**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 until April 30 – Any vehicle left in a public way can be towed at the owner’s expense, 24/7.

March 3  Friday
7 p.m. **Open Mic** at Town Hall. Arrive at 7 to sign up for a slot. Hot drinks and light supper available for a reasonable cost. Sponsored by the Cultural Council.

March 5  Sunday
10:00 a.m. **Pine Bark Baskets with Jennifer Lee.** Learn about Northeast Woodland American Indian culture while creating a pine bark basket. Funded in part by the Royalston Cultural Council and Friends of the Library. The workshop will last 4 hours and the $20 materials fee includes a light lunch.

March 8  Wednesday
**International Women’s Day**

March 12  Sunday
2 a.m. **Daylight Savings Time begins.** Spring time forward.

Changing of the clocks began in WWI. Once the Germans changed the clocks and started rising an hour earlier, the U.S. didn’t want to be caught sleeping and also pushed forward time. While last year the U.S. Senate did not pass a “Sunshine Protection Act,” which would make it so Daylight Savings Time is permanent, there is a lot of debate as to which is better for citizens’ health and well being: an extra hour of daylight in the morning or in the afternoon, so it has not been decided. So far, no bill around stopping the changing of clocks has been signed into law.

March 17  Friday  **St. Patrick’s Day**

March 18  Saturday
6 p.m. **Roast Beef Supper** at the The Royalston Fish and Game Club. Tickets are $15/person; rarely are tickets available at the door so RSVP 978-249-3004.

March 20  Monday  **Vernal Equinox**
Spring is sprung, the grass is riz.
I wonder where the birdies is.
They say the birdies on the wing, but that’s absurd.
I always thought the wing was on the bird.

**anonymous**

March 21  Tuesday
10:32 p.m. **New Pink Moon**

March 25  Saturday
8 - 11 a.m. **Chet Hall Scholarship fundraising breakfast** tentatively at RCS. Baked goods, pancakes and sausage with real maple syrup. Raffles and gift card tree.

March 30  Thursday
3:30 p.m. **Library Book Group meets** to discuss *In the Sanctuary of Outcasts* by Neil White. Copies of the book are available to borrow. All welcome to join. Refreshments and lively discussion.

**Save the Dates:**

April 3  Monday  **Annual Town Election** at Town Hall.

April 8  Saturday  10 am sharp **Annual Easter Egg Hunt** on The Common Rain or shine! Dress for the weather, and don’t forget a bag or basket to gather the eggs. Hunt followed by chocolate melt inside the Town Hall. Volunteers needed. Contact Sara Dilg at 978-248-9828.

April 20  Thursday  1:30 p.m. **Hawk Program** with Henry Walters of Monadnock Falconry, followed by kite flying, kite poetry, and kite cake.

June 19 - July 17  **Royalston Shakespeare Company**- Kids’ workshop production of *the Tempest*. The dates are still being finalized to work around school snow day schedules, but the RSC is happening in 2023. This free, fun theater workshop has been sponsored by the Friends of the Library and funded with support from the Royalston Cultural Council since 2001. Many Royalston kids have gotten to know theater, Shakespeare, and each other in the happy process.
**Select Board Notes**
*Rick Martin, clerk*

**New Union Contract**
After four months of negotiations a new 3-½ year contract has been agreed to with the AFSCME union and the Town. The union represents the full-time workers at the DPW (other than the superintendent) and the library director. It is great to have a long-term agreement with this group, and the Town looks forward to the next 3-½ years of working together. There were many changes to the contract, but the major changes affected the salary structure, working day start and end times, and union and no-union membership rights clarifications.

**Recent Bad Weather**
The recent weather was not quite as bad as 2008, but it created some of the same serious issues: power outages over most of the Town, trees and limbs blocking roads, and ice and snow on the roads. In its wake, the chair of the Select Board met with the key first responders (fire chief, police chief, DPW superintendent, and emergency management director) to talk about what went right and what can be improved upon. This group will continue to meet and come up with a plan and an implementation schedule in order to improve all responses and communication within town and the groups that come from outside of town to help out with the process.

**Budget Season**
It’s budget season in town! If you are interested in how the town budget is constructed for the coming year, watch the Select Board’s March agendas, when meetings with key departments have been scheduled. Come and listen and learn how it all comes about and how much work and thought go into crafting budgets and spending town funds.

**Monty Tech Town Representative**
Last year Jessica Schanz was appointed as the Town of Royalston representative on the Monty Tech School Committee. The Board was informed this month, however, that Jessica will have to step down from that post. She has accepted a job at the school and thus cannot continue in her representative position due to conflict of interest issues. Anyone interested in serving on the Monty School Committee should contact the Select Board office (978-249-9641 or bos@royalston-ma.gov).

