*
- Applegate, Katherine: *Doggo and Pupper*
- Barrows, Annie: *Ivy + Bean Get to Work!*
- Cazet, Denys: *Sunflowers*
- Cooper, Elisha: *Yes & No*
- Dorlands, Marie: *Night Walk*
- Griffiths, Andy: *The 130-Story Treehouse*
- Hale, Shannon: *Itty-Bitty Kitty-Corn*
- Henkes, Kevin: *Billy Miller Makes a Wish*
- Hobbie, Holly: *Toot & Puddle*
- Klassen, Jon: *The Consequences of Fear*
- Pilkey, Dav: *The Last Kids on Earth*
- Brallier, Max: *Secrets of the Sea*
- Griffith, Evan: *The Book of Not Entirely Useful Advice*
- Harrold, A.F.: *Walking Toward Peace*
- Latham, Irene: *This Poem is a Nest*
- Mone, Gregory: *Strange Nature*
- Pham, Nguyen: *Dog Man: Mothering Heights*
- Phung, Nguyen: *What is a River?*

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- Anand, Shelly: *Laxmi’s Mooch*
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- Klassen, Jon: *The Rock from the Sky*
- Kinney, Jeff: *Rowley Jefferson’s Awesome Friendly Spooky Stories*
- Macleary, Kyo: *Hello Rain*
- Martinez-Neal, J.: *Zonia’s Rain Forest*
- Pham, LeUyen: *Outside, Inside*
- Phung, Nguyen: *My First Day*
- Pilkey, Dav: *Captain Underpants: Tyrannical Retaliation of the Turbo Toilet 2000*
- Rudd, Maggie: *Sometimes it’s Hard to be Nice*
- Scott, Jordan: *I Talk Like a River*
- Wilson, Karma: *Bear Can’t Wait*
- Yoon, Helen: *Sheepish*

**Audiobooks**
- Box, C.J.: *Dark Sky*
- Lawson, Jenny: *Broken (In the Best Possible Way)*
- Winspear, Jacqueline: *The Consequences of Fear*
- Bryson, Bill: *A Perfect Planet*
- Harrold, A.F.: *Walking Toward Peace*
- Latham, Irene: *This Poem is a Nest*
- Mone, Gregory: *Strange Nature*
- Pham, LeUyen: *Outside, Inside*
- Phung, Nguyen: *My First Day*
- Pilkey, Dav: *Captain Underpants: Tyrannical Retaliation of the Turbo Toilet 2000*
- Rudd, Maggie: *Sometimes it’s Hard to be Nice*
- Scott, Jordan: *I Talk Like a River*
- Wilson, Karma: *Bear Can’t Wait*
- Yoon, Helen: *Sheepish*

**Adult Non-Fiction**
- Angell, Marcia: *The Truth about the Drug Companies*
- Breslin, John: *Old Ireland in Color*
- Duckworth, Tammy: *Every Day is a Gift*
- Espada, Martin: *Floaters*
- Genova, Lisa: *Remember*
- Gorman, Amanda: *The Hill We Climb*
- His, Tony: *The Fifty Percent Solution*
- Lawson, Jenny: *Broken (In the Best Possible Way)*
- Lemon, Don: *This is the Fire*
- Levine, Peter: *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma*
- Moss, Michael: *Hooked*
- Salmon, Enrique: *Iwigara*
- Steele, Andrew: *Ageless*
- Tyson, Neil deGrasse: *Cosmic Queries*
- Weidensaul, Scott: *A World on the Wing*

**Open for Browsing**
It’s been great having people back in the building and the cooperation of everyone in maintaining distance and being conscious of others in the building has made it a pleasure to be ‘back in business’. The open hours will keep increasing until we reach our normal operating schedule. And while we are open for browsing, we still are doing outdoor pickup of materials for anyone. Just call or email an order and we will pack it up and have it outside at a prearranged time for you to collect.

