Calendar of Events

A complete listing of department, committee, commission, and board meetings is posted: www.royalston-ma.gov

June 3  Saturday
7:30 - 11:30 a.m. Saturday Morning on the Common: Village School pancake breakfast at Town Hall, birds of prey, tag sale, and more on the Common; silent auction at the Church. Starting at 8:30 – the famous Library plant sale and book sale at Old School House.
noon Winner of the Garden Tour Raffle drawn at the Library. Buy tickets at the Library or at the plant sale.

June 5  Monday
World Environment Day

June 10  Saturday
10 am Annual Town Meeting, upstairs in Town Hall

June 12  Monday
6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Community meeting for Whitney Hall marketing study with consultants Keen Independent Research to assess the potential municipal or nonprofit uses - upstairs at Town Hall.

June 17  Saturday
5 p.m. Fire & EMS Chicken BBQ at the Center Fire Station. The chicken will be accompanied by bread and butter, potato salad, corn, and watermelon. Adult meals are $20; $12 for kids 12 and under. Advance tickets are available from any Fire & EMS member, and a limited number will be available at the event.

After Rain

A quick morning shower refreshes the spring world, exploding green.
Robins sing for joy,
In anticipation of juicy worms, or just because they can.
Lilacs spice the fragrant breeze.
After the rain, the sun.

Michael Young
Royalston poet laureate
Select Board Notes
Shelby Bronnes, Clerk

Town Meeting June 10, 2023
We remind our voters that our Annual Town Meeting will take place on Saturday, June 10 at 10AM upstairs at the Town Hall. As you know, the business of the Annual Town Meeting is for voters to approve spending for the next fiscal year (FY24). Your Select Board and the various town departments have worked very hard over the late winter and spring to create a budget that provides needed services to our residents while staying within our means – always a challenge. The warrant will be posted at Town Hall, Whitney Hall, in West Royalston, and on our website one week prior to Town Meeting.

As many of you know, Royalston has lost our long-time resident and Town Moderator, George Northrop, who died on May 4. We will truly miss his wise and knowledgeable leadership at our town meetings. Andy West has graciously offered to step in as Moderator and we are grateful to him. Our Town Clerk, Barbara Richardson, will be guiding residents through the official procedure of nominating and voting on this temporary position from the town meeting floor.

Energy Committee at Work
The Board met with the Energy Committee this past month. The committee has many plans in the works to support Royalston’s efforts toward becoming a more eco-friendly town. The Board has charged the committee with creating an Energy Efficiency Plan for the Town and they are digging into some interesting projects. These projects include the possibility of electric vehicles for town departments, installation of EV charging stations in Royalston, and the viability of solar power for the Wastewater Treatment Plant in the South Village. In the next several months they will take over the management of Royalston’s Green Communities Grant. Interested in being part of this committee’s efforts? Contact the Select Board office and let us know.

Whitney Hall Marketing Survey
Using a grant from the state, the Select Board has engaged Keen Independent Research, a national arts, culture, equity and market research firm, to conduct a marketing feasibility study of Whitney Hall. The study will provide options for transforming this iconic, but underutilized South Royalston village site into a fully functioning, vibrant community asset. The first, most important, step will happen on Monday, June 12 when the folks from Keen will be in Royalston to hear from all of us about our hopes, wishes, concerns, and ideas for Whitney Hall. Please look for a full-page of information about how you can participate.

Luncheon Club and COA
The Council on Aging sponsors the Wednesday Luncheon Club at the Town Hall. Coffee and tea are ready at 11 a.m. A nutritious and tasty lunch in the company of others is served at noon. Please call Betty at 978-249-9656 or Gary at 978-249-8957 before 5 PM Monday to reserve a seat. A confidential, voluntary donation of $3.00 is appreciated.

Royalston South Village Revitalization News
Dear neighbors,
The mission of the Royalston South Village Revitalization Committee is to revitalize the South Village while building community in the process. To us, community building means building mutually trusting relationships among ALL Royalston residents regardless of background or political points of view.
We want to thank the Select Board for writing the grant for the Whitney Hall Marketing Study funded by the Massachusetts Rural and Small-Town Grant Program. Please attend the public meeting on June 12 from 6:30-8:30 pm at the Town Hall.
Thanks also go to DPW and Chief Jaret Thiem for loam seeding, mowing and moving the bench by the Gazebo. Plant Subcommittee Co-chairs Rose Lawrence and Maureen Blasco hope that you can help at the Planting Work Day on Sunday, June 4 at 10:00 a.m. at the Gazebo. Thanks also to Rene Lake-Gagliardi for all of her help in preparing for the SOS Community Meeting on April 12. We had a great turn-out due to volunteers like her.

Here is the report of Peter Gagliardi, Chair of the SOS (Save Our Store) Subcommittee:
The SOS Subcommittee of the Royalston South Village Revitalization Committee has been very active since last month’s report. Following the town-wide meeting that launched the SOS effort, the Subcommittee, consisting of 14 volunteer members, has met twice and a Finance Working Group has had three meetings.

As of this writing, the store has not been listed for sale but the current owner assures us that this will happen in the near future. The delay has actually given the Subcommittee more time to determine the feasibility of the possible approaches that the community might take to put the store on a sound footing going forward.

The models offered by the Petersham experience and the current work of a community group working on saving a key facility in Ashfield have demonstrated the value of separating ownership of the historic property and operation of the business or businesses in the store. In both cases, there are second floor residential units as well as leased store space.

Our first stage necessarily begins with acquisition of the building. At that point, there will continue to be a leased residential unit on the second floor. Simultaneously, the Subcommittee will be pursuing additional details relative to the possibilities for the store, beginning with the goods and services that have already been brought to the committee’s attention. We expect to gather more information with town-wide questionnaires and research of other successful community stores.

Most importantly, we will be seeking an operator who can create a successful business that will meet the needs, preferences, and vision of Royalston’s residents. Ultimately, we want to engage those who offer the best path to the success of the store and the satisfaction of the patrons.

The emerging economic development plan for the town and for the South Village has already resulted in significant projects by RSVR volunteers, ranging from cleaning up the brush once obscuring the river, to building a gazebo, and to an extensive beautification effort. It is RSVR and the SOS Subcommittee’s belief that saving our store is essential to the success of any long range economic development plan for the Town.
Greetings from the Fire Department

This spring has been busy. We have responded to 35 calls for service since April 1st with two of those calls being for structure fires in Royalston. On April 3rd RFD members along with Royalston Police and surrounding towns responded to 2 Woods Rd for a reported fire by a passerby. Fortunately, with quick actions by initial crews the fire was contained but the home did receive smoke damage throughout. On April 30th, we received another report of a structure fire. This time for a mobile home at 79 Athol Rd. This time first arriving crews found heavy fire conditions and the home was a total loss. On April 10th, RFD responded to a reported brush fire at 60 Bliss Hill Rd that was threatening a home. RFD along with crews from Richmond and Athol worked quickly to keep the fire from spreading to the home. RFD crews also responded a total of 5 times as mutual aid, which is important for our community as we do not always have enough resources to respond to local emergencies, so we in turn provide crews to other communities when they have incidents and they reciprocate.

I am pleased to announce that Lt. Jayne Porter was recently awarded the Emergency Medical Services Educator of the year award from the Central Ma. EMS Corporation for her work to provide training for our first responders.

We were fortunate to receive ARPA funding from the Town to be used to perform repairs and lighting upgrades to our rescue truck. Those repairs are in process, and we hope to have them completed in the next few months.

We have also recently hosted a few regional fire trainings in town. We had a combined fire attack drill with the Templeton Fire department where crews trained on pump operations and hose handling. We also hosted a tanker shuttle drill with Athol, Petersham, Orange, and Templeton fire departments. In this drill, crews practiced moving water from a static source (a lake) to a fire scene. Crews moved 46,000 gallons of water in 90 minutes with 2 engines and 4 tanker trucks.

Stay Safe, Chief Jack

Board of Health News

Phil Leger, chair

The cardboard compactor is fully operational. It is located next to the can and plastic container. It’s the one with the large green hopper. Please make sure your boxes, etc. do not contain plastic, styrofoam, ties, and other non-paper/cardboard items. If you have questions, see attendant.

New annual windshield stickers will be available from attendants. New stickers are due July 1st. Please display on driver’s side windshield.

Air conditioners contain freon, so they are not to be deposited in metal. See attendant for proper location for collection.

Reminder that all trash bags are to have a trash sticker on them prior to deposit. Reminder that demo is not free. Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

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.

Planning Board News

At the March 8th meeting of the Planning Board, Kate Collins stepped down as the chair and Kyle Nartowicz was elected as the new chair of the board. The members of the Planning Board are Kate Collins, Kyle Nartowicz, Tom Musco, Amy Sanden and Joshua Doub. Diane Staude is the Planning Board clerk.

The elected five-member Planning Board writes, updates, and is the authority for the Town’s zoning Bylaws. To ensure compliance with the Bylaws, the Board reviews plans for building lots so that they can be recorded at the Registry of Deeds in Worcester. The board also takes applications for special permits and site plan reviews for other projects, as required by the zoning bylaw, including subdivisions, cell towers, marijuana establishments, and large-scale solar installments. The Board also has responsibilities related to any proposed zoning bylaw amendments. In addition, the Board has general planning responsibilities such as open space and recreation planning. The board meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7PM in the Town Hall.

You can contact the Planning Board using the Town website - https://www.royalston-ma.gov/user/212/contact.

Energy Committee

The Town of Royalston Energy Committee is seeking new members who share an interest in reducing the Town’s energy usage and costs. A willingness to communicate and work well with other members are the only other qualifications.

For further information, please contact: Robert Fairchild at 978-248-9962 or Joe Liebman at joeliebman@gmail.com.

Royalston Department of Public Works

DPW Superintendent Jaret R. Thiem 978-249-4223 or dpwadmin@royalston-ma.gov

DPW Superintendent Jaret Thiem reports all cemeteries have had a spring clean-up, in anticipation of Memorial Day. Special thanks to the Butterworth Road residents who pitched in to clean up Butterworth Cemetery and the Historical Society who recently held a workday to clean and reset headstones in Old Center Cemetery.

A few grant applications for road/bridge projects are in the works. We expect to hear back late fall or spring on those. The Falls Road culvert and Warwick Road from Route 32 to Bill Hill are among grant-funded projects in the works.

The DPW welcomes Levi Teto of Orange, who has been hired to fill the full-time opening. The DPW is now fully staffed and ready to get down to some serious work.
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
Diane Lincoln
Rene Lake-Gagliardi and Peter Gagliardi
Amy Newland
Diane and Judy Kurtz
Kay Shodeck for “Bubbles, Brains, and Breathing—Exploring How Our Bodies Work Through Play”

“Find Your Voice” Summer Reading Program
With snow days delaying the end of school and the Royalston Shakespeare Theater program continuing until July 7, we will begin our summer programming on July 10 for preschoolers and July 13 for older kids.

Preschool programs will be held on Mondays at 10 on July 10, 17, and 24 and include Music and Movement with Emily Hall, Bubbles, Brains, and Breathing—Exploring How Our Bodies Work Through Play with Nada Pooster and Make Your Own T-shirt with Brooke Coleman.

Older kids will be busy with some great programs. The first two programs will be on Thursdays at 1:30 with Gina Verrelli leading a workshop on the 13th called Upcycled Suncatchers, where kids will be painting cool designs on discs. Then on the 20th Jim Mercier will be teaching how to tune and play a Kalimba thumb piano, which each participant gets to keep. And in a very exciting program, which has to take place upstairs in the Town Hall because there will be a life-sized (30’ long!) humpback whale that kids will be going into to learn about whales. We will also find out about whale voices and many other cool things. This program will be on Wednesday, July 26 at 2:00.

Then on August 2, we will again have Heavenly Treats Ice Cream Truck to get us ready for a Crazy Hat Parade around the Common. Come, eat ice cream, make a Crazy Hat with Amy Newland, pick up an instrument and get ready to Find (and use) Your Voice in the parade. And there will be prizes for reading! All of our programs are made possible by a generous grant from the Royalston Academy with additional funding from the Friends of the Library.

Win a Garden Tour for you and your Bestie
Visit some of Royalston’s finest hidden gardens
Hidden along the backroads of our town are some absolutely fantastic gardens. The owners have generously agreed to open them up for a tour to benefit the Friends. For your chance to stroll Dr. Bouchard’s, the Vaccari’s, the Richardson’s and the Lawrence’s on Saturday, July 24, get raffle tickets (3/ $5) at the Library or at the plant sale. Winners reserve 2 spots on the individualized garden tour.

Annual Library Plant and Book Sales - June 3, 2023
Saturday, June 3 from 8:30 - 11:30 come to the famous Friends of the Library Plant and Book Sale at the Post Office (Old School House #1). Find a completely new selection of books in all genres for all ages at excellent prices. Call the Library to donate books for the sale.

Expect the usual common and uncommon varieties of high quality perennials, vegetables, herbs, annuals, bulbs and tubers, houseplants and surprises from local gardeners, offered with experienced advice and a smile. Why not donate some diggings and put aside some space in your gardens - and bookshelves - for the Friends? Donations of plants can be brought early to the sale Saturday morning or dropped outside the library the week before.

All profits benefit the Friends, who use the money to support the Library and its programs as well as produce and distribute this newsletter 10 times per year. New members are always welcome.

The Royalston Shakespeare Company, our long-running kids’ theater workshop will create a workshop production of the Tempest from June 28- July 7. Thanks to many snow days last winter, the schedule is a bit convoluted. Rehearsals will run mornings from 9:30 - 12:30 Mon - Sat. The July 4 rehearsal will be recommended but optional. The culminating performance will be Friday, July 7 at 7 pm at Town Hall.

This free, fun theater workshop that 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. Actors, stage crew, set designers, costumers all needed. Everyone is cast. No experience necessary, but attendance at each rehearsal is required. For more information or to sign up, contact the Library.

Hotspots Available to Borrow
Going on a trip? Got lousy internet? Need to have unlimited data? Borrow one of the T-Mobile hotspots from the Library. Recently a patron borrowed a hotspot to take on vacation with them. They had lousy cell phone coverage but would pull into a town, turn on the hotspot and then connect to their tablet and find a place to stay, a place to stay, and things to see. Wherever there is T-Mobile service, the hotspot (should) work.
Some of the new materials at your library

**Adult Fiction**
- Adjei-Brenyah, Nana: *Chain-Gang All-Stars*
- Alexander, Nelly: *Love Buzz*
- Barry, Dave: *Swamp Story*
- Boyle, T.C.: *Blue Skies*
- Cronin, Justin: *The Ferryman*
- Fortune, Carley: *Meet Me at the Lake*
- Griffiths, Elly: *The Last Remains*
- Hanks, Tom: *The Making of Another Major Motion*
- Buzzeo, Toni: *Eat Your Superpowers!*
- Chang, Rosa: *My Indigo World*
- Forrester, Amy: *Search for a Giant Squid*
- Hirsch, Rebecca: *Rise to the Sky*
- Montgomery, Sy: *The Book of Turtles*
- Tarshis, Lauren: *I Survived the Great Chicago Fire, Beyond Books:*

**Children’s Fiction**
- Agee, Jon: *My Dad is a Tree*
- Applegate, Katherine: *The One and Only Ruby, Who Will Win?*
- David, Ariihoni: *The Crayons Go Back to School*
- Dean, James: *Hickory Dickory Dock*
- Elliott, Rebecca: *The Nature Club*
- Grabenstein, Chris: *Evil Genius*
- Gravenstein, Chris: *NO is All I Know*
- Harrison, Vashit: *Big*
- LaRocca, Rajani: *Summer is for Cousins*
- Oswald, Pete: *The Noise Inside Boys*
- Rylant, Cynthia: *Rain*
- Sidman, Joyce: *We Are Branches*
- Tullet, Herve: *Tap! Tap! Tap!*

**Children’s Nonfiction**
- Agee, Jon: *With My Little Eye*
- Keane, Mary: *The Half Moon*
- Kuang, R.F.: *Yellowface*
- Lauren, Christina: *The True Love Experiment*
- Lehane, Dennis: *Small Mercies*
- Paolini, Christopher: *Fractal Noise*
- Patterson, James: *23rd Midnight*
- Paul, Crystal: *Did You Hear about Kitty Karr?*
- Shepard, Katie: *Bear with Me Now*
- Steel, Danielle: *The Wedding Planner*
- Sternbergh, Adam: *The Eden Test*
- Thayer, Nancy: *All the Days of Summer*
- Verghese, Abraham: *The Covenant of Water*
- Yarros, Rebecca: *Fourth Wing*

**Adult non-fiction**
- Diamant, Anita: *Period. End of Sentence*
- Eig, Jonathan: *King*
- Gerhardt, Christina: *Sea Change*
- Gunter, Jen: *The Menopause Manifesto*
- Hale, Nathan: *The Mighty Bite*
- Matthews, Hannah: *You or Someone You Love*
- Thunberg, Greta: *The Climate Book*
- Toobin, Jeffrey: *Homegrown*
- Williams, Lucinda: *Don’t Tell Anyone the Secrets I Told You*
- Winchester, Simon: *Knowing What We Know*
- Wohlleben, Peter: *The Power of Trees*

**Art Exhibit**
Gordon Morrison, known for his exquisite botanical illustrations and expressionist paintings, will have several of his works on display at the Library during the month of June and July. His exhibit will be a varied selection of his many styles and sure to please.

**Ebooks and eAudiobooks**
If you would like to let us know what titles or genres you are interested in we will gladly take suggestions for purchasing items. And remember while traveling, it’s easier to download books than carry heavy books with you.

**Beyond Books:**
**Check out some Summer at the Library**
This is a reminder that the Library has folding tables and chairs, digital projectors and screens, and a Kill-A-Watt electricity usage monitor as well as state park passes which patrons can borrow.

**Preschool Story Time**
Story time continues on Mondays at 2:00 at the Library through June. Join with others to hear stories, do a craft, play, and have a healthy snack with Brooke Coleman. All preschoolers are welcome with their caregiver. There is no registration. Come whenever it’s convenient.

**Yoga**
Increase your core strength and improve your balance. Join in with Jess Schanz for a weekly hour of movement and breathwork in this gentle yoga class. You’ll be pleasantly surprised how good you feel after only an hour. Bring your own mat. The class is every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. in the upstairs of the Town Hall. It is funded by the Friends of the Library and donations are appreciated and go to the instructor.
Historical Society News

Peter Kraniak, president

On recent workdays in the museum, shelves were built in the office, new archival storage boxes put into use, and areas of the museum were unpacked, dusted, and organized. Going forward, the group is excited to plan for some temporary exhibits, possibly connected to the LBS 200th anniversary and the role of women in the Town’s history.

The recent gravestone cleaning and restoration workshop was well attended and very productive. Not only did participants learn the difference between a “consort” and a “relict”, but also under the guidance of Ta Mara Conde of Historic Gravestone Services, five headstones that were lying on the ground were stood up and set straight. Several that were tilted were righted. Over a dozen headstones were gently scrubbed and look obviously better for the effort. The stone of Hannah Heywood with the carved faces of her five children who died in rapid succession of throat distemper (diphtheria) in 1784 received special TLC as serendipitously, a member of the Heywood family had reached out to the Society for genealogy information this spring. Upon learning that we were having a cemetery cleaning program and would work on that headstone, four siblings traveled from Texas to clean their ancestor’s stone. Thank you to the Royalston Cultural Council for supporting the event. The Society plans to have more cemetery workdays in the future as many who participated found it meditative and rewarding.

In October, the popular “living history” cemetery tours will be back, using Riverside Cemetery as the setting. A group of people is researching lives of the people buried there and working on scripts. If you would like to take the role of an old soul this October, contact Beth Gospodarek 978-249-0358.

Volunteers are needed. 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 our next meeting on Friday, July 17 at the Museum, using our web-site, or by calling Maureen Blasco 978-249-5138.

Butterworth Cemetery Clean-up

Eight people on Butterworth Rd. got together and cleaned the Cemetery for Memorial Day to help the town out. Eight and a half hours of man and woman power was done to make it beautiful again.

We sometimes take walks to the old cemetery on our road
My daughter races ahead, left in the wake of our dogs.
Upon arrival, worn stones, broken twigs, long untended grasses and crumbling stone walls anoint the ground we tread.
Somber, downtrodden monuments to primitive bones, greet us in apathy.
No flowers, no wreaths, no footsteps, no tears, we feel the lack in the air.
We start to work, bending to twigs, debris, then replace the fallen cemetery sign, lug logs and straighten slate markers, imagining loved ones from another time.
As warm breezes haunt us, with a gentle presence we fill a need, until all plots are clear, then strew gay wildflowers onto barren earth, we take quietly and leave, not returning until the next year.

Sharon A. Harmon

Ladies’ Benevolent Society News

President Laurie Deveneau at 978-249-5807, lmdeveneau@msn.com

Ladies Benevolent Society’s next meeting is Thursday, June 29, at 6:30pm at Kristi Schellie’s house at 18 On The Common. The program following the short business meeting will be Women’s Health with Charlotte Weltzin. New members are always welcome.

Also, the LBS along with the Royalston Police and Royalston Fire will be hosting National Night Out, Tuesday, August 1, from 5:30-7:30pm on the Common. Food, Fun, Music and demonstrations!!!! This is a free family friendly event. More info to come in the next newsletter.
Congratulations and Good News

Got something to crow about? This means you graduates! Send it along to the RCN at chasegos2@gmail.com or drop at library.

Molly Divoll recently graduated from the University of Rochester.

Obituaries

George Northrop, farmer, of 46 Taft Hill Road, died at home May 4, 2023. George was Town moderator, chairman of the Conservation Commission for many years and a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals. He was in more than a few town Follies and Dinner Theater skits. He attended Town meetings since 1974. He played on Royalston’s soft ball team for the 225th celebration games with Asburnham. He worked for the Highway Department under Bill Simmington.

There will be a celebration of his life at a latter date.

Kristen and Andy West are extremely proud to announce the graduation of Samantha West, summa cum laude, from The Winchendon School. Samantha received the Lauren Lambert Award for Excellence in the Performing Arts. At school, Samantha was Senior class Vice-President, a Peer Teacher, and a member of the National Honor Society and Model United Nations. She devotedly pursued theater, performing in every show during her time, with a pinnacle performance as the lead role in Rogers and Hammerstein’s musical, Cinderella, this spring.

Samantha has danced at The Dance Center for 16 years, 11 of those years competitively, winning accolades for dancing, acting, and singing.

Samantha is headed to the University of New Hampshire in the fall to study Pre-Veterinary Medicine. She received the Presidential Award from UNH and has earned a place on the Division 1 dance team.

Laura Stanton, part-time resident of the Common since 1980, who now brings her own family to Town for Royalston respite, was recently named one of the best doctors in Rhode Island and featured as a cover photo in Rhode Island magazine. Laura’s parents, Don and Jeanne Stanton, are proud of her accomplishments.

Good weather and a good crowd are the hope on Sunday, June 4, 2023 for the tenth annual Amanda Putney Memorial Horse Show. Last minute donations for the fund-raising raffles and auctions are still being accepted – contact Karen Brooks at baileybrooksfarm@msn.com or 978-297-2102. A limited number of Sponsorships may still be available – contact Brenda Putney at brenput@yahoo.com or 978-297-2102. Questions regarding the show – contact Marge Tanner at margetanner@aol.com or 603-746-3813. All profits from this event support young equestrians with riding and competition expenses, as was Amanda’s dream, which was unrealized when she was killed in a motor vehicle crash in 2012 at the age of 19. Funds from this show help keep Amanda’s dream alive.
What is Happening at the Village School?
Rise Richardson, director

Saturday Morning on Royalston Common
June 3rd from 7:30 a.m. to noon.
Pancake Breakfast 7:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Town Hall
Adults $10  Children $5
Blueberry pancakes and local syrup
Spectacular Silent Auction 7:30 to 11:00 a.m. at the Congregational Church
Auction items include original paintings, handmade furniture, crafts, gift certificates, maple syrup, organic meat, and lots of interesting brand new items from local farms and businesses.
The whole list of items for the auction is posted at https://www.biddingowl.com/TheVillageSchoolMa
The auction and breakfast will benefit ongoing building renovation at the Village School campus.

Friends of the Library have plants and books for sale at the Post Office.
The program of events includes a giant yard sale, the Millers River Morris Men, a live Bird of Prey Presentation, an espresso and citrus bar, beer tent, a Cake Walk for Children, face painting, live music, and lots more.

Summer Programs at the Village School for ages 4-10
Led by Sofie Vieira and Lily Thompson.
Mornings from 9:00 to 1:00.
Choose your week(s) for outdoor fun, including art, crafts, nature walks, scavenger hunts, singing, yoga, water play, fort building, fairy houses and lots of free play.
It’s an outdoor program.
Go to https://www.villageschoolma.org/programs/summer/ to see the full Summer Program brochure.

Kindergarten Registration has begun. If your child will be 5-year-old before September 1, 2023, pick up paperwork at RCS or call 978-249-2900 for more information.

What is Happening at Monty Tech?
Sara Dilg at 978-248-9828, Royalston Rep. sdilg@montytech.net ~ 978-248-9828

Congratulations to Royalston’s Monty Tech graduates! Anya LeBlanc and Angela Diaz-Santos earned their diplomas last month. Anya studied Culinary Arts, and Angela was in the Cabinetmaking program, and each earned a Certificate of Occupation Proficiency (COPS) in their field of study.

Monty Tech has even more reasons to celebrate. At the end of April, the school sent thirty-five students to the SkillsUSA State Competitions in Marlborough. Eighteen students came home with medals across more than a dozen categories of competition.

As has been reported in past newsletters, Monty Tech is often the grateful recipient of generous donations from community businesses and local organizations. This spring the school received a gift of $350,000 worth of equipment from the L. S. Starrett Company of Athol. The tools will benefit students in the Advanced Manufacturing and Auto Technology vocational programs.

Other donations include two from the Barre Masonic Charitable Educational Corporation which donated $250 each to the Automotive Student Activities Account, and the Electrical Program Account.

Reminder for golfers: The Monty Tech Scholarship Scramble Golf Outing is back, after the pandemic pause. The event is Friday, June 16, 2023, at the Woods of Westminster Golf Course, beginning with a 9 a.m. “shotgun” start. The entry fee is $125, and proceeds will support some of the $40,000 in scholarships and awