The Royalston Community Newsletter

March 2022

Volume XXIV Issue II

A Publication of the Friends of the Phinehas S. Newton Library, Royalston, Massachusetts

Calendar of Events

Reminders: Dog licenses expire at the end of this month. Winter parking ban is still in effect until April 30. Burn permits required to burn brush. Burning season ends May 1st.

Save the date:

March 4 Monday 10 a.m. Annual Town Election. Town wide polling will be at the Town Hall, 13 On the Common.

March 4 Wednesday
10 a.m. Royalston Annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held at the Royalston Town Hall on the Common.

March 16 Thursday 1:30 p.m. Kite Flying and and Earth Day Celebration at the Library

March 20 - July 1
Royalston Shakespeare Company, free theater workshops for kids. Call the library to register or for more information. Funded by the Royalston Cultural Council.

And that’s why we call it... according to the Caswell and Bartlett histories of our town and research by Ann McRodenh Mensch

Doane’s Falls: Lilley Caswell reports there are “at least 3 waterfalls connected with deep gorges in Royalston, that are well worth the attention of those who are fond of wild natural scenery”. He writes, “The Doane Falls is situated on the little stream called Lawrence, 2 miles southwest of Royalston Center, and near the road from Royalston to Athol. It appears to be the only waterfall in Royalston which retains it’s early name. Caswell states that this waterfall is the most accessible to the traveler of any of Royalston’s falls. Bartlett includes a quote from Prof. Hitchcock of Amherst College concerning this falls as well, who wrote of Doane Falls, ca. 1838, as follows: “Its width, indeed, must be as much as 25 feet, and its depth considerable. In a short distance here the water descends, at several successive leaps, as much as 200 feet, between high walls of gneiss and granite. Toward the upper part of the descent, several mills are erected, but a small part only of the water power is employed. Below the mills the stream passes into the woods; and toward the lowest part of the descent, we get a single view of two falls of about 25 feet each. ... This stream also has been, and still more extensively can be, applied to useful purposes. “ This falls came to be called by the name of “Doane Falls” in honor of Amos Doane, who owned the land around the falls, and built a large mill nearby. Caswell writes the following of the Doane family:

Joshua Doane, from Cape Cod, settled on the place north of the Dexter place. He had a family of eleven children, among whom were Amos Doane and a daughter Adaline, who married Joel O. Flagg, of Hubbardston, May 22, 1843.” “Amos Doane, oldest son of Joshua and Ruth Doane, was born in Royalston April 7, 1803. He was a well known character in Royalston and surrounding towns and his name is perpetuated in “Doane’s Falls”. He owned the land around the falls and built a large mill in close proximity, but which was never utilized to any great extent for manufacturing purposes. It stood for many years an interesting and unique landmark, and finally was torn down a piece at a time. He was a man of great height, being more than six feet tall, and was engaged in many law suits. He was a familiar figure in Athol, where he commenced the erection of a large building which was never completed and which was known for a long time as ‘Doane’s Castle’. Many interesting anecdotes are related of him. He married Luceba Pennyman Sept. 27, 1836 and they had two children Andrew and Byron. Andrew died in infancy.” The 1857 map reports an A. Doane residence near the location where the road to Athol is crossed by the Lawrence River.
Selectboard Notes
Christine Long, clerk

Special Town Meeting for Renovation of Raymond. In February the Select Board offered two well-attended informational meetings and an open house to explain the plan to grapple with our need for modern, comfortable, accessible space for town officials to work in and for residents to meet with those officials in a convenient, one-stop location. The special town meeting seeking voter approval of this plan was held at the end of February, and it was decided to table the article until more information is gathered.

Polling place: A reminder, too, that the Select Board voted earlier to combine our two precincts into one, so all voters will cast their ballots at town hall.

FY23 Operating Budget. In February the Select Board met with major departments about their budget requests for the fiscal year that runs from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. The board has not yet considered the requests in total, but here are some highlights.

- Department of Public Works Budget: The requested budget for salaries and wages seeks a 12% increase, primarily to again fund summer temporary wages, which have not been funded for two years. The expenses request is up only 2%.

  The sewer arm of the DPW requests a 5.9% increase over this year, primarily driven by increases in maintenance lines. At the time of this meeting, the board did not yet know of any significant changes in the intermunicipal agreement with Athol, which handles operations. (Sewer users pay for operations; taxpayers as a whole pay for maintenance.)

  The municipal buildings arm of the DPW requests an essentially flat-line budget.

- Fire Department Budget: The department is requesting 25% more in wages and salaries. It proposes no raise for the chief, but does seek more funds for call and training wages. To cover expenses, the department requests only a 1% increase.

- Police Department Budget: The department is requesting a 19% increase in salaries to fund an increase in the chief’s hours and an additional one hour per day for patrols, to provide coverage of town-sponsored events, and to pay for Bridge Academy training mandated by the state Police Reform Law. The department asks for a 7% increase in expenses, to meet higher fuel prices, as well as maintenance and information technology needs.