**Winchendon Rod and Gun Club Looking to Re-Open**
The Select Board sat with a representative from the Winchendon Rod and Gun club and talked about the process of reopening. The club has been closed for several years, due to internal issues and pandemic closings. Since the restaurant/bar resides in Royalston, a number of licenses and permits are required to bring these facilities back on line. The club representative laid out their plan to bring only sections of the club open at a time in order to make sure it is done correctly. The Select Board was enthused to hear that this will be beginning and wished them much good luck!

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**Town Clerk News**

**Annual Town Election Update, Dog Licenses Due and Street Lists:**

Annual Town Election lineup: No contests this year. Anyone interested in the blank positions can run as a write-in on election day.

- Select Board- Ryan Hood
- Assessor-BLANK
- Cemetery Commission-BLANK
- Board of Health- Philip Leger *
- Library Trustee- Theresa Quinn *
- Planning Board- Thomas Musco *
- John N. Bartlette Fund- Nancy Melbourn *
- John N. Bartlette Fund- Gary Winitzer *
- 2 Seats for the JNB Fund-BLANK
- Athol Royalston School Committee Member-BLANK *incumbent

The Election is April 3rd at the Town Hall from 10 AM-8PM. Last day to register to vote in the Annual Town Election will be March 24th 9-11 & 3-5 at the Clerk’s office Whitney Hall. In-person early voting will be held Wednesday 3/22 and 3/29 from 10-2 at the Clerk’s office Whitney Hall.

Absentee and Vote by Mail Ballots will be available March 8th, printable applications are available on the Town’s Website.

Remember it’s time to register your dog and send those street list forms back, PLEASE!

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**Board of Health News**
*Phil Leger, chair*

The cardboard compactor is now operational. Thank you AJ Maroney for the electrical work. Pay attention when going to the transfer station as to where to dump paper and cardboard. We will be using the roll-offs at times, so watch for signage indicating where to dump or not to dump. Reminder that the new compactor is for cardboard, paper, newspaper, magazines etc. Please NO PLASTIC, STYROFOAM, PLASTIC BAGS OR TIES, PELLET BAGS, FOILS, METAL, GLASS etc. The hopper to the new compactor is high, so once you deposit in the chute it’s gone. If you have any questions, ask Tony or Steve for assistance. The compactor was funded by the federal American Recovery Rescue Plan (ARPA). We thank the ARRA committee for including this in the distribution of funds. The use of the compactor should save some on shipping costs plus keep the material dry.

The RDPW has been busy cleaning up wood debris that was collected in the lower area. This area will eventually be developed for composting for the residents. Stay tuned.

A reminder that COVID booster vaccines are available at most pharmacies. COVID is still circulating in our area. Vaccines help lessen symptoms and help keep you out of the hospital. Be safe, vaccinate. Test kits are available at the Town Hall, Library, and the Post Office. If you test positive, stay home and call your health care provider.
Royalston Emergency Management Agency
Jim Barclay, director

The whacky winter weather continues. The past month saw sun, snow, sleet, rain, clouds... not to mention, temperatures swing as much as 40 degrees in a single day! Especially during the month of March, we can expect to have snow one day, and spring-like temperatures the next. This brings with it the reality of flooding, and in particular, flooding of roads when river banks and culverts can’t contain the rapidly-melting snow. First and foremost, do NOT drive over a road that is flooded! In addition to the fact you may stall and damage your vehicle, the road bed integrity may be compromised, and unable to support your vehicle. If water is moving, it can control your vehicle.

Fast-melting snow can also send damaging amounts of water into homes, especially if snow is piled along the foundation, and melting snow has nowhere to escape. On the days snowbanks/piles near the house are softened enough to move, make sure there are clear paths for water to run away from the foundation. Dig trenches with outlets downhill, so water runs away, rather than against the foundation. And of course, if you haven’t already, give your sump pump a test run. If it’s working, great. If it’s not, contact a plumber ASAP to get it up and running before the water is running into the sump hole!

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.

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.

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.

Royalston Fish and Game Roast Beef Supper
Roast beef suppers are back! The Royalston Fish and Game Club has started up monthly fund-raising suppers, next on March 18th. Family-style meals feature tossed salad, bread with real butter, perfectly-cooked roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, and a strawberry or chocolate Hoodie cup for dessert. Take-out dinners available. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and supper is served about 6 p.m. Call or stop by the Clubhouse at 978-249-3004. Tickets are $15/person; rarely are any available at the door so RSVP.

Royalston has some of the lowest Taxes in the State
The following graph presents the ten highest and ten lowest FY2023 average single-family property tax bills according to the Division of Local Services City and Town Newsletter, published by the state Department of Revenue.

Board of Assessors Updates
Tax bills just went out. The assessors recently created a brochure with practical information about abatements, exemptions, deadlines and appeals. The information is available on the Town website or by picking up a brochure at Whitney Hall or Town Hall. Here is some information shared about where your Royalston tax dollars go:

How Your Tax Dollars Are Spent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services/Departments</th>
<th>Budget (%)</th>
<th>Budget ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Government</td>
<td>9.37%</td>
<td>$242,222.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>13.45%</td>
<td>$347,846.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>26.62%</td>
<td>$688,526.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>33.07%</td>
<td>$855,191.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>0.79%</td>
<td>$20,336.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>3.07%</td>
<td>$79,376.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt Service</td>
<td>5.99%</td>
<td>$154,932.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Benefits</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>$135,996.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Insurance</td>
<td>2.39%</td>
<td>$61,883.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL TO BE SPENT</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>$2,586,309.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximate Cost of Services for the Average Homeowner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town Service</th>
<th>Average Taxes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Government</td>
<td>$264.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>$380.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>$753.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>$935.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>$22.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>$86.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt Service</td>
<td>$169.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Benefits</td>
<td>$148.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Insurance</td>
<td>$67.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL AVERAGE TAX BILL</td>
<td>$2,829.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Based on average single family home valuation of $294,034)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

Thank you:
Amy Newland for creating program posters.
Jeff Wright for setting up our new computer.
Lorraine Casinginho for help cataloging the historical documents.
Royalston Fire Department members for their early morning wake-up calls and thorough inspection of the alarm system in the Library.
Ciara Wetherby who was at the Town Hall and cheerfully helped not only set up most of the chairs but also cleaned the dust off all the chairs for the Animal world Adventure program. Thanks to all who came and pitched in to help put away chairs as well.

Library Book Group
The next meeting of the Library Book Group will be Thursday, March 30 at 3:30. Copies of the book, In the Sanctuary of Outcasts by Neil White, are available at the Library. This book describes White’s loss of everything he deemed important, and then he discovers the secret of happiness, leading to a fulfilling life in the most unlikely of all places, the leper colony in the continental United States. Anyone is welcome to join for lively discussion and refreshments. Early May’s selection will be Caste by Isabel Wilkerson. For more information, contact Maureen Blasco at 978-249-5138 or call the Library.

Pine Bark Baskets with Jennifer Lee
The Pine bark basket workshop on March 5 is full but we will accept names of those who wish to be on the waiting list.

Library Updates
Just when you think you have finished with most of the major repairs: the new roof, the new furnace; something else pops up. Very early one morning, I received a call from the alarm company that one of the smoke alarms was triggered but nothing was out of the ordinary. After this happened again, we knew we had to replace the alarms. So our next project was to replace the bulbs in the building and schedule an upgrade of the burglar alarm system. That happens this month. What next?

Talking Books at Worcester Public Library
Do you struggle to read standard print? The Worcester Talking Book Library (https://talkingbook.mywpl.org) can help! This service includes the delivery of materials in accessible formats, including large print, braille, and audio, by U.S. mail at no charge. Play audio materials on their easy-to-use equipment, or download materials directly to your device. This free service is available to Massachusetts residents of any age who struggle to read standard print due to a visual, physical, or reading disability. To learn more, please visit the website or contact the Worcester Talking Book Library at 1-800-762-0085 or talkbook@mywpl.org. We also have updated materials explaining the program and applications available at the Library.

Accessing eBooks and eAudiobooks
The use of electronic materials for reading books and listening to audiobooks has increased significantly over the last year. In our Library for FY22, e-materials accounted for 22% of our adult fiction and non-fiction borrowed by adults. We have joined Overdrive and now own e-books in our collection. The system is easy to set up and use and if you need help downloading Libby and getting an account, call or stop by the Library for help. There are instructions on how to set up your account on the Library website: http://royalstonlibrary.org. If you can’t find your library card or don’t have one, contact the Library and we’ll provide the information you need or set you up with a card.

Yoga
As most yoga attendees already know, instructor Jess Schanz gave birth to a daughter. Yay! Holly Cyganiewicz will step in to lead the class on March 7. The class will then be on hiatus until April 4.

Art Exhibit
Clarence Rabideau will exhibit more of his paintings during March, all of which are for sale with a portion of the proceeds to benefit the Friends of the Library. Clarence works in many media including large print, braille, and audio, by U.S. mail at no charge. This free service is available to Massachusetts residents of any age who struggle to read standard print due to a visual, physical, or reading disability. To learn more, please visit the website or contact the Worcester Talking Book Library at 1-800-762-0085 or talkbook@mywpl.org. We also have updated materials explaining the program and applications available at the Library.

Preschool Story Time
On non-holiday Mondays at 2:00 p.m., join preschoolers and their caregivers for crafts, stories, play time, snacks, and connecting with other families with Brooke Coleman. There is no registration necessary; just come whenever you can. It’s a great way to relax and socialize with others while enjoying the benefits of the Library.
Some of the new materials at your library

**Adult Fiction**

Beaton, M.C.  
Death of a Traitor  
Benedict, Marie  
The Mitford Affair  
Berry, Steve  
The Last Kingdom  
DeFino, Terri-Lynne Varino Palladino’s Jersey Italian Love Story  
Engel, Patricia The Faraway World  
Greaney, Mark Burner  
Harding, Paul This Other Eden  
Harper, Jordan Everybody Knows  
Harper, Jane Exiles  
Hemon, Aleksandar The World and All that it Holds  
Hendrix, Grady How to Sell a Haunted House  
Hoover, Colleen Heart Bones  
Hunter, Stephen The Bullet Garden  
Hurwitz, Gregg The Last Orphan  
Jenoff, Pam Code Name Sapphire  
Johansen, Iris More Than Meets the Eye  
Jones, Stephen Don’t Fear the Reaper  
Joyce, Rachel Maureen  
Kellerman, Jonathan Unnatural History  
Koontz, Dean The House at the End of the World  
Makkai, Rebecca I Have Some Questions for You  
Marshall, Heather Looking for Jane  
McFarlane, Fiona The Sun Walks Down  
Moyes, Jojo Someone Else’s Shoes  
Osman, Richard The Thursday Murder Club  
Patterson, James The House of Wolves  
Pellegrino, Amanda The Social Climber  
Perry, Thomas Murder Book  
Preston, Douglas The Cabinet of Dr. Leng  
Robb, J.D. Encore in Death  
Roth, Veronica Arch-Conspirator  
Rushdie, Salman Victory City  
Tudor, C.J. The Drift  
Walker, Megan Miss Newbury’s List  
Small World

**Adult non-fiction**

Dodds Pennock, C. On Savage Shores  
Fitzgerald, Isaac Dirtbag, Massachusetts  
Hansen, Ann A Landowner’s Guide to Managing Your Woods  
Kidder, Tracy Rough Sleepers  
Korte, Steven What Do We Do About Bigfoot?  
Mansfield, Howard Chasing Eden  
Philip, Leila Beaverland  
Prince Harry Spare  

**Audiobooks**

Shetty, Jay 8 Rules of Love

**DVDs**

Black Panther: Wakanda Forever  
The Fabelmans

**Children’s Fiction**

Brun-Cosme, Nadine Rabbit, Duck, and Big Bear  
Burris, Priscilla Sabrina Sue Loves the Sky  
Cordell, Matthew Evergreen  
Cummins, Lucy Sleepy Sheepy  
Dewdney, Anna Learning with Llama Llama  
DiPucchio, Kelly Oona in the Arctic  
Doerrfeld, Cori Beneath  
Donaldson, Julia Welcome to the World  
Fogliano, Julie All the Beating Hearts  
Gibbs, Stuart Whale Done  
Heim, Alastair Big Bub, Small Tub  
Krans, Angela Finding Papa  
Levis, Caron Feathers Together  
Lin, Grace Once Upon a Book  
Muhammad, Ibtihaj The Kindest Red  
Muth, Jon Stillwater and Koo Save the World  
Rogers, Kim Just Like Grandma  
Shatokhin, Oleksandr Yellow Butterfly  
Wynter, Anne Nell Plants a Tree  
Yoh, Eugenia This is Not My Home

**Children’s Nonfiction**

Ben-Barak, Idan We Go Way Back  
Bunting, Philip The Gentle Genius of Trees  
Gibbons, Gail St. Patrick's Day  
Green, John Investigators: Agents of S.U.I.T.  
Mullins Lee, C. You Gotta Meer Mr. Pierce!  
Owen, Polly Darwin’s Super-Pooping Worm Spectacular  
Pinkney, Jerry Just Jerry  
Thermes, Jennifer The Indestructible Tom Crean  
Woelfle, Gretchen A Take-Charge Girl Blazes a Trail to Congress

**Young Adult**

Gratz, Alan Captain America  
Jackson, Holly A Good Girl’s Guide to Murder  
Leali, Michael The Civil War of Amos Abernathy  
Marcus, Leonard Mr. Lincoln Sits for his Portrait

**Beyond Books:**

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.
Recipe of the Month - Gifts from last summer

In March the sun is higher, and the ground will get a bit mushy. That means last season’s parsnips can now be pried out. Over-wintering parsnips brings out sweetness. This roasted recipe combines these extra sweet roots with March’s other gift from last summer’s photosynthesis: maple sap. The tree stored sap away to feed the unfurling of spring’s buds. We tap sap out to concentrate into syrup from last summer’s sunshine.

