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

Winter Parking Ban continues in February. – Any vehicle left in a public way can be towed at the owner’s expense, 24/7.

February 3  Friday
7 p.m.  Open Mic at Town Hall. The Bluez Katz will be the house band; Line up is Scotty Monette, Charlie Scott, Doug MacCloud, Jamie Hatch, and Jim Bennett. Arrive at 7 to sign up for a slot. Hot drinks and light supper available for a reasonable cost. Sponsored by the Cultural Council.

February 5  Sunday
1:29 p.m.  Full Snow Moon

February 6  Monday
Half-Day – ARRSD for professional development

February 11  Saturday
10 a.m. to noon.  Village School Open House
Come meet the teachers, talk with parents, meet alumni, tour the building, find out about our unique curriculum and get your questions answered! Find out about the admissions process. Bring your children; they will enjoy activities in the classrooms. Preschool is filling up for next year, kindergarten has a few openings, and other classes may have waiting lists. If you cannot come to this event, we are taking names for preschool, kindergarten and 3rd-4th grades for next fall, e-mail rise@villageschoolma.org . Visits will be arranged for this spring.

February 13  Monday
5 p.m.  Deadline for Return of Nomination Papers for candidacy in Annual Town Election. Bring to Town Clerk’s office.

February 14  Tuesday
Valentine’s Day

February 18  Saturday
6 p.m.  Royalston Fish and Game Roast Beef Supper: salad, bread, roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, and a Hoodsie Cup. Take-out dinners are available. Doors open at 5:30. Call or stop by the Clubhouse at 978-249-3004. Tickets are $15/person; rarely are any available at the door so RSVP!

February 19  Sunday
2 pm and possibly 4 pm  Library Pottery Class for Adults and Young Adults in the Town Hall led by Lydia Musco and Joshua Doub. Participants will create a coiled or slab clay vessel. After firing, the pieces will be returned to the Library for pick-up. To participate, pre-register by calling or emailing the Library (suggested donation $10 per person).

February 21  Tuesday
Mardi Gras ~ Fat Tuesday

February 20  Monday
Presidents' Day – Post Office, P. S. Newton Library, all schools closed; no meetings. (School vacations last all week.)

2:06 a.m.  New Worm Moon

February 24  Friday
1:30 pm  “Animal World Experience” School Vacation Program with Matt Gabriel in the upstairs of the Town Hall. There will be animals from around the world and opportunities to ask questions. The program is funded by a grant from the Royalston Academy and the Friends of the Library.

Save the Date:

March 5  Sunday
10 a.m.  Make a Bark Basket with Jennifer Lee at the Royalston Town Hall. The basket will be a berry basket with spruce roots to bind it together and arrowwood or red osier dogwood trim. Jennifer Lee has spent her adult life learning the true history and culture of the Northeast Woodland Indigenous Peoples. She is enrolled with the Metis Nations of North America and the Northern Narragansets. This workshop has limited spaces so you must pre-register and pay a $20 materials fee. The workshop will last approximately four hours and there will light luncheon after two hours.

April 8  Saturday
10 a.m.  The Annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held at the Royalston Town Hall on the Common. Donations of soft, individually wrapped candy are welcome (hard candy is not permitted). Look for donation baskets at the end of March! Thank you!
Town Facilities Use Application Form
Are you planning a get-together for an event but cannot find a facility to have it? Have you considered using facilities owned by the Town of Royalston? Rooms in the Town Hall, including the kitchen area, the Common, the park and gazebo in the South Village, as well as Bullock Park behind the Historical Society Building are available for rental fees that are significantly less costly than other venues. The Town Facilities Rental Application has been updated and is located on the Town website now. This has been updated with prices and the process to obtain approval. Check it out!

BRIC Money for Royalston
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts’s program, “Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities” (BRIC), provides grant funding for detailed studies of the effects of climate change on municipalities and how best to mitigate those effects. Looking at the Warwick Road/Route 32 intersection or the Brown Road and Bliss Hill Road wash outs, you can see how the town is being affected by stronger storms and heavier rains. The Select Board recently signed a letter of support for $30,000 that would gain us a grant of $90,000 for a study of the many culverts (over 250) and roadways in town that are being affected by changing weather and water courses. This information will help us determine how to replace and repair bridges and culverts to withstand these environmental changes.

Memorial Day Committee
I know that we have mentioned this before, but it is worth mentioning again. The three main cogs in our Memorial Day Committee have chosen to retire. So as of this moment we have no active members on this very important committee to honor our veterans and fallen heroes of the past. Please consider joining this committee and honoring these men and women. If you are interested, contact the Select Board administrator at 978-249-9633.

In-progress Work on Falls Road
The Town has received a notice from the Mass Department of Transportation that a recent inspection of a bridge on Falls Road indicates needed repairs. At this time the bridge is deemed safe and continues to be used, but the state has outlined the issues that need to be repaired within a short period of time. DPW Superintendent Thiem is on top of this and has started research on the methods to be used. Funds are available, so depending on the weather, work should begin in short order. Be on the lookout for work happening on Falls Road by our DPW crews.

First Congregational Church - Marion’s Food Pantry:
We know times are tough. Anybody in need –please come visit the pantry, or we can deliver if home-bound during pantry hours. Saturdays 10am to Noon. Contacts-Deb Conrad (978)895-3505, Jeff & Sue Smith (978)895-7887.

Run for Office, Dog Licenses and Street Lists:
Town Clerk News
Annual Election time: nomination papers are available and must be completed and returned by February 13 @ 5 p.m.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>Incumbent name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Selectman</td>
<td>Christine Long</td>
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<td>Assessor</td>
<td>James Richardson</td>
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<td>Cemetery Commission</td>
<td>Roland Hamel</td>
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<td>Board of Health</td>
<td>Phil Leger</td>
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<td>Library Trustee</td>
<td>Theresa Quinn</td>
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<td>Planning Board</td>
<td>Thomas Musco</td>
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<td>Trustees of J.N. Bartlett Fund</td>
<td>Gary Winzter</td>
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<td>Trustees of J.N. Bartlett Fund</td>
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<td>Trustees of J.N. Bartlett Fund</td>
<td>Nancy Melbourne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athol-Royalston Reg. School</td>
<td>Nancy Melbourne</td>
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The 2023 dog licenses are available, come during regular hours (Wednesdays 10-2) Whitney Hall, or by mail using the form you can print from the Town’s website in the Town Clerk’s section.

Street List forms are headed your way soon, you will also find a copy of the dog registration form included. PLEASE return the forms ASAP and get them back to the Clerk’s Office.

Luncheon Club and COA
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. Meals are $2 for seniors (60+) and $2.50 for pre-seniors. Please call Betty Woodbury at 978-249-9656 before 5 PM on Monday, to reserve a seat for lunch that Wednesday.

Board of Health News
Phil Leger, chair
Happy New Year everyone. The paper compactor is installed and awaiting final electrical hook-up prior to being operational. In the meantime, please don’t throw material in the hopper. Folks will be informed when it is operational. We would like to thank RDPW for their assistance in the installation. We would also like to thank Hopkins Masonry for the cement pad work and AJ Mallet for the asphalt work.

Winter is here although not a snowy one so far. Please be careful around the facility and keep an eye out for black ice.

Reminder: that textiles and mattresses are now waste bin items. We have 2 clothing boxes outside the recycling building. See attendant for proper mattress recycling procedure.

Covid unfortunately is still among us. The most recent strain is very contagious. There are plenty of test kits available at the Post Office, Library and front and rear entry halls at the Town Hall. If feeling ill, test to be sure. New booster vaccines are available at your local pharmacy. Be safe, vaccinate.
Important Update on DPW Vehicle Purchase
At the June 2022 Annual Town Meeting and again on the November ballot, Royalston voters authorized the town to purchase a new dump/sander cab and chassis for the DPW. The amount approved for this purchase was $200,000.

As Jaret Thiem, our DPW superintendent, worked to find a new vehicle of this description, he was confronted with the economic reality of our times. New vehicles are now costing upwards of $260,000. Even if voters had approved that amount for this purchase, the wait time pushes delivery of such a vehicle out to May of 2024 – 18 months later than when we need it, which is now! Jaret has found a used dump/sander cab and chassis in excellent condition, and available now, for around $98,000 – less than half the cost voters approved.

Given all of this, and the urgency of having a dump/sander ready for the winter at hand, the Select Board has authorized the purchase of this used vehicle. The Board believes approving this purchase is in the town’s best interest, both from a financial and public safety standpoint.

We want to be sure you, the voters, understand our reasoning behind this change. As always, we appreciate your trust in us. You can email the Board with any questions at bos@royalston-ma.gov.