- Library Budget: The department is requesting a 3% increase, which includes modest salary raises and increased spending on internet and automation.

- Board of Health Budget: The Board of Health is asking for an 8.6% increase, the major driver of which is a required biannual monitoring of the landfill at a cost of $5,000.

Capital Requests. The Select Board believes there will be capital requests for the coming year, but at press time we do not yet have specific information.

Office of the Town Clerk
Barbara G. Richardson
P.O. Box 127, Royalston, MA 01368
Phone: 978-249-0493; Fax 978-575-0748
e-mail:townclerk@royalston-ma.gov

The street list questionnaires are coming in at a nice pace. Please keep them coming!

Dog licensing is available by mail or in office on Wednesdays 10-2 at Whitney Hall. If you did not receive a licensing form with your street list, printable ones are available on the Town website in the Town Clerk section. If mailing please send only COPIES of your certificates, and a check made out to the Town of Royalston.

Annual Election News: The annual election will take place on April 4, 2022 from 10 AM-8 PM town wide polling will be at the Town Hall 13 On the Common.

Running for the following positions

Selectboard-( 1) seat available
3 years Roland Hamel- incumbent
Richard B. Martin

Town Clerk (1)
3 years Barbara Richardson-incumbent

Constable (1)
3 years Blank

Assessor (1)
3 years Blank

Cemetery Commission (1)
3 years Blank

Board of Health (1)
3 years Andrea Crete-incumbent

Library Trustee (1)
3 years Jeffrey Mangum-incumbent

Planning Board (1)
5 years Kathleen Collins-incumbent

Trustee of the J.N. Bartlett Fund (4)
1 year Nancy Melbourne-incumbent
Gary Winitzer-incumbent
Christopher Deveneau
Blank

School Committee Member for Royalston (1)
3 years Britany M. Newton
Royalston Emergency Management
Director Jim Barclay, e-mail ema@royalston-ma.gov or 978-249-2904

Coronavirus Status: There’s reason to be hopeful – positivity rates in our area (although as much as FOUR TIMES HIGHER than state averages) are falling. As rates fall, so do some of the measures that prevent transmission. As these measures are reduced or discontinued, unvaccinated individuals will be at greater risk of contracting all of the COVID-19 variants currently circulating – and yes, I’m repeating myself, but the VAST MAJORITY of hospitalizations and deaths involving COVID-19 are unvaccinated individuals. Please, if you are not vaccinated, do so as quickly as possible!

COVID-19 Home Test Kits: are available through the Board of Health, as well as Emergency Management. Rather than risk exposing others, if you have symptoms that warrant a home test, please contact us to drop one off at your home. FACTS on COVID-19 are found at www.cdc.gov and/or www.mass.gov; social media sites are NOT reliable sources of FACTS! Keep up on state and Worcester County transmission rates at https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view.

March Readiness: (PIC)

Wind and water are the watchwords for March – and while there may be some degree of luck involved, keeping water out of your basement and your windows intact is mostly about preparedness! Before snow melt run-off and spring rains hit the time is make sure exterior drains are free of debris and able to swallow large amounts of water. Before your cellar is under inches of water is the time to show your sump pump a little love – test it and service it now.

March winds – while great for kites – can wreak havoc on items left outside and unsecured. Be sure to get the mostly-empty salt and sand buckets, shovels, roof rakes, sleds, skis, snowshoes, etc. either under cover or somehow secured. One good gust can send them through the window of your house or vehicle. Preparedness beats panic every time. Be informed. Make a plan.

Fire Department News

I want to remind all of our residents that open burning starts again on January 15th and runs until May 1st. Again this year we will be using an online system for burning permits. It can be found by going to Royalston-ma.gov and using the “find it fast” tab and click on burn permits. You can also use this address to go directly to the site https://massfire.net/brush/royalston.php. There is a two step process to obtain your burning permit (which is only good for the 2022 burning season). Follow the directions on the site to pay for your permit from your checking account. (This is a very safe and secure way to pay, and is the same system banks use to transfer money. Your information will not be compromised). Once payment is made, you will receive a confirmation number. Save that number and go back to the burn permit page and complete step two, which is to apply for the burning permit. Before the permit is issued, you will have to read and accept the open burning rules. If any resident has a legitimate hardship and is unable to use a computer, or does not have friends or family able to assist, call the fire station 978-249-8138 and arrangements can be made. Once a permit has been issued, you will use the phone number you used when you applied for the burning permit on the site to call in your permit to an automated number, which will inform you if burning is allowed on not for the day. This new system allows for our dispatch center to monitor active permits for the day and inform our crews if any permits are in the area prior to responding on calls. (The previous system required crews to listen to the answering machine at the station prior to responding to calls). I understand this new system can be challenging for some residents, but the benefits make it worth the effort.