**Young Adult**
- Fletcher, Tiera: *Wonder Women of Science*
- Medina, Meg: *Merci Suarez Can’t Dance*

**DVDs**
- *All Creatures Great and Small (PBS 2021)*
- *Bang Season 2*
- *News of the World (DVD & Bluray)*
- *Our Friend*
Historical Society News
Peter Kranik, president
Thank you to Mr. Gerald Wilson and Mr. Richard Wilson for their donations in memory of their mother who attended school here from 1915-1922.

Upscale Tag Sale: On May 29, the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend, and in conjunction with the Friends of the Library Plant Sale, the Society is holding a tag sale outside Old School House #1. After a year of cleaning closets, come see what treasures await! All profits are used to maintain the museum and its building.

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

First Congregational Church of Royalston Outreach
Marion’s Food Pantry: If anyone is in need or knows of someone in need within the Royalston community please let us know. No one should be without food. We can deliver to you or you can come in to pick out what is needed.

Weekly Meals: We are also cooking meals and delivering them to anyone homebound, elderly, physically or medically challenged that could use a home cooked meal and some of God’s love.

For further information, please contact:
Debbie Conrad (978)895-3505
Fred Hodgeman (978)894-4996
Wendell Kathan (978)939-3990

Royalston Cemetery Commission
May is a busy month in cemeteries around Royalston. The grounds are being groomed for Memorial Day, and many visitors are enhancing the final resting places of loved ones. Some reminders: Trees and shrubs may not be planted without permission of the Cemetery Commission; flowers may be planted, but are limited to an area of one foot in front of the lot monument; any plantings in violation, or adornments deemed inappropriate or which might pose a hazard to visitors or groundskeepers may be removed without notice. Questions may be addressed to the Commissioners: Roy A. Smith, Jr, (Chair); Roland G. Hamel; or Sherry A. Miner. Messages may be left at 978-249-4587.

CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD NEWS
Graduates (and graduates’ families)- You’ve worked for this, so celebrate. Let us know of your accomplishments here at the RCN! No such thing as too late.

Annie Hall arrived safe and sound on April first at 10:56 p.m., weighing in at 7 pounds and welcomed by parents Emily and Chet Hall and her big sister Penny.

People in your Neighborhood
contributed by Allen Young
I saw Dr. Dwight Stowell recently in front of his house in Royalston, and having not seen him for years, I stopped and enjoyed a friendly conversation. He has spent much of his time in recent years at his summer home, Gray Rock, on Lake Sunapee, NH. He was pleased to give me a copy of Boathouse News, including a photo-essay about him and his beautiful wooden boat collection, which he recently donated to the NH Boat Museum. In the interview, he told about his interest in boats and other aspects of his life. He stated, “Even while I was in the Navy, I was interested in historic restoration. I purchased and renewed the historic Salmon Falls Mill in New Hampshire and houses on the common in Royalston, Mass.” The interview inquired, “Would you consider yourself ambitious?” and Dr. Stowell replied, “Yes, I started my dental career in my own hometown, Royalston. It was not until I finished with every patient in town, as there were only 800 total population, and of those, only a certain percentage had teeth! This inspired me to work on my concept of putting dental specialties in rural settings at multiple locations. Over the last 50 years, I have owned and reconfigured close to 40 practices in New England.” Dr. Stowell did not mention his political activities. He served on the Royalston Board of Selectman for several years and he also ran for Mass. State Senate on the Republican ticket against Democratic incumbent Robert Wetmore. By the way, I was one of those Royalston residents who came to him for dental care at his office in his home just off the Common.
Obituary

Rita L. (Dunham) Gates, 82, of 267 South Royalston Road, died peacefully Tuesday morning, April 6, 2021 in her residence, with her family at her side.

She was born in Winchendon on February 28, 1939, daughter of the late Lewis and Arlene (Stowell) Dunham and was a resident of Royalston for most of her life.

Rita had worked as a technician for Simplex Time Recorder for many years until her retirement. In earlier years she had worked at Digital as a machine operator. She enjoyed dancing, attending antique car shows and especially enjoyed spending time with her family.

Her husband of 56 years, William R. Gates, died in 2013. She leaves three daughters, Tamatha E. Gates of Royalston, Tanya M. Moore and her husband John of Royalston and Theresa L. Gates of Royalston; eight grandchildren, twelve great grandchildren and four great great grandchildren; her siblings, Roger A. Dunham of Royalston, William R. Dunham of Polk City, FL., Alice M. Leonard, Doris A. Smith, June M. Smith, all of South Royalston and Sally J. Berry of Orange. In addition to her husband, she was preceded in death by two brothers, Lewis A. Dunham Jr. and Harry A. Dunham.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date in Royalston Fish and Gun Club.

Individuals desiring to make contributions in memory of Rita Gates may do so to the Royalston Community Scholarship Fund, care of Brenda L. Putney; 185 N. Fitzwilliam Rd., South Royalston, MA 01368.

Millers River Garden Club
Pauline Aldred, co-president

The North Quabbin Garden Club is having a plant sale on Saturday, May 22 from 8 am to 1 pm at the Millers River Environmental Center in Athol. Even during a pandemic plants grow and make gardens beautiful. Plants offered for sale have usually been grown by garden club members so we know they thrive locally. Native plants are offered. Come and join us for this outside event. We will be happy to see you.

An affiliate of the Millers River Environmental Center in Athol, the North Quabbin Garden Club formed in 2006 to encourage interest in all phases of home gardening. The club suspended indoor meetings from September last year to May of this year but members had access to zoom presentations of the Athol Bird and Nature Club. The club board members hope to be able to restart meetings in the near future. Meetings are free to members and guests are asked for a donation.

Bake Sale: On May 8th, there will be a bake sale from 8am-noon, in front of the Raymond School, across from the post office. The sale, featuring popcorn, granola, and of course, homemade goodies, is sponsored by the youth group called the Federation of North American Explorers.

Recipe of the month -

Karen Swan Otto (now in Athol) lived in Royalston – the land of both blueberries and rhubarb – for 16 years, and her son Ben, and daughters Anna and Blue were raised here and attended Royalston schools. She was well-known for her multi-media artistic talents, was involved in many community endeavors, and taught in the Athol-Royalston Regional School District for 20 years. She says her “absolute favorite rhubarb combination is with blueberries,” and she freezes rhubarb so she has it for blueberry season, and freezes blueberries for rhubarb season.

BLUEBARB PIE – recipe of Karen Swan Otto

Your favorite two-crust pie crust recipe

2 cups rhubarb, chopped
2 cups blueberries
1 cup sugar
3 Tbsp. flour
Pinch of salt
+/- 2 Tblsp. of butter

Preheat oven to 375F. Roll out and place the bottom crust in the pie plate, leaving enough overhang to seal the top crust in place. Roll out the top crust, pierce with steam vents, and set aside. Toss the rhubarb and blueberries (fresh, frozen, or a combination) with the sugar, flour, and salt, and pour into the pie plate, dot with butter, dampen the rim of the bottom pie crust, place the top crust, and then fold over the edges of the top and bottom crusts, sealing well so there’s no leaking.

You can leave the top crust as is, or egg wash and sprinkle sugar. Bake in the pre-heated, 375F. oven for 45-50 minutes. If the edges are browning too quickly, cover them with foil.

When asked about freezing either the raw or baked pie, Karen reports, “I’ve never had any left over to freeze!”

2021 Amanda Putney Memorial Horse Show is happening on Sunday, June 6th, at the Cheshire Fairgrounds to raise money to help children and young adults with grants towards horse showing expenses. Due to changes necessary because of the Coronavirus Pandemic, exhibitors at the show will not be able to stay over the night before, but instead may enter when the gates open at 6:00 a.m. Exhibitors are asked to pre-register to save time the morning of the show. There will be sign up that morning, but pre-registration is strongly urged. To sweeten the deal, those who pre-register are automatically entered into a drawing for three prizes (To be determined, donated by the Putney family). Any one who wishes to donate items for the fundraising raffles and auction may contact Brenda Putney (978-249-7787) to arrange for pick-up/drop-off. Monetary donations towards grants are also greatly appreciated, (checks to the MassQHYA) and sent in c/o Brenda L. Putney; 185 N. Fitzwilliam Road, Royalston, MA 01368.
Royalston Community School
Cynthia Kennedy, principal

Vital to every positive school culture are its partnerships with families and the community at large. Royalston Community School (RCS) is the beneficiary of small town connections and traditions, such as the annual Harvest Feast and the Chet Hall Scholarship breakfast, while also charged with overcoming some obstacles in our path toward sustained collaboration with families and community members. One such obstacle are the circumstances related to the pandemic that have severely restricted RCS’s ability to invite volunteers, meet with parents in person, and so forth. Now that we are slowly moving toward being able to negotiate our way back out of “isolation”, it is our hope that families will reconnect with us in new and meaningful ways.

RCS has the requisite Parent-Teacher Group (PTG) like most any school, as well as a School Improvement Council. In fact, the same few parents serve on both groups and do 100% of the parent volunteer work for RCS. The PTG now holds virtual meetings, which offer the ability to attend without having to leave home or find a babysitter. We need every parent to know our PTG depends on parents! Without you, we are not able to plan and hold events and fun activities. Without you, the kids miss out! The PTG is planning some things for this spring but we are also looking ahead to next year. We need moms and dads, guardians, grandparents, aunts, and uncles, you name it, to help! We need board members and volunteers to help with some of our event committees. Please consider attending our PTG meetings whenever you can. You can find info on the RCS PTG Facebook page about the meetings, including the links. The meetings are one hour or less.

RCS is looking for volunteers for our Career Day planned for the week of June 7-11. We will be inviting family and community members to present virtually, to one or more classes about their job or career. To our students, all jobs are interesting and we are hoping for a wide variety of professionals to present to our students. Volunteers will speak about their jobs for no more than 15 minutes, and then allow for a question and answer time for about another 10 minutes. In advance, students will research and prepare questions to ask.

Come and be an active part of the RCS community! Join us for PTG and get involved! Let us learn about your career or profession. More info will be coming home with students, and community members who would like to participate should contact the school office at 978-249-2900.

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.

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

Exciting News: A Monty Tech Graduation Ceremony is scheduled for May 26, 2021! Six guests will be allowed for each student, with careful set-up so distancing is observed.

Monty Tech employees – all who requested – were able to receive their COVID-19 vaccinations; second doses were given on April 18, 2021. The Administration expressed appreciation to Heywood Healthcare and the City of Gardner for their help.

From May 1-21, Monty Tech will be at full capacity. Seniors’ last day is May 21, so the remainder of the school year will be at 75% capacity, and of course, with all possible precautions remaining in place. Students who wish to remain remote only learning may do so.

Despite the Pandemic, Monty Tech has managed to keep students on co-op. This has allowed 97 seniors and 31 juniors to continue working and learning in their areas of focus, and will also reduce student density for the three weeks before seniors are done.

The Spring Sports Season for Monty Tech includes Track & Field, Lacrosse, Baseball, and Softball, and begins April 26th. The last sessions will conclude June 26th.

Once again, due to the high numbers of in-District students at Monty Tech, school choice students will be accepted only for 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, and these, to ensure that students accepted as freshmen, will be able to complete their education at Monty Tech, even if they’ve moved out of District after that first year.

Statistics for class of 2020 were recently released, and show Monty Tech with a 98.5% graduation rate (State = 89%), with 98.5% of economically-disadvantaged students, and 98.8% of high needs students graduating. Male students’ graduation rate was 97.2%; females was 100%. Monty Tech is third among our sending schools in terms of graduation rates.

The 2021-2022 SY calendar was approved at the April School Committee meeting, and has the first (student) day of school August 25, and June 7th as the final day. New student orientation is slated for August 16 & 17, 2021.

A new teacher’s contract was ratified for 2020-2023; the Pandemic is the reason for the delay in completing contract negotiations. With that completed, the Superintendent-Director year-end review has begun with suggested goals required by May 5th; evaluations due the 17th, and a report out date by the Workforce SubCom by June 2nd.

Donations were accepted at the last meeting in the amount of $20,000 (for Veterinary Sciences from Joseph Cadette); and Personal Protective Equipment, est. value of $12,476 (for Masonry from Hollingsworth & Vose Paper).
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 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 bguiney@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

Summer Program sign-ups are in full swing. The program will be all outdoors, without masks, mornings from June 21 to August 20. Choose any week or weeks. For information, go to https://www.villageschoolma.org/programs/summer/

In early May, the Maypole will go up and the whole school with gather in their class groups to celebrate May Day with dance, song and maypole weaving. It’s not for the public this year because of the pandemic.

The 5th-6th class has written the play based on their year-long study of the middle ages, with lots of intrigue and humor. The students are learning their lines, and we hope for a safe performance, possibly in masks, and only for family, in early June. The other classes are taking advantage of the weather, with canoeing at Tully Lake, art classes in the pavilion and science classes by the pond and in the forest. At noon, you’ll find children are sitting outside for lunch.

for sale:


Custom thermal travel cups by Swank Kreations. 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 - $20/quart; Eggs $4/dozen. Contact Jessica Putney Schanz at 978-939-3329 (cell); 978-249-28617; 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 $12, quarts $20, half gallons $32 and gallons $55. Text/ 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.


Raw Squier Davis Farm honey
1 lb. jar $10.00, Self service on porch Call if you want 2 lb. jar. $20.00, 978-249-4000. We are on Route 32 north just past mile marker 60

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


The Preschool is now an outdoor preschool, outside all morning, digging in sand, climbing trees, playing make-believe in the woodland, riding tricycles, pounding nails in logs, painting on the outdoor easel and more.

There are potential openings in the 5th-6th class for next fall, email rise@villageschoolma.org if you are interested. Visits are scheduled after school, with masks on and safe distancing.
Garden Notes

April 22, 2021

April snow in Royalston is not unheard of, though the one six days ago was unique in one respect, occurring on the heels of an extended stretch of unseasonably mild weather. Spring was advanced: lawns were green, daffodils flowering, the forsythias in full, in-your-face flame yellow bloom, standing incongruously above six inches of snow.

I’m usually just piddling around the garden in early April but this year I was gardening in earnest, seeding a portion of my peas, spinach, radishes, and beets and setting out some potatoes. How could I not? Temperatures were beyond moderate, the soil more than workable. Pre-snow the peas, spinach, and radishes had emerged, tender as all get-out, but post-snow (there were still patches three mornings later) they looked just fine. Currently, mid-day, it is 39° and spitting snow, with a gusty north wind and gardening is, frustratingly, once again on hold. I have assured myself that this is the last hurrah, matters will soon settle and I will jump back into action, replanting everything that was previously planted and seeding the first of the carrots. Clearly, the notion that the New England gardening season opens on Memorial Day weekend is a misguided one.

Winter stores are virtually non-existent; with the exception of a plentiful supply of onions and a couple handfuls of beets, the root cellar is empty. To the rescue come the parsnips, dug and consumed in one form or another almost every day. Wee salads of spinach and scallions and a few sprigs of parsley exhaust our fresh vegetable options.

The garden in late April is full of promise and empty of weeds, a refuge, even now, from the insanity of our daily lives. Those of you with young’uns might consider introducing them to the gardening experience (even if it means introducing yourself to the gardening experience). Radishes are handy because they are quick to provide a crop (three or so weeks). Bean seeds are large enough for small hands to plant. A bit more patience is required, but the same small hands are capable of picking them when mature (seven to eight weeks). They can assist in transplanting tomatoes and assist in harvesting them. They will marvel at the sheer majesty of pole beans and sunflowers. It strikes me that small people might consider the affairs of the garden to be a magical event. I consider the affairs of the garden to be a magical event.

There is an indication that the orchard, after a dismal performance last year, might be fruitful this year. The trees, mostly apples and a few peaches, are filled with buds. That is a far cry from fruit but there is no fruit without flowers and no flowers without buds and the intrepid gardener is eternally optimistic. And eternally enthusiastic. This is my forty-fifth Royalston garden and my optimism and enthusiasm have not waned a bit.

Larry Siegel

Spring in a Jar

Walking our woods in this early spring chill I look for signs of life. But mostly I think of pollywogs. In streams and dark pools, I find clumps of eggs – hundreds of them – floating at the surface and clinging to leaves and twigs. These are wood frog eggs, the end result of all that singing we hear each evening from the woods behind our house. It will be a few weeks before these eggs hatch into tadpoles, but my mind sees them now – tiny and black – in the ponds of my childhood.

As a young child I spent many spring days splashing too close to the edge of icy ponds, glass jar in hand, scooping up a tadpole collection of my own. Back home, I would set my jar on our kitchen table and gaze at my catch. These were strange creatures, neither fish nor frog but something entirely “other”.

My tadpoles seemed to live their lives at an astonishing clip. In just a few days, tiny hind legs emerged. Eyes grew bigger, mouths opened and closed. When front legs popped into view I stared in disbelief. How did THAT happen? But my aquatic guests seemed unphased and went on about their business of extraordinary change. That all this was happening in a jar on our kitchen table astonished me.

When the tails became shorter and the pollywogs larger, our mother announced it was time to bring them back to their rightful home. So, I returned to the pond and released them into a watery world where they swiftly disappeared.

By the time I was a fifth-grader, a pollywog’s charms competed with so many other distractions: friendships, flute lessons, boys. We were, after all, sophisticated 10-year-olds. So, in April, when our teacher told us to bring in “something from spring” for our science table, it was no surprise that the result was a slap-dash collection.

The serious students among us brought twigs in jars of water, their opening buds a real teacher-pleaser. The irreverent among us contributed rocks, waiting for a rebuke from our teacher that never came. But then someone brought in a jar of tadpoles. “This is spring in a jar!” our teacher declared, and we were charmed once more. As the days passed, the tadpoles underwent their predictable changes and we sketched them into our notebooks.

The tadpoles were, by far, the best item in that spring collection, not so much for their scientific value as for their magical effect on us all. Watching the wriggling black specks, we allowed our fifth-grade sophistication to fade away. It was easy to recall our younger selves on an April day at a pond’s edge, wet to our knees, trying to capture our own jar of spring.

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**Cold breeds character.**
Hot brings out the mosquitoes.
Spring rain grows flowers.

*Michael Young*
*current Royalston Poet Laureate*

**Wildlife sightings:**
(in haiku form inspired by Michael Young)

Porcupine raced past
library kids trailing kites;
Wow! Warp-speed waddle

Black bears about town -
Bird feeders come down at six.
Bear arrives at five.

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Phone: 978-249-0358 (newsletter)
In person: Drop off at library

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

Royalston Resident
Star Route 80
Royalston MA 01368

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**Annual Town Meeting Reminder**
This year’s town meeting will be held Saturday,
June 26, 2021 at 10AM
On The Common.

We will meet under a tent
to allow for social distancing.

More details in the June Newsletter.