Maple spiced parsnips

Ingredients
1 ½ tbsp canola oil (or any flavorless oil)
¾ tsp turmeric
1 ½ tsp ground cumin
1 ½ tbsp maple syrup
2 lbs parsnips, (or carrots mixed with parsnips) peeled and quartered lengthways

Heat oven to 400 degrees F. Mix the oil, turmeric, cumin and maple syrup, then toss with the parsnips on a baking tray and season lightly. Bake in the oven for 30 mins or until soft and slightly blackened – the caramelizing will give them more flavor.

The 23rd Annual Royalston Egg Hunt,
Saturday, April 8th

Mr. Bunny and friends invite you to celebrate the annual Egg Hunt on Royalston Common. The festivities will start promptly at 10:00 AM on Saturday, April 8th from the steps of the Town Hall. It will be held rain or shine; participants are advised to dress for the weather. There will also be an opportunity to have photos taken with Mr. Bunny. The Easter photo panel created by local artist Gordon Morrison was very popular last year, and children will again be able to enjoy it. The morning’s activities will once again include the longtime-favorite chocolate candy-making in the Town Hall immediately following the egg hunt.

Children should bring a bag or basket to hold their eggs during the hunt and to hold their candy afterwards, to take home. We ask that everyone please recycle the emptied plastic eggs in the bins set up for that purpose in the Town Hall.

Want to help out? 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. From March 18th through April 1st, please bring donations to the Library and the Post Office during their normal business hours and to the Royalston General Store on weekends. Cash donations are also welcomed and are used only for candy and chocolate melting wafers. Also, volunteers are needed for the morning of the event! Please contact event organizer Sara Dilg at 978-248-9828 for more information.

Historical Society News

Peter Kraniaik, president

May I extend to those who have sent donations to the Society a THANK YOU. Our founders must be smiling to see how people have responded.

Our building, which is almost 200-years-old, needs regular, not deferred, maintenance. We are looking to redo the walk into the building so that the “lake” which forms in wet weather can be eliminated. We also are custodians of the fence in front of The Bastille, #10 The Common. This responsibility was given to us by the Selectboard as most of the fence is on public land. So again thanks.

The museum is also undergoing updates. Using recommendations from an archivist with the Massachusetts State Historical Records Advisory Board, the Society is updating the inventory digitally so that it can be easily cross-referenced. It is applying for a grant to buy archival supplies. More shelving is being installed in the office. Acquisitioning and de-acquisitioning policies may be expanded.

Upcoming events: The Society is finalizing details for two programs. This spring it plans to work with Historic Gravestone Services to train interested participants in how to clean and preserve our headstones. In the fall, a talk on the historic importance of the waterfalls in Royalston is planned. In October, the popular “living history” cemetery tours will be back, possibly using Riverside Cemetery as the setting. Stay tuned.

Volunteers are needed for all of the above projects. If you would like to staff the museum, plan events, maintain the Museum or the fence, or help archive, please reach out by coming to a meeting, using our web-site, or by calling Maureen Blasco 978-249-5138.

The next quarterly meeting will be April 21, 2023 at 7 PM at my home at the corner of Winchendon and Stone Roads. The April and October meetings are pot luck suppers, so if you can, bring your favorite dish. If not, just come and meet some nice people with a shared purpose.

North Quabbin Garden Club

On March 16, 2023 at 7 pm at the Millers River Environmental Center, the Garden Club will host Adrienne Bashista of Passalong’s in Florence. This presentation was postponed from December 2022 due to inclement weather. Passalong’s is a Farm and Florist business in the Pioneer Valley focusing on weddings and special arrangements for events as well as selling cut bouquets at their flower stand at 198 Sylvester Rd. Adrienne will speak and show slides about her experiences as a grower in the Pioneer Valley. Questions will be welcome at the end.

Come and join us for this start-of-spring program. Attendance is free and all are welcome.
Scholarships Available
Royalston Academy Scholarships:
Deadline April 25, 2023
Forms are available through your high school guidance counselor, Royalston Library, or Kristen West c/o Royalston Academy Scholarship Committee, PO Box 35, Royalston, MA 01368.

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

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

The Ladies’ Benevolent Society Scholarships are open to all residents (regardless of age or gender) pursuing higher or continuing education opportunities. Forms are available from high school guidance counselors and the Phinehas Newton Library. For more information, contact Theresa Quinn 978-249-3819, therauquinn@aol.com. Deadline for submissions is April 25, 2023.

Chet Hall Memorial Scholarship is open to those who attended ARRSD schools past and present. Applications are with guidance counselors, the Library or call Royalston Community School 978-249-2900. Deadline: April 30, 2023.

Wildlife Sightings
What is in your backyard? Let us know at the RCN.
On Thursday, February 1, Mae Williams saw a moose on Frye Hill Road and on the same day, Christine Cheney was leaving the Library and came back in to tell that there were two bobcats just crossing the road. Everyone clamored to the windows to watch the bobcats cross the road and head behind the Schellie/Wright barn.

Marlene (Whittemore) Jarvenpaa, 64, of River Road, died early Thursday morning, February 23, 2023 at home surrounded by loved ones, following a courageous battle with cancer.

Marlene was employed by Market Basket in Customer Service before her illness. She had also worked previously at the Royalston Country Store, Pete & Henry’s, The Baldwinville Station, Village Family Restaurant and Baldwin Hill Bakery.

Marlene was active with the Royalston 250th Anniversary celebration, as well as joining her son for the Events Committee in Royalston to raise funds for the 275th anniversary. She was also a member of the North Quabbin Stop The Pipeline Group, and the Royalston South Village Revitalization Group Steering Committee, which honored her with the dedication of the gazebo in the village.

Marlene was known for crocheting many blankets to give to others. She also enjoyed gardening, including her fairy garden, canning and was a huge New England Patriots fan.

Marlene leaves her loving husband, Donald Jarvenpaa Jr. of South Royalston; her children, Carla Hartwell of South Portland, ME, Matthew Jarvenpaa and his girlfriend Jennifer, of Winchendon, Amber Doherty and her husband, John, of Tyngsboro, and Gabriel Jarvenpaa and his fiancée, Autumn, of Royalston; grandchildren, Kayla Lusco of Berwick, ME, Tiffany Lusco of South Portland, ME, Logan Doherty and Owen Doherty, both of Tyngsboro; a great granddaughter, Lucy Richards of Berwick, ME. Marlene also leaves behind her siblings, Lisa Arnot and her husband, Ben, of Athol, Edwina Whittemore of Mesa, AZ and Kenneth Whittemore of New Bedford; several nephews and nieces; and extended family. Marlene was predeceased by a son, Donald Jarvenpaa III in 2006, her father in 2015, her mother in 2016, and a sister, Doris Ricko, in 2015.

The family would like to thank the UMass Memorial Healthcare Cancer Center, Dr. Donnally, Wendy Coutu and her entire team at Heywood Hospital, Care Central VNA & Hospice of Gardner and Jeff Cole and the staff of Witty’s Funeral Home.

Calling hours will be held on Sunday, March 5, 2023 from 1-3 p.m. at Witty’s Funeral Home, 158 South Main Street, Orange. A funeral service will follow at 3 p.m. in the funeral home. Interment will be held privately in the spring. In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to either the Royalston South Village Revitalization Committee, c/o Rose Lawrence, 9 Dickey Road, Royalston, MA 01368, or to the Friends of The Phinehas S. Newton Library, P.O. Box 133, Royalston, MA 01368.
What is Happening at the Village School?
Rise Richardson, director

K-6th grade students are going to see a performance of Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf* at the Hanover Theater in Worcester. K-6th grade students start swimming lessons at the Athol YMCA this month. 5th-6th grade students, just returned from England, are studying the Middle Ages, making clay castles and a “Rose” window. 3rd-4th grade students are studying Native Americans and learning about local animals. 1st-2nd grade students are learning about the seasons and cycles, and are writing poetry and acting out stories. Kindergarten is exploring fire and heat and making clay dragons. Preschool is outside all morning, enjoying imaginary play in the woods. We’ll put in taps on the maple trees, collecting sap daily. We look forward to quenching our thirst with fresh sap at snack time.

We are scheduling parent visits this spring. If you are interested in kindergarten for next fall, email rise@villageschoolma.org or call 978 249 3505. For up to date information, go to www.villageschoolma.org

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Athol Royalston Regional School District News

ARRSD’s Family & Community Center and the Community Food Pantry at Athol High School honored volunteers in February. The Community Food Pantry at Athol High School officially opened in December 2020. We have helped 2,542 households, and 8,196 individuals. We have seen a tremendous increase in households accessing the food pantry. In January 2022, 73 households were served in January 2023, 163 households were served. We could not do this without the support of our students, community volunteers and partners. Dean’s Beans, an organic coffee company, provides a box truck to help us pick up the food at the Worcester County Food Bank. The Farm School provides us with weekly fresh vegetables and milk. Athol High School alumni provide delivery support to our senior community and help pick up the food at the Worcester County Food Bank. The pantry offers a variety of food, inc. fresh vegetables, eggs, milk, pastas, meats, as well as hygiene products and pet food. Food Pantry hours are Tuesdays from 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM and Thursday’s from 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM.

AR FACT (Athol Royalston Family Assistance Connection Team) meets monthly, virtually, during the school year. We brainstorm ways to support families and individuals experiencing challenges in their lives. This past month, as a group of eleven participants brainstormed to help a household with a variety of supports. Since starting this referral process in October 2019, the AR FACT Team has completed 35 referrals. The Team is made up of individuals from Valuing Our Children, NQCC, YMCA, The Salvation Army, MassHire, Heywood, State Rep Whipps’s Legislative Aid, and MART Transportation.

ARRSD (Athol-Royalston Regional School District) Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning has many curriculum and instructional projects in the works within the District to work toward continuous improvement. The Innovation Pathway and Early College Academy initiatives at Athol High School continue to move along toward full implementation for the 2023-24 school year. Two groups of teachers and administrators are working to update and align our English Language Arts (ELA) curricula. An elementary team of 15 staff are considering options for a new elementary ELA curriculum resource system to replace our current Wonders materials. At the secondary level, ELA department chair Kasey Teixeira is leading her team to review and revamp middle school and high school text sets and curriculum resources to increase student voice and choice, reflect the need for more culturally responsive literature, and increase student achievement as defined by MA curriculum frameworks.

RCS (Royalston Community School) welcomed back a live school-wide, Winter Wonderland-themed concert in February, following a pandemic hiatus. The K-6th grade student body had been working since September on the concert, with Unified Arts teacher, Mrs. Sarah Melanson. The show started with the kindergarten and sixth grade buddies singing together, then highlighted various grades and culminated with an all-school rendition of “Let it Snow.” It was a great time for students, staff and families to come together.

ARMS (Athol Royalston Middle School) continues to foster a sense of belongingness for students, and specifically, are sharing learning alongside a classmate who is learning braille to support her access to the curriculum. Students in Ms. Talbot’s room are becoming familiar with braille as an extension activity of understanding themselves and each other. Students have learned to write their names in braille and areas of the classroom are labeled in braille as this learning is incorporated into their classroom. In other news, our 8th-grade students are reading the novel, *Witness*, as part of the ELA curriculum. Connected to the ELA frameworks, students are delving into the setting and its contextually essential vocabulary.

AHS (Athol High School) has launched a weekly Spanish for Heritage Speakers class, which is designed to prepare students for the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy testing. This Seal is awarded in recognition of students who have attained academic proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. It is used as proof of language mastery for potential employers and university admissions. Our vision is to help students connect to the tangible benefits of being bilingual.

AHS’s Best Buddies program took 35 students to TD Garden in Boston for the Boston Celtics vs. Detroit Pistons basketball game. As part of the experience, our students were provided with 15 minutes of access on the basketball playing court, where they were able to shoot around with their peers prior to the game. Best Buddies is the world’s largest organization dedicated to ending the social, physical and economic isolation of the 200 million people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
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**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.

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**First Congregational Church of Royalston**

**Marion’s Food Pantry**

Pantry Hours:
Saturdays 10:00-12:00
Contact:
Debbie Conrad 978-895-3505

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Volunteer Friends of the Library have produced the Royalston Community Newsletter for more than 20 years, and supplied it, at no cost, to every Royalston home. Subscriptions ($25/year) and sponsor boxes ($25/box/issue or $200/year) support this valuable resource. Contact chasegos2@gmail.com or 978-249-0358 to place an ad.

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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 Down-load, 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 Kreations. Single pieces or sets; totally kool kids’s cups. Krys and Keith Swan at swankkreations@gmail.com .

**Eggs $5/dozen.** Contact Jessica Putney Schanz at 978-939-3329 (cell); 978-249-248-8617; jessputney1989@gmail.com. (No maple syrup this year.)

**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/

**Squier Davis honey** is available at Horse and Buggy in Winchendon and Keene.
Garden Notes

February 21, 2023

The winter that wasn’t. Admittedly, there is another week in February and, as we all know, March enters like a lion (sometimes departing as one as well), so we may return to more seasonably-appropriate weather. Worst case scenario: we’ll have experienced a winter that wasn’t all that much. The unprecedented conditions manifest themselves in a variety of ways. The furnace is mostly idle. Since a significant portion of my time is spent moving around and keeping the fire going, I am mostly idle as well. There is not a lot obliging me to be outdoors, but tending the animals is one of them. More often than not, I am out there coatless. Granted I’m clad in a heavy flannel shirt, an even heavier wool sweater, hat (with ear muffs), scarf, and mittens. But coatless.

When the ground opened up last week, surprises emerged. The grass was green. Not greening up; it had never reverted to un-green. The scallions and chives had broken dormancy. Garlics had more than broken dormancy; they had grown beyond their mulch. We applied a fresh layer and this represented our first-ever February garden activity. Then there were the less attractive conditions of open ground. Plastic, in all its various forms and manifestations, littered the garden. Twigs and branches abounded, the fall-out from our January storm. I have decidedly less enthusiasm for the tasks at hand, but not so little that I won’t deal with them.

Trees were tapped on the eighth (and could have been tapped several days prior). This was our earliest date ever. For a couple of reasons, it was but a token tap. We’ve always produced primarily for personal consumption and, with fewer persons to consume, our needs have declined. In addition, almost two years’ worth are on hand. But we first tapped in the spring of 1977 and have not missed a season since. I am not yet prepared to let it go. From the largest producers to the smallest, the goal is the same: evaporate significantly reducing the time and fuel required to accomplish the task. The little guys (that’s us, folks) have a couple of five-gallon pots on the wood cookstove. A rule-of-thumb ratio in respect to sap content is 40:1. Every one hundred gallons of sap will yield but two and a half gallons of syrup. That’s a lot of water to introduce into our kitchen. A second rule-of-thumb is that each tap will yield a quart of syrup. We’ve already achieved that and the season is hardly drawing to a close.

Seeds have been ordered. Like most everything else in my life, it has been scaled back. One reason, of course, is the reduced size of the garden. In addition, with but a couple of exceptions, I will grow but one variety of each vegetable. Multiple varieties served several purposes: spreading the risk of possible failures, extending the harvest period, and providing, well, variety. Simpler times ahead.

Larry Siegel

P.S. February 23. Snow-covered again. Spring feels so very far away.

Squirrels

The late winter activity in our backyard is all birds and squirrels. Both come in search of food, but our intent is to feed the former and discourage the latter. To that end, feeders filled with sunflower seeds and metal baskets of suet hang high above the ground, suspended from a cable that stretches 50 feet from oak tree to house. The intent is to provide an abundance of food for our birds while restricting the squirrels to foraging for dropped seeds below.

Most of the time this works. But sometimes we look out to find a squirrel stretched head down along the length of one of these suspended feeders, gorging itself on sunflower seeds while the Chickadees scold from a bush nearby. The mystery to solve: how did that squirrel get there?

For several days we observed from our dining table as squirrels went about their foraging. Then one morning we saw a squirrel climb the oak tree and perch at the end of the cable. It sat there for long moments. Then, suddenly, it took off across the wire. After only a few steps it shifted its weight so that it now hung upside down, clutching the wire with all four paws. We watched in disbelief as, paw over paw, it made its way along the cable to the nearest feeder where it stretched itself head down and began to eat. Mission impossible? Apparently not.

We shifted our focus to the feeders themselves. After some research we purchased large plastic “squirrel-proof” domes and attached them above each feeder. We admired these umbrella-like attachments that swayed gently with the wind. Our birds continued to visit the feeders undeterred and, in stormy weather, sought shelter under the domes. However, our thoughts of success were dashed when, one morning, we watched a squirrel shimmy upside down along the wire, land on the dome, and tip it just so, making a sort of ramp which it then used to slip gracefully onto the feeder. It seemed we were producing an ever-more fascinating rodent amusement park, complete with zip lines and slides.

The only remaining modification must be with the wire itself. What would make that upside down shimmy along the wire less appealing? We thought of threading the wire through a Slinky (yes, they still make those) to impede the squirrel’s progress. But after several back-of-the-envelope sketches we realized that this would only create little ladder-like rungs across the wire, making the squirrel’s progress even more fun.

What if we dangled something from the wire itself? Strips of cloth or ribbon or tinsel, perhaps. Since the squirrel had to hang upside down as he traversed the wire, these strips might confuse him enough to abandon the mission all together. Or would he quickly learn to ignore them and soldier on? We needed something hanging there that could not be ignored. Then we hit on it: flypaper!

We debated this idea for several days. What if the gluey strips adhered to the squirrel? Would he be able to extricate himself? While we wanted to deter his progress, we were not intent on actual harm. Perhaps we should start with the cloth strips and take it from there.

We ordered a pack of six flypaper strips, just to be ready. However, since the pack arrived, we have not seen one squirrel on our feeders. Not one. Are they aware of our flypaper scheme? Having watched our squirrels out-think us these past few weeks, I would not be at all surprised.

Deb D’Amico
Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn.
Lewis Grizzard

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Mixed Messages

Everyone talks about the weather.
What to do when the weather talks back?

Traditional prognosticators disagree.
Groundhog's shadow says more winter.
Red-winged blackbirds declare spring's begun.

The weather report predicts 50 degree days,
dropping to 1 degree nights by week's end.
Wondering whether to get out the lawnmower
or the snow shovel.

Limbs still litter the roadside and hiking trails.
Many trees have lost their tops.
The whine of snowmobile engines has been
replaced by the chainsaw's roar.

"It's been a strange winter," people say.
While others observe, "that's winter in New England!"
As for me, I wish the weather would make up it's mind.

Michael Young
Royalston Poet Laureate

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Annual Chet Hall Pancake Breakfast
Proceeds go to college scholarships for ARRSD
students.
March 25, 8 - 11:00 a.m., tentatively at RCS