Deb D’Amico

Got broken branches?
Burn Permits are now available online. It is illegal to burn without a permit. Go to the royalston-ma.gov web site and find the Fire and EMS Department. Follow the Royalston Burn Permit link which takes you to the massfire.net web site. There is a fee of $10.25

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

Royalston South Village Revitalization News
The Sub-committee of the South Royalston Revitalization Committee which is planning a new park where Pete and Henry’s used to be held its first meeting on January 18. In attendance were Lynne Kellner (chair), Janice Trask, Dick Lawrence, Maureen Blasco, and Bill Chapman. The Committee met with Newage Landscape, LLC owner Kyle Johnson who presented some ideas for creating a patio space that will allow for the addition of playspace and other areas of interest. The Committee is looking at dividing the project in two phases; the first would focus on removing the wall in the middle of the property and making it more level, while the second would encompass the development of the patio, play areas, and possible artistic works as some possibilities. If interested in learning more about the Committee’s work, or wanting to join in some of our efforts, please contact Lynne at blueheron63@gmail.com.

Got broken branches?
Burn Permits are now available online. It is illegal to burn without a permit. Go to the royalston-ma.gov web site and find the Fire and EMS Department. Follow the Royalston Burn Permit link which takes you to the massfire.net web site. There is a fee of $10.25

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

Department of Public Works

DPW Superintendent Jaret R. Thiem 978-249-4223 or dpwadmin@royalston-ma.gov
It could be an active storm cycle for February, which means lots of sanding, salting, and plowing. Residents should remember that snow from driveways should not be plowed into or across roadways. The resulting piles and ridges often freeze, posing a hazard to motorists, and must be removed by scraping in a time-consuming (and if equipment is damaged, expensive) process.

There has been a change from sand/salt mix to straight salt for asphalt surfaces, which means the roads look white longer, but once the salt is given time to work, the roads will ultimately be clearer of snow and ice... as well as clearer of gravel, which can also cause traction issues. “Dirt” roads will continue to be sanded, but with a new mix that includes small stone, which both aids in traction, and builds up material for the gravel roads.

The branches crashing under heavy rained-on snow at the end of January caused many residents to lose power and made some roads impassible for short stretches. Residents cooperation was greatly appreciated.

Internet for Royalston – February Update from the Select Board
Just as the Newsletter was going to press, the Select Board received the following update from Charter/Spectrum, the company that is bringing high-speed internet and cable services to Royalston.

For several months, Charter has been in the “make-ready” stage of this project, which involves securing pole permits from National Grid and Verizon. Once secured, Charter will be able to install their fiber on poles throughout the town.

John Maher, Director of Government Affairs for Massachusetts, reports that Charter has completed the fiber installation along Athol-Richmond Road and is ready to launch services to 54 addresses from house #2 up to #400. These addresses are unique because Charter had existing pole permits on this street. Charter will do direct door to door marketing to these homes very soon.

Charter is still working with National Grid and Verizon to secure the pole permits needed for the rest of the town. The company has one year from when this make-ready work is complete to connect the rest of the town. Mr. Maher reports that their construction folks are hopeful they will have the pole permits done by the second quarter of 2023, which would be sometime in May or June. Once these permits are completed, Charter will be able to start construction to the rest of the town. These connections will be on a “rolling” basis, that is, services will launch as soon as a section of town is completed.

We will continue to keep you updated through this newsletter and on our website (www.royalston-ma.gov) Please reach out to the Select Board with questions via email (bos@royalston-ma.gov) or by phone (978-249-9641).
Phinehas S. Newton Library News
Kathy Morris, Library Director
Trustees: Jeffrey Mangum, Jennifer Basso, Theresa Quinn
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
Leslie and Tom Freudenheim
Buddy Dyer
Fair Alice McCormick
Cedric and Gisela Nash
Kenneth and Martha Bouchard
Alyce Mayo
The MacPhee family
Ken and Andrea Lively
James Taylor
Marguerite LaCroix
Janace Wamboldt and Robert Hendrie
George Krasowski and Theresa Quinn

In Memory of Werner Bundschuh
Christopher and Emily Santillo

Donations to the Library
Pierre and Marie Humblet
George Krasowski and Theresa Quinn
Donald Stanton

Art Exhibit
An exhibit of a selection of paintings in many different styles and media by Clarence Rabideau will be on display through the month of February. All the paintings are for sale with a percentage of the proceeds going to the Friends of the Library. We are grateful.

Our Library Honored by Library Journal
The December 2022 issue of Library Journal featured an article entitled “America’s Star Libraries, The LJ Index of Public Library Service 2022” by Keith Curry Lane. It is the 15th year in which Library Journal has scored U.S. public libraries on the LJ Index of Public Library Service and awarded Star Library ratings. We were notified of the award by Patti Stanko, of town and also a librarian at the Beals Memorial Library who happened upon the story and called us to congratulate us. The 2022 scores and ratings are based on FY20 data from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Public Library Survey. The Phinehas S. Newton Library was awarded a star in libraries with expenditures ranging from $50,000 to $99,900 (ours was $73,849, right in the middle). There were 258 Star Libraries in the United States; Massachusetts had 20 of them. While we are pleased to be recognized, it is fair to point out that some states collect data differently and thus had no star libraries. This was also the beginning of COVID, so some libraries were affected by closings differently than others. But, we'll take the award and try to live up to its ideal of providing excellent service to all!

Pottery Class for Adults and Young Adults
We had a huge response from adults after a pottery workshop for children as part of the Summer Reading Program, so now there will be a workshop for adults and young adults. The program will be held on Sunday, February 19 in the Town Hall. Lydia Musco and Joshua Doub, both experienced and talented artists, will teach slab and coil building techniques in clay. Participants will create a vessel of their own design and select a glaze. After drying, bisque firing, and glazing and firing, the pieces will be returned to the Library for people to pick up. Depending on the number of people signing up there will be a class at 2:00 and if we have a lot of people signing up, there will be a second class at 4:00. You must pre-register by calling or emailing the Library and there is a suggested donation of $10 per person. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Royalston Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. The Friends of the Library are also subsidizing and supporting the program.

Animal World Experience Program with Matt Gabriel
On the Friday of school vacation, February 24 at 1:30 p.m. in the upstairs of the Town Hall, Matt Gabriel from Animal World Experience with bring a whole slew of animals from around the world for a program that promised to be fun, educational, and exciting! He is known as the “Animal Man” and gets rave reviews from people who have seen his programs. The program is funded by a grant from the Royalston Academy and the Friends of the Library.
Some of the new materials at your library

**Adult Fiction**
- Amidon, Stephen  
  *Locust Lane*
- Bardugo, Leigh  
  *Hell Bent*
- Cameron, W. Bruce  
  *Love, Clancy*
- Dee, Jonathan  
  *Sugar Street*
- Hawkins, Rachel  
  *The Villa*
- Johns, Jessica  
  *Bad Cree*
- Lipman, Elinor  
  *Ms. Demeanor*
- Reyes, Ana  
  *The House in the Pines*

**Children’s Nonfiction**
- Chin, Jason  
  *The Universe in You*
- Martin, Ann  
  *Karen’s Birthday*
- Perdew, Laura  
  *Aquatic Adventures*
- Perdew, Laura  
  *Footsteps in the Forest*
- Perdew, Laura  
  *Grassland Globetrotting*
- Perdew, Laura  
  *Tour the Tundra*
- Weatherford, Carole  
  *A Song for the Unsung*

**Children’s Fiction**
- Alexander, Kwame  
  *An American Story*
- Armand, Glenda  
  *All Aboard the Schooltrain*
- Dewdney, Anna  
  *Love from Llama Llama*
- Moore, Katrina  
  *Grumpy New Year*
- Murray, Lily  
  *A Dress with Pockets*
- Yolen, Jane  
  *Interrupting Cow and the Horse of a Different Color*
- Willems, Mo  
  *The Frustrating Book*

**DVDs**
- *Black Adam*, *House of the Dragon Season 1*, *Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile*,  
  *She Said, Tar, Till, and The Woman King*

Make Bark Baskets with Jennifer Lee
On March 5 at 10:00 a.m. at the Town Hall, Jennifer Lee will lead participants in creating a bark berry basket with spruce roots to bind it together and arrowwood or red osier dogwood trim. While teaching, Jennifer will describe her discovery of her Indian ancestry. She has spent her adult life learning the true history and culture of the Northeast Woodland Indigenous Peoples. She is enrolled with the Metis Nations of North America and the Northern Narragansetts. This workshop has limited spaces so you must pre-register and pay a $20 materials fee. The workshop will last approximately four hours and there will light luncheon after two hours. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Royalston Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. The program is also subsidized and sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

Beyond Books: Check out the Library of “Things”
This is a reminder that the Library has folding tables and chairs, digital projectors and screens, and a Kill-A-Watt electricity usage monitor and park passes which patrons can borrow.

Library Substitute Position Available
If you are interested in a very irregular, often on short notice, position as a Library substitute, stop by the Library for an application. Applicants should have a love of reading, be somewhat familiar with the Dewey Decimal System, able to lift and carry and bend and reshelve materials, and want to provide excellent customer service. The position requires that a person be computer literate, able to navigate several databases, use Microsoft Office functions, be able to research and find items for patrons either in our Library or through Interlibrary Loan, help them connect to our online e-book collection through Libby, process items received from and returned to other libraries, and maintain strict patron privacy. Individuals must be available, optimally, for our regular Library shifts: Mondays 10-1, 1-5, 6:30-8; Thursday 1-5, 6:30-8; and Saturdays 9-12. Hourly rate is $17/hour.

Yoga Takes a Maternity Leave
Yoga will continue through February, with Holly Cyganiewicz leading the class for Jess on February 28 and March 7 and then the class will take a break while Jess concentrates on her family. Classes will resume on April 4 at 6:00 p.m. in the upstairs of the Town Hall.

Preschool Story Time
Join other preschoolers for crafts, snacks, stories, playtime, and visiting with Brooke Coleman on non-holiday Mondays at 2:00. Come whenever you can and join in this joyful program.
Marion’s Food Pantry/Recipe of the Month—For over 2 years Deb Conrad and her team, Jeff and Sue Smith, of the First Congregational Church have been running a food pantry in Town, as well as cooking and delivering hot meals on Thursdays to folks around town. Though the Thursday meals have ended for now, the Saturday morning food pantry is still going strong. Deb says “We want to thank the community for all their donations to the pantry. There are too many people to name them all. Some I don’t even know. When I come home from work, there are bags and envelopes with donations. We couldn’t do it without you all. May God bless you.”

At the uptown Christmas tree lighting last December, Deb’s group prepared tasty clam chowder. Deb said the recipe is from her sister, Kathy Matewsky.

Clam Chowder from Kathy Matewsky

½ lb. bacon  ¼ lb. butter
2 stalks celery-chopped I onion-chopped
3 cans Snow’s condensed clam chowder
6 cans regular chopped clams 2 T. kosher salt
2 cloves garlic-minced 1 pint heavy cream
1T. dill weed 1 tsp. pepper
1 small can evaporated milk
3 cans diced potatoes (or 3 lb. parboiled cubed potatoes)

Fry bacon (except 3 slices) until crisp and set aside, save some bacon drippings just in case. In a large pot take the 3 uncooked pieces of bacon. Chop in small pieces and fry in pot until crisp. Once crisp add chopped onion and celery and cook until tender (translucent). If needed add more bacon drippings. Add clams with half their juice, then add heavy cream, evaporated milk, condensed chowder, potatoes, and minced garlic. Simmer until hot (do not boil). Crumble bacon in, add butter, and then dill weed. Stir, and serve with oyster crackers. Enjoy!

Royalston Emergency Management Agency
Jim Barclay, director

It’s shaping up to be a rough February, weather-wise, with a continuation of an extremely active weather pattern that was bad enough it necessitated area schools be delayed or closed multiple times in January.

Heavy, wet snow can cause structural damage, so keep an eye on the depth of snow on roofs – especially those with flatter pitches, like porch roofs, and many outbuildings. Snow loads per square foot, on average, are about 1.25lbs per inch of depth; about 5.2lbs per inch of ice buildup. Two feet of heavy, wet snow can weigh 30lbs per square foot! If you’re safely able, keep roofs shoveled or “raked” off. If not, consider hiring it done. It’ll be cheaper in the long run.

If the roads are bad enough to cancel school, it stands to reason that if you don’t need to go out, you shouldn’t go out. With a bit of advance planning, there’s no need to go out, and staying in can actually be fun. As is always the case, every home should have what is now referred to as “sheltering in place.” www.ready.gov has checklists of the necessary items, and some suggestions for niceties.

If the kids are home from school, it’s never a bad idea to have some unusual activities lined up to keep them occupied. If it’s too cold or dangerous to go outside (and you have power and internet), perhaps they can click over to www.ready.gov/kids and “...step into the heart of the action and help a team face everything from home fires to earthquakes” in “Disaster Master!” It’s an eight-level game, with successful completion providing a password to the next level. Various levels include wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes/blackouts, home fires, winter storm/extreme cold, tsunami/earthquake, thunderstorm/lightning, and the final level, Hot Seat, when the student becomes the master!

Keep an eye on neighbors, especially those who may have difficulty dealing with snow and ice. If something doesn’t look right, or if you haven’t seen any signs of life at a home, make a call. If not to the person about whom you’re concerned, call the Royalston Police Department to check things out.

If you’re able to help, please help. If you need help, please ask. If we work together, we can work through anything!
CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD NEWS

Daniel Wolski, 37 of Royalston, was recently sworn in as Winchendon’s Chief of Police. He began his career in policing in 2006, in Royalston, as a part-time patrol officer, while working in Winchendon as a public safety dispatcher. He reports, “I am proud to say I got my start in Royalston!” He quickly landed full-time employment as an officer with the Winchendon PD, working his way through the ranks to acting chief following the retirement of the prior chief. The Murdock grad attended MWCC, transferring to Franklin Pierce University for a bachelor’s degree in business management, and recently completed a master’s degree in criminal justice. Dan lives on Turnpike Road with his wife, Megan, their nine-year-old son Ben, and six-year-old daughter Ella, both of whom are, “proud students at RCS!”

The work party at Nartowicz’s wood lot to supply a FREE WOOD BANK was very successful. More than 100 people showed up over the course of the six hours, some arriving with mechanical splitters, others with splitting mauls and wedges. A few came for a trunkful, or pick-up bed of wood; others with trucks and trailers to deliver wood to those who couldn’t get their own. Some of Kyle’s friends in the industry also showed up to help. Many brought food and beverages. Donations of donuts came from Winchendon Gourmet Donuts and Adam’s Donuts of Greenfield; Subway of Athol (thank you, Nancy Monette of Royalston) sent a flat of sandwiches. Residents, Ladies’ B. member Maureen Blasco, for example, brought hot coffee and the works, and then stayed to split a couple of cords. Kyle estimates approximately 35-40 cords of wood were given away. As a result of Kyle’s generosity, many people will enjoy being warm, and at least two other communities are considering a similar event. Kyle has offered to connect them with tree services in their immediate area. Thank you, Kyle!

Show 01368 Some Love!
Your postage purchases keep the Royalston Post Office up and running. Show them some love this February with a purchase of stamps for your Valentines! Open Monday through Saturday, 7:45-11:45 a.m. (Closed Sunday.)

Winter walk

A trickle of clear Snowmelt runs
Alongside the road,
Providing little pools
Where my dog laps
Water.

Wind
Gently blows through
The pines,
Swaying in a
White-noise whisper dance.

“Rock-a-bye baby
In the tree tops.
When the wind blows…”
It can sooth you to sleep.

Sepia ash and oak leaves,
Trembling tenaciously in the wind,
Add some color
To an otherwise
Black and white
Winterscape.

Time to
Turn around,
Walk up the hill,
Follow our tracks
Back home.

Michael Young
Current Royalston Poet Laureate
Athol Royalston Regional School District News

RC\'s student council is sponsoring their second annual “Hobby Day” on Friday, February 17, 2023. Last year, the group proposed a day to highlight the many different hobbies of students and staff and shed light on the unique talents and interests that make up the RCS Community. Not only does that align with the District goal of creating a culture of belonging, it provides a fun way to kick off the February break.

Over at ARMS, middle school students are synthesizing elements fostered in their earlier years of education. They are gaining knowledge beyond facts and figures. As their brains are growing and changing, these students are acquiring the skills and character needed to thrive in a diverse and ever-changing world. Grounded in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, our 8th grade students are learning about the branches of government, which includes checks and balances. Students have personalized the concept of checks and balances by creating personal scenarios that demonstrate their understanding of this concept.

As part of a pilot project, our third floor is being transformed into a photo walk of all lived experiences. From students engaged in art to students participating in e-sports, with so much more in between, students accessing the third floor will see someone like themselves and different from themselves. Through this bridge building, our students are developing connections among themselves, each other, and their content learning.

At AHS on February 16 from 11:30am to 2:00pm, high school students will sponsor a Multicultural Day. The creation and implementation of the event has been student-led, with the support of a few adult advisors. The ultimate goal of the Multicultural Day is to build more “dignity and belongingness for all”. Students will have opportunities to participate in a series of fun activities, including a talent show, parade, international healthy food cook-off, geography trivia, dance lessons, an art project, language challenges, and events focused on world music. Additionally, all students will participate in a more serious activity. They will be able to choose from sessions featuring multilingual/multicultural role models (local small business owners, a Clark University admissions officer; and the assistant to the mayor of Worcester), a “dignity for all” presentation created by the students in the Diversity Club and GSA, a “dealing with stress” workshop, or a “plant a seed” lesson around being an upstander.

Also, AHS and the Athol Teachers Association (ATA) have teamed up for the third straight year to provide financial and technical support for students seeking to obtain their learner’s permit and driver’s license. Funds donated by the ATA will pay for RMV fees. Staff connected with the Family and Community Engagement Center will assist students in registering for the exams, including transportation to RMV when needed.

MassHire and AHS will also be running, for its third consecutive year, the Student Teaching Assistant Internship program. Up to 20 Athol High School seniors will be placed in teaching assistant positions at either Athol Community Elementary School (ACES) or ARMS. These paid internship positions provide seniors with hands-on, real-world learning experiences. This successful program has led to additional support for our schools, has opened the idea for seniors that educational professions are rewarding, and has transitioned into both summer employment and full-time paraprofessional positions for some interns over the past two years.

What is Happening at the Village School?

Rise Richardson, director

5th-6th grade students are studying the Middle Ages and cutting out ‘stained glass’ windows with exacto knives and using tissue paper for the ‘glass.’ As part of their study, the class goes on their class trip to England and Wales, just before February vacation. They will visit museums, castles and see a live performance of The Tempest at the Royal Shakespeare Company’s theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.

3rd-4th grade students are studying Northeast Native American culture and are learning weaving. 1st-2nd grade students are learning about the seasons and cycles, and are tracking in the snow and learning about animals in winter. Kindergarten is exploring water and ice. Preschool is outside all morning, enjoying imaginary play in the woods.

Recess has been a blast, with lots of sledging, snow fort building and snow exploration. On Friday afternoons when there is snow on the ground, 1st-6th graders are cross-country skiing around Camp Caravan and at Jolly Farm.

Monty Tech

Jessica Putney Schanz, Royalston Rep. j-schanz@montytech.net

Prior to the holidays, seniors in the Health Occupations program geared up for their Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) exams. While there are still a few students who need to sit for the exam, 100% of the 22 students taking the exams passed!

The Leo Club (Division of Lions International) donated toys to families, in cooperation with the Gardner Emergency Housing Mission. The Health Occupations program provided gifts to Alliance Health Nursing Home in Baldwinville. A school-wide drive was held to collect and distribute toys for families in need.

The Monty Tech Dog House – the school’s official store – was revamped by students. In addition to all new inventory, there’s new merchandising, custom fixtures and displays, new lighting, a new point-of-sale system, and an expanded retail training program. Gift e-cards can be purchased on-line.

The National Honor Society (NHS) Induction Ceremony was conducted mid-December, adding 55 new members. Congratulations to these students, and their instructors/advisors for their outstanding leadership, service, and support.

Freshmen have completed their exploratory period, and selected their top choices for shop placement. Placements were finalized at the end of January.
**Classifieds**

**Help wanted:** Someone to shovel or snowblow paths and sidewalks at the Village School after snow storms. Please call 978 249 3505.

**Services Available**

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

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

**Horse Help!** You and your horse may find an extra pair of hands, another pair of eyes & experience useful. I can assist at your horse’s home space or my farm, working with your equipment or mine. Book by the day. Call or text Suzanne: (978) 424-8580.

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

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

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

“You Name It” blankets, crocheted to order: $25. Perfect for baby gifts, nursing homes, or your own couch. Also available: hats, scarves, mittens, baby sweater sets, etc. Call Marlene at 978-249-4491.

**First Congregational Church of Royalston**

**Marion’s Food Pantry**

Pantry Hours: Saturdays 10:00-12:00

Contact: Debbie Conrad 978-895-3505

Missing something? RCS kids (and parents!) please check out the school’s over-flowing lost and found to reunite with warm clothing before vacation.

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**for sale:**

**Firewood** - $260/ cord or $230 for 2 or more cords. Call Jim Putney. 978-249-3379.

**Green Cordwood** - Cut to 18” length, split, and delivered in Royalston for $285/cord. Kyle Nartowicz, Nartowicz Tree Service, West Royalston. Office Ph. 413-325-5985.

**2014 Road King** $12,500, Screaming Eagle Air, Stage 1 Download, 18” Fat Bars, Quick Disconnect Hardware. Removable Quick Connect Windshield, Samson Fishtail Exhaust Emissions Eliminated, Brand New Battery, Majority of miles highway. Runs and looks new, must be seen and ridden to be fully appreciated. Contact Paul: 978-407-5319


**Custom thermal travel cups** by Swank Creations. Single pieces or sets; totally kool kids’s cups. Krys and Keith Swan at swankcreations@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.

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

**Royalston Maple Syrup from Divoll’s sugar house.** Prices: pints $15, quarts $20, half gallons $35 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

**Mulch your garden.** - Fertilize by the load or by the bag from Black Horse Farm (978) 424-8580 or email suzannagaits@gmail.com.

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

**Dean’s Beans Coffee** You can order fresh roasted coffee once a month through the Village School, ground or whole beans. Order online and pick it up in the hallway at the school the following Friday. Go to https://www.villageschoolma.org/shop/

**RCS PTG Pizza Kits Fundraiser** (ptgroyalstoncommunityschool@gmail.com ) order deadline is February 6th. Kits are $20-$26 each. The PTG receives $6 per kit sold, all of which goes to enrichment through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Order by going to this link: https://fundraising.littleceasars.com/fundraisers/support/90f3cd35-550e-4fee-8b7d-5612fc74da24?bclid=1wAR202BWZHV7mzwZOrkAVLgL-tCv12c55AsR11aXJwYHRyYIZbOKVBhER7SqbM

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**Garden-less Notes**  
*January 23, 2023*

Can you cut me some slack here? It is, after all, late January in north central Massachusetts. I was about to state that gardening is but a gleam in my eye. It is not even that. My go-to seed catalogues, FEDCO and Johnny’s (both out of Maine) arrived a month ago and I have yet to open them.

We are snow-covered again, a rare enough event this winter. It is the winter wonderland type of snow, attached to every branch of every tree and shrub. Until, of course, those branches start dropping. Which they did. Last night. We (probably most of you) are powerless.

It has been a remarkable winter, weather-wise. There were a couple of days in late December when frigid temperatures appeared. My first thought was that we could experience another eight weeks of bone-chilling weather. Hah. A couple of days later we experienced a nine-day stretch when days were in the 40s (50s even) and temperatures did not dip below freezing. There will be no January thaw this year; there was no January freeze. All but four days had a reading above freezing and those four were not much below. The furnace has been off since late December. Admittedly, it is a might chilly through most of the house, but the cookstove is fired up early in the morning and burns till late at night, and we pretty much live in this room. If anyone comes by to visit, we ‘entertain’ in our kitchen/dining room/lounge/parlor.

It will be interesting as to how the mapping season plays out. Nobody taps in January but there were many days that provided the proper conditions for a run. Whether or not this affects the run in a month or so is anyone’s guess.

Most root cellar occupants are holding up well, the exceptions being those that are not actually roots. Outer leaves of cabbages and leeks degrade and must be peeled back from time to time. Squashes begin to rot. We have not made much of a dent in stores and the possibility of dumping foodstuffs come April is disturbing to me. We eat what we can. Many are used in one-dish meals like beef stew. Any cut of beef will, after long, slow simmering, become fork-tender. Potatoes and onions and garlic and carrots and celeriac move from the root cellar to the pot. We throw in some frozen beans or sugar snap peas for a touch of green and, voila, dinner (for more nights than one).

Our multi-purpose room serves one more function: it is our bird observatory. The evening grosbeak, occasional winter visitors to our neighborhood, have chosen this winter to visit. Mourning dove numbers have increased dramatically. Both are ground feeders and since each arrives in flocks of two dozen or more, there is a bunch of ground feeding. There would be a whole bunch more if it weren’t for the fact that blue jays are non-existent. The little guys, the chickadees, juncos, nuthatches and titmice, abound. The menagerie is completed with a pair of cardinals and three kinds of woodpeckers. Bird-watching, it sure beats work.

Larry Siegel

**Winter Sun**

“I’ll tell you how the sun rose,” writes the poet Emily Dickenson. “A ribbon at a time.” And I know exactly what she means.

On a recent morning I watched a pre-dawn sky streaked with color. Cloud after cloud was touched with soft shades of pink, purple, and orange. The bands of color stretched and shifted, moment to moment - “a ribbon at a time”! The exact spot where the sun itself would rise was not clear. There was a patch of brighter light low in the southeast, but with the ribbons of soft color that continued to appear in the sky above, the sunrise itself seemed almost an afterthought.

Even on overcast mornings Dickenson’s ribbons appear. This morning the sun rises in an overcast sky, a slash of silver low in the southeast. Bands of clouds shift gradually from purple to gray to pale blue and white. Now the sun itself appears, a tiny star of bright light just at the edge of the world. In the blink of an eye, it is swallowed by a bank of gray. Today the sun will travel across the southern sky behind a veil of clouds, with just a hint of brighter white to mark its progress. Shrouded behind thick clouds, the sun is so weak I can look it square in the eye.

But the sunset itself is more difficult to know. Sometimes its light bounces back from west to east, bathing the eastern horizon in bands of color, a false sunrise that shifts and lingers. Those ribbons again.

One evening last week near sunset, Tom called me outside. “Come see this,” he said. The western sky was streaked with deep blue and soft pink. As we watched, the colors shifted into a wide band of hot orange that stretched horizon to horizon, north to south. Moments passed and still the colors lingered as if the sky itself had caught fire. I snapped some photos and sent them around to family and friends. “Look at what we are seeing!” Within moments their own photos appeared. From Mid-Coast Maine to Cape Cod, Boston to Central Mass, we were all watching the same light show that stretched along the eastern seaboard for hundreds of miles.

That evening I returned to Dickenson’s poem and her observations of the sunset. “But how he set/I know not” she tells us, and I thought of her skies long ago being bathed in color and light. Does the color come before or after sunset? And when, exactly, does the sun slip out of view? Like the poet, I don’t know. Only after the colors fade do we see that the sun has disappeared, leaving us deep in winter’s dark.

Deb D’Amico
The Royalston Community Newsletter

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“Where Many Waters Fall”: The ice formations at all three of our Town’s waterfalls have been stunning this winter. Pictured is Royalston Falls at the very end of December.

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