In other news, the Fire Department will be sending the first few members to the Mass. Firefighting Call/Volunteer Recruit Firefighting Academy starting March 1st thanks to a federal grant. This Academy is 240 hours of training over 54 sessions and when completed these members will be certified to the firefighter 1/2 level and also as Hazardous Materials First Responders. We have another four members scheduled to attend in the next year. As part of our $169,000 federal grant received a few months ago we were also able to order six new sets of firefighting turnout gear saving the town $20,000. Once town meeting approves the Town’s 5% share of the grant, we will be ordering new portable radios also with this grant funding, saving the town $95,000. We also were awarded funding through the grant to send 12 of our members to receive 10 hours of pump training, which consists of classroom instruction and hands on training with our fire engines and a high tech simulator trailer where our members will be able to practice scenarios with our fire engines that will provide invaluable training for our members.

Chief Eric Jack
Phinehas S. Newton Library News
Kathy Morris, Library Director
Trustees: Jeffrey Mangum, Jennifer Basso, Theresa Quinn
Open and pick up hours: Mondays 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Thursdays 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. and 6:30 - 8 p.m.; Saturdays: 9:00 am-12 noon
978-249-3572 www.royalstonlibrary.org

Donations to the Friends
Clarence and Elizabeth Rabideau
Dana Perkins

Thank You
Ernie LeBlanc for a great nature program
Patti Stanko for help with refreshments for the program
Jeff Wright and Kristi Scheile for allowing us to take a nature walk in their fields and to John and Steffi McClure for their full bird feeders.

Library Receives Roving Archivist Grant
Looking for an update to the Heritage Grant the Library received twenty-one years ago under the guidance of former trustee, Polly Longsworth, I applied for and received a grant to survey the materials in preparation for cataloging and digitizing many of the records to make them available online for research and general interest. We hope this will make available some of the historical documents in our collection. An archivist will begin work on the project in early March.

Spring into Shape with Yoga
Certified yoga instructor, Jessica O’Clair will help you regain some flexibility you may have lost during the COVID-19 winter months. Class is on Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. in the upstairs of the Town Hall. Masks are no longer mandatory and is up to the individual. Adjustments to poses are given so that all abilities are accommodated. Please bring your own mat.

COVID-19 Test Kits
As of the newsletter deadline, there are still COVID-19 test kits available for free at the Library. Families may receive one kit for each two people as long as supplies last. We thank the Board of

Library Book Group Forming
Interested in being part of a Library book group on either Monday or Thursday evening or Saturday morning approximately once a month. If so, contact Maureen Blasco at 978-249-5138 and voice your preference for time and day.

Preschool Story Time
Join Brooke Coleman on non-holiday Mondays at 10:00 in the Library (unless it’s beautiful outside) for stories, crafts, play, visiting, and healthy snacks. No pre-registration is required. Come meet others with small children.

St. Patrick’s Day Craft
On Sunday, March 13 at 2:00 at the Town Hall, Kathy Morris will teach different plaits to create shamrocks from straw for St. Patrick’s Day. The symbolism of the shamrock is possibly derived from the triskele, a Neolithic three-lobed spiral, common throughout Ireland. There were also two triple deities in ancient Celtic lore and St. Patrick’s used the symbol, which was already familiar to the Irish, to represent the Holy Trinity in early Christianity. No matter the symbolism, each participant in the workshop will make two shamrocks, using one or more plaits to create a slightly different shamrock. The program is free but space is limited and you must pre-register: sign up at the Library or call or email.

Hotspot Update
We have two types of hotspots at the Library; the Mobile Beacon Coolpad with Sprint and The T-Mobile Hotspots. T-Mobile has acquired Sprint and is in the process of converting all the towers to T-Mobile. As of March 3, we have to switch our service of the Mobile Beacon Coolpad Hotspots to T-Mobile. We are not sure how this will affect service to those who currently can use this hotspot but not the T-Mobile hotspot. If and when the tower in Winchendon is upgraded to T-Mobile, those hotspots should still function. We currently have 13 hotspots to loan and the T-Mobile hotspots can be renewed for more than two weeks as long as there are not people waiting to borrow one. Stop by and check one out.

Traveling? Anywhere T-Mobile has service, the hotspots should work.

Log into Wowbrary.com to see what’s new at the Library. Updated weekly.
# Some of the new materials at your Library

## Adult Fiction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allende, Isabel</td>
<td>Violeta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atkins, Ace</td>
<td>Robert B. Parker’s Bye Bye Baby</td>
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<td>Beaton, M.C.</td>
<td>Death of a Green-Eyed Monster</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chamberlain, Diane</td>
<td>The Last House on the Street</td>
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<td>Cumming, Charles</td>
<td>Box 88</td>
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<td>Davis, Fiona</td>
<td>The Magnolia Palace</td>
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<td>Dimaline, Cherie</td>
<td>The Marrow Thieves</td>
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<td>Evison, Jonathan</td>
<td>Small World</td>
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<td>Faulkner, Katherine</td>
<td>Greenwich Park</td>
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<td>Ferrante, Elena</td>
<td>The Lost Daughter</td>
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<td>Foley, Lucy</td>
<td>The Paris Apartment</td>
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<td>Gardner, Lisa</td>
<td>One Step Too Far</td>
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<td>Gish, Jen</td>
<td>Thank You, Mr. Nixon</td>
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<td>Gramont, Nina de</td>
<td>The Christie Affair</td>
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<td>Greaney, Mark</td>
<td>Sierra Six</td>
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<td>Haigh, Jennifer</td>
<td>Mercy Street</td>
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<td>Hamilton, Hugo</td>
<td>The Pages</td>
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<td>Hurwitz, Gregg</td>
<td>Dark Horse</td>
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<td>Ide, Joe</td>
<td>The Goodbye Coast</td>
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<td>James, Marlon</td>
<td>Moon Witch, Spider King</td>
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<td>Jonas, Julia</td>
<td>Vladimir</td>
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<td>Kellerman, Jonathan</td>
<td>City of the Dead</td>
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<td>Koontz, Dean</td>
<td>Quicksilver</td>
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<td>Krentz, Jayne</td>
<td>Lightning in a Mirror</td>
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<td>Kukafka, Danya</td>
<td>Notes on an Execution</td>
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<td>Lippman, Laura</td>
<td>Seasonal Work</td>
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<td>Lutz, Lisa</td>
<td>The Accomplice</td>
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<td>Macneal, Elizabeth</td>
<td>Circus of Wonders</td>
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<td>Maher, Kerri</td>
<td>The Paris Bookseller</td>
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<td>Mitchard, Jacquelyn</td>
<td>The Good Son</td>
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<td>Morris, Amelia</td>
<td>Wildcat</td>
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<td>Nagamatsu, Sequoia</td>
<td>How High We Go in the Dark</td>
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<td>Patterson, James</td>
<td>The Horsewoman</td>
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<td>Pitoniak, Anna</td>
<td>Our American Friend</td>
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<td>Preston, Douglas</td>
<td>Diablo Mesa</td>
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<td>Rivers, Francine</td>
<td>The Lady’s Mine</td>
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<td>Robb, J.D.</td>
<td>Abandoned in Death</td>
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<td>Silver, Josie</td>
<td>One Night on the Island</td>
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<td>Solomon, Rachel</td>
<td>Weather Girl</td>
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<td>Steel, Danielle</td>
<td>Invisible</td>
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<td>Wang, WeiKe</td>
<td>Joan is Okay</td>
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<td>Wilkerson, C.</td>
<td>Black Cake</td>
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<td>Wrobel, Stephanie</td>
<td>This Might Hurt</td>
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<td>Yanagihara, Hanya</td>
<td>To Paradise</td>
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<td>Unger, Lisa</td>
<td>Last Girl Ghosted</td>
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## Children's Fiction

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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blas, Terry</td>
<td>Who Was the Voice of the People? Cesar Chavez</td>
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<td>Boynton, Sandra</td>
<td>Jungle Night</td>
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<td>Chen, Eva</td>
<td>I am Golden</td>
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<td>Dewdney, Anna</td>
<td>Everything will be OK</td>
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<td>Elliott, Rebecca</td>
<td>Bear Builds a House</td>
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<td>Hong, Pam</td>
<td>Storm on Snowbelle Mountain</td>
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<td>Forsythe, Matthew</td>
<td>Once Upon a Forest</td>
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<td>Greanias, Margaret</td>
<td>Mina</td>
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<td>Ho, Joanna</td>
<td>Eyes that Speak to the Stars</td>
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<td>Lionni, Leo</td>
<td>Mouse Seasons</td>
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<td>McCully, Emily</td>
<td>1, 2, 3 Pull!</td>
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<td>Melleby, Nicole</td>
<td>How to Become a Planet</td>
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<td>Osada, Hiroshi</td>
<td>Almost Nothing, Yet Everything</td>
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<td>Osborne, Mary</td>
<td>Sunlight on the Snow Leopard</td>
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<td>Paulsen, Gary</td>
<td>Northwind</td>
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<td>Phelan, Matt</td>
<td>Sweater Weather</td>
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<td>Pinkwater, Daniel</td>
<td>Kat Hats</td>
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<td>Sotomayor, Sonia</td>
<td>Just Help!</td>
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<td>Walker, Tricia</td>
<td>Dream Street</td>
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<td>Wild, Charlotte</td>
<td>Love, Violet</td>
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## Children's Nonfiction

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barlow, Mark</td>
<td>The Steal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bernstein, Carl</td>
<td>Delorme New Hampshire, Vermont Topo Maps</td>
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<td>Higgins, Maeve</td>
<td>Chasing History</td>
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<td>Hogan, Linda</td>
<td>Tell Everyone on this Train I Love Them</td>
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<td>Insel, Thomas</td>
<td>The Radiant Lives of Animals</td>
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<td>Mohamed, Mariam</td>
<td>Healing</td>
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<td>Pink, Daniel</td>
<td>Eid al-Adha</td>
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<td>Raff, Jennifer</td>
<td>The Power of Regret</td>
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<td>Rawlence, Ben</td>
<td>Origin</td>
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<td>Sedaris, David</td>
<td>The Treetline</td>
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<td>Stanley, Diane</td>
<td>A Carnival of Snackery</td>
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<td>Styler, Kevin</td>
<td>Peril</td>
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</tbody>
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## DVDs:

- Clifford the Big Red Dog, Dear Evan Hansen, The Dry, Dune, Eternals, Ghostbusters Afterlife, House of Gucci, King Richard, and The King’s Man

## Audiobooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bernstein, Carl</td>
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<td>Hawkins, Rachel</td>
<td>Reckless Girls</td>
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<td>Moriarty, Liane</td>
<td>Apples Never Fall</td>
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<td>Towles, Amor</td>
<td>The Lincoln Highway</td>
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## Young Adult

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reynolds, Jason</td>
<td>Ain’t Burned all the Bright</td>
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Selectboard Candidates’ Statements
There is one contested position in the April 4 Annual Town Election. Selectboard incumbent Roland Hamel is challenged by Rick Martin.

Roland Hamel
I would appreciate the support of Royaston’s voters because I would like to complete some of the town’s projects that we have started and feel that I have experience. Being a life resident of this town, I communicate with the people and know what they are talking about. I have helped straighten out the sewer treatment plant and operations, which saved the taxpayers from being fined by EPA and Mass DEP. I also helped move the Fire Department forward, and the morale there is very high now. There are other projects in my (and the rest of the Selectboard’s) sights that I think will be good for the town over the next 3 years. Thank you.

Rick Martin
I would like to introduce myself. My name is Rick Martin, and I am introducing myself as a candidate for the Select Board in the election coming up in town on April 4th. My wife Cathy and I have been residents of Royalston for 10 years, first in the Village and now just off the Common. Even though I am seemingly a newbie to Royalston I did grow up in Athol. For over 40 years I worked for small to large manufacturing companies in NY and New England. In most of these companies I was responsible for the purchase of all materials used to build the products for the company and all Capital equipment and supplies to run the company. In all these cases I was responsible for the creation of the yearly budget for these expenditures sometimes reaching into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

While being in Royalston for a seemingly brief time I have been an eager and enthusiastic participant in both the town and town government. I have a short stint on the Sewer Commission. I am presently on the Finance Board of the Town and am currently the Chairman of the Cable Advisory Committee working to get reliable Broadband service available to each resident of the Town. I was a member of the Search Committee for the hiring of the new Fire Chief, and I have attended over 98% of the Selectboard meetings over the last three years. While a resident of the South Village I was a participant with the South Village Revitalization Committee in many projects that have started to transform the Village and am now a member of the Steering Committee.

I see the coming years to be very challenging for the Town as costs continue to go up and yearly revenues not matching these costs. I feel that all areas of Royalston need to be informed of the challenges coming, or already here, and all residents need to be heard and actions taken to meet the challenges. I have tried to use my experience to contribute to the betterment of areas of Royalston and would think this would translate well to a position on the Select Board.

I am eager to bring this experience in both business and government to the Select Board and the Town to deal with the many issues that are facing each of us currently. I would very much appreciate your consideration and support.

Scholarships Available
Deadline for all is April 16, 2022
Royalston Academy Scholarships:
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 residents 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.

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.

Royalston Fish and Game Club Suppers
Roast Beef Suppers Resume – The Royalston F&G’s famous roast beef suppers are back! Tossed salad, bread, and real butter, whet the appetite for perfectly-prepared roast beef, mashed potatoes with a savory brown gravy, and green beans, all served “family-style.” A chocolate or strawberry “Hoodsie” tops off the meal. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.; supper is served at 6 p.m.

Memberships for 2022 are $50 and available that night at the Club. They are also available at the Royalston General Store. Call RF&G at 978-249-3004. Check out the Facebook Page – message for specific information.

Historical Society News
Thanks to generous donors, the next major renovation to Old Schoolhouse No. 1 is about to take place. The second floor ceiling of the museum will be removed and restored to its earlier coved plastered period. The coved rafters are mostly intact and visible in the attic. The museum will be closed for months. Volunteers are doing preparatory work. Jeff Wright is doing a photographic survey. Kathy Morris will secure fragile textiles and the only extant P.S. Newton palm-leaf hat. Stephen Chase will remove and replace the crown molding. Castine Movers from Athol will move all remaining exhibits from the second floor to the first. (When unpacked, this collection will be weeded and more thoroughly archived.) D.P. Autio Co. of Littleton MA will do the restoration work using blue board, wire lath and three coat plaster.
CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD NEWS

Graduates, newlyweds, reunions, pandemic babies... share the milestones here at the RCN! This is your space.

Don Shambroom of Blossom Street, South Royalston, won an award as “most treasured artist,” the equivalent of “best in show” at a recent art show in Warren, R.I. The show was sponsored by the Imago Foundation for the Arts and took place at the Imago Gallery during the month of January. Don’s portrait of musician Herbie Hancock was the winning work of art.

submitted by Allen Young

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 who could use a home-cooked meal and some of God’s love.

Please contact: Debbie Conrad (978)895-3505, Fred Hodgeman (978)894-4996, and Wendell Kathan (978)939-3990

Obituary

Thomas John Kussy, 73, of Portland, Maine, formerly a longtime resident of Butterworth Road in Royalston, died Jan. 20.

He was born in Boston on Feb. 18, 1948, a son of the late Edward and Jennie (Potapski) Kussy. Survivors include his wife of 44 years, Ann; a sister Cynthia Kussy-Goldberg and her husband Jeffrey, and nieces Tiffany McDonnell and Tara Welby. He was predeceased by his brother, Edward Kussy Jr.

He received a bachelor’s degree in marketing from Boston College and pursued studies in computer engineering at Lowell University. Tom served for many years as executive director of the North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce, based in Athol. Before taking the Chamber position, he worked for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in various positions. He was deputy commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Commerce and Development, a job that introduced him to the North Quabbin region. He was state liaison to the Small Business Development Center at the University of Massachusetts School of Business Administration in Amherst.

He was a member of the Athol-Orange Rotary Club and served on various boards and committees. He was the chair of the Royalston Town Democratic Committee. He was involved in community theater productions.

Following a fire that severely damaged his Royalston home in 2005, Tom resigned his position at the Chamber and several months later, he and Ann relocated to Maine. In Portland, Tom worked part time as a business consultant, with clients including L.L. Bean. He enjoyed giving tours of the Portland area to visitors who came to visit him and Ann there.

Annual Royalston Egg Hunt, Saturday, April 16th

Mr. Bunny and friends invite you to celebrate the return of the annual Egg Hunt on Royalston Common. The festivities will start promptly at 10:00 AM on Saturday, April 16th from the steps of the Town Hall. It will be held rain or shine; participants are advised to dress for the weather. Since it is an outdoor event this year, there will be plenty of room for social distancing.

Prior to the egg hunt, there will be opportunities to say hello to Mr. Bunny, to admire and take photos of Gordon Morrison’s beautiful stand-in painting (which was awarded a Royalston Cultural Council grant), to guess the number of jelly beans in a jar for a prize, and to try an informal pickup Egg-and-Spoon race.

Children should bring a bag or basket to hold their eggs during the hunt and to bring their candy home afterward. We ask that everyone please recycle the plastic eggs. Everyone is asked to place the emptied eggs in bins set up for that purpose outside the Town Hall.

Donations of soft candy are welcome (hard candy is not permitted). All candy must be individually wrapped and small enough to fit into the plastic eggs. The General Store, Library and Post Office will accept donations in the baskets provided from mid-March through April 2nd, allowing the time necessary to prepare the eggs. Cash donations for the event are also welcomed. In 2023 we hope to bring back the indoor chocolate-melting activity. Questions can be directed to event organizer Sara Dilg at 978 248-9828.

Prize-winning portrait of Miles Davis
Monty Tech. Mary C Barclay, representative

Royalston vaccination rates are creeping upward, but in the 12–15-year-old category, the rate (27%) still lags behind all of the Monty Tech communities, and is substantially lower than the abutting communities of Athol and Phillipston (44%), Templeton (41%) and Winchendon (38%). The 16–19-year-olds – the majority of Royalston students – are now at a 74% vaccination rate. The DESE (Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education) mask mandate will not longer be in force come March. The Monty Tech School Committee will take up the topic of masking at the March 2nd meeting, and based on City of Fitchburg masking requirements. When mask mandates are dropped, unvaccinated students will be at greater risk of contracting all viruses, including all of the COVID-19 variants.

COVID-19 Testing Protocols are changing. “Test and Stay” is being replaced with home testing of individuals, and if a student or employee develops symptoms while at school, they will be isolated, evaluated, and tested by the School Nurse. Families are supplied with weekly home tests, and reminded that students with symptoms may not ride school buses or enter school buildings without first testing negative at home.

Monty Tech Applications must be completed, including interview, no later than March 31st! Royalston has just two quota seats. If there are unused quota seats in other towns, those extra seats are available to anyone on the wait list who has a fully-completed application. The SY2022-23 freshmen applications are available at www.montytech.net along with a video guide.

The Spring Vocational Interest Program (VIP), which offers opportunities for seventh and eighth graders to try out five Monty Tech shops, is fully-subscribed. Any Royalston students unable to reserve a seat may email Dean of Admissions, Chrissy Leamy at leamy-christine@montytech.net to be placed on a wait list for cancellations.

Monty Tech’s Open House is March 16th (snow date 17th) from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Any families interested in exploring Royalston’s CVTE (Career, Vocational, and Technical Education) school are encouraged to attend. Administrators, faculty, and staff will all be on hand to answer questions as potential students investigate the 21 programs offered, and find out about the wide variety of extra-curricular activities available. Any questions can be directed to Angie Moux at moux-angie@montytech.net.

Superintendent-Director interviews for the next leader of the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School were held in February, with the two candidates forwarded by the Search Committee. Both candidates have the necessary credentials and bring outstanding experiences to the table. Former Royalston resident (life-long Athol-Royalston resident) Anthony McIntosh, and current Monty Tech Principal Thomas Browne appeared before the faculty and staff, and later before the School Committee, to provide introductory comments, and answer questions. Written evaluations by the interviewers will be discussed at the March School Committee meeting.

Speaking of Superintendent-Directors, the April Superintendent’s Dinner, which has not been held for two years due to the pandemic, has been pushed out to September 21st, but it’s in the planning stages! In addition to providing a little more time for people to obtain vaccinations, this will allow Monty Tech’s new Superintendent-Director to experience an evening of fine dining and fundraising.

Recipe of the Month: tatties and neeps

March means the end of the root cellar traditionally. In Scotland, that means extra helpings of “tatties and neeps” (potatoes and turnips). This dish is often served with hagis. Here is one recipe: Fill a large pan with cold water, add a good pinch of sea salt and put it on a high heat. Peel 1 large rutabega/ aka “swede” (roughly 2 lbs), and cut it into 1 inch chunks. Once the water is boiling, add the rutabega and cook for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, peel about 2 lbs of potatoes and cut them into 1 inch chunks. When the 15 minutes is up, add the potatoes and cook for a further 10 to 15 minutes, or until everything is soft and cooked through. Drain, leave to steam dry for a minute, then mash with a good pinch of salt and white pepper and a knob of butter.
Classifieds

**Wanted:** Looking for donations of camping supplies, like a large cast iron dutch oven, griddle, and other large pans and cooking utensils, to be donated for our scouting group. Please contact Teresa at 405.885.0650

**Services Available**

**Royalston Dog Walker** - I let the dogs out. Call or text 978-340-2105

**Babysitter available.** Completed Red Cross Babysitter Training. Please call Hailey Dilg at 978-248-9828.


**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 978-939-3962.

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

**Sweet Water Sugar House** in Royalston at 56 Brown Road will be participating in Massachusetts Maple weekend; Saturday, March 19, 2022, 12 - 5pm & Sunday, March 20, 2022, 11am - 4pm. Visitors will see: a New 2 x 6 Leader Stainless Steel Steam Away Evaporator (Willy Wonka Chocolate Factory Style) in a 15 x 20 foot sugar shack. Take a stroll through the on-site vacuum system with sap ladders or offsite gravity fed lines. Learn how to tap trees, collect sap filtered to the RO system through to the process of bottling the finished maple syrup product, which you may purchase. Will be making maple candy both days: 2pm - 3pm. Questions or updates? Visit Sweet Water Sugar House Facebook page: swshRoyalston.MA

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**for sale:**

**Sweets from Teenie’s Sweet Shop:** Family-owned Sweet Shop that bakes up large size cookies, brownies, whoopie pies, pocket pies, and many other sweet treats. All items made to order. Special orders welcomed. 413-768-1614 email teeniessweetshop@gmail.com also on Facebook and Instagram


**Vermont Castings Vigilant wood burning stove.** Great stove; in Royalston. $100. cash. U p/u. Call or text David @ 617-593-0056

**Laying hens. Rhode Island Reds.** $12/bird. Call Sheila 978-249-2183

**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); 978-249-248-8617; jessputney1989@gmail.com

**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 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.

**Nature books and prints.** Commissions accepted. Call Gordon Morrison at 978-249-2947.


**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 Order** (ground or whole bean) once a month through the Village School. Order online and pick it up in the hallway at the school the following Friday. Go to https://www.villageschoolma.org/shop/ to put in your order.
Garden Notes  
February 22, 2022

It’s been a month since I last wrote. Notwithstanding, gardening seems as far away now as it did then. Today’s rain put the finishing touches on the remaining snow and the garden opened up. It was not a pretty sight. This and that pilled here and there. I had successfully accumulated the piles last fall. I had unsuccessfully removed them. Project number one when the elements (and my mood) are agreeable. In the absence of mulch, I discovered bed after bed mired in mud (sort of like the road in front of our house), a far cry from anything resembling a garden. It was not exactly devoid of promise. Strawberry leaves were green and scallions were sending up new shoots. This was not entirely unexpected; both tend to retain at least some color throughout the winter. I was more surprised, when, lifting the mulch (the only mulch in the garden), I discovered the garlics had emerged. More surprising still was the appearance of a few rhubarb buds. I would not have expected either for at least another month. The rabbits are in waiting; I’ve seen two and I cannot imagine how many I have not seen. So much for bobcat control.

The garden will be smaller. Over the last several years, portions have remained fallow with the expectation that they would be brought back into service. No such expectations remain and they will revert to non-garden status. It was a no-brainer actually. I no longer grow for market and our family size has long since been reduced from six to two. There remains a certain persistent sadness. I have maintained this ground for over four decades and it is not ready. I understand. Not ready? I understand.

Winter stores of vegetables are disturbingly low. This comes as no surprise since there were no beets, no carrots, no cabbages for the root cellar. (In a good year, they would be providing upwards of two hundred pounds of grub.) Winter squash, despite every effort on my part, behaved as they always have, starting to disintegrate in December, gone by January’s end. I’m not sure why they are referred to as winter squash; I have yet to have stored any that have survived the winter. We generally hold off reaching for the frozen vegetables, beans and corn and sugarsnaps and broccoli and cauliflower and peppers and celery, until we’ve made a dent in the root cellar. We made that dent months ago. The good news: an ample supply of rutabaga remains. The bad news: an ample supply of rutabaga remains. Its flavor ranges from okay to not okay (depending on the tastes of the taster). I have yet to hear anyone refer to it as ‘mouth-watering’. What it lacks in flavor, it also lacks in versatility. I’ve found that mashing them with equal quantities of potatoes works out just fine. This may, regretfully, become the first year I am obliged to buy vegetables. Stay tuned.

Larry Siegel

February 25
Six inches of snow (as least as measured astride Prospect Hill). It was welcome. Shoveling becomes me. And, the sprouted garlics will have another layer of insulation. And, especially, the unpretty sight of the garden has been prettified.

Not Ready
This year it seems that winter, barely arrived, is already slipping away. The light’s return is the first sign. By mid-February the sun is rising around 6:30 a.m., but the eastern sky is light well before. Sunset is later than 5:30 p.m. now, leaving a faint glow in the western sky long after. Last night’s snowfall turned crystalline in this morning’s sun and our eaves drip with melting snow. Usually, I welcome this turning of winter toward spring. But this year I am not ready.

I am not alone in this wish for spring to hold off a bit longer. I know skiers, snowmobilers, winter campers and ice-ledge hikers who would also love to see more weeks of cold and snow. I admire their joy in being outside in winter’s elements. However, that is not my reason for wishing spring away.

Winter’s snow and cold invite me to slow down and pay attention to the small, quiet things in this pared-down time of year. It is enough just to watch the birds gather at the feeders. I do not catalogue their number or type. It is enough just to watch a powerful nor’easter toss our giant trees and fill our yard with snow. How much snow or how cold is irrelevant. After the storm I step outside into the dark and breathe in winter’s burning cold. Dark, cold, silent – the essence of winter. I would welcome a bit more time to take this all in.

In these last weeks of winter, I bring my slowed-down noticing outdoors. Bundled up, I walk our roads in the weak winter light just to hear the wind and watch the branches sway. I wander across our field and into our woods, taking in winter’s landscape and noticing the tracks of others – human and animal – out before me. I am reminded of childhood winters, cold and dark, when we knew the scent of snow and could gauge the temperature by the feel of cold air on our skin. Perhaps this is winter’s gift – the permission to claim the cold and dark and make it your own.

A recent trip to the compost pile at the far edge of our yard set me wondering if winter itself is unsure if it should linger or depart. In the waning light of day, I trudged through a snow drift and onto a patch of ice. This quickly gave way to bare ground, a patch of soft mud, then back to ice and snow. It was a walk through the season’s own ambivalence. Not ready? I understand.

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Have You Ever
Have you ever gotten out of a warm bed before dawn to glimpse moonlight glinting off frost crystals? Moisture in the air from the last thaw has graced brittle grasses with disarming beauty. Yet it’s an awkward stage between winter and spring, a sort of seasonal adolescence, full of confusing and conflicting behavior. The weather wants to be temperate, but cannot resist an outburst or two. Just when you thought that the mood had shifted, here comes a stormy attitude. Maple sap flow is on hold until warm days and freezing nights develop some consistency. Nature’s vicissitudes reflect the mental condition of humanity. Do we really not get the imbalance that climate change brings? Everyone talks about the weather. Maybe now is the time to do something about it.

Michael Young
Royalston Poet Laureate

Preschool Storytime
at the Library
10 am each Monday
Stories, socializing, songs, snacks and crafts
Free
Call the Library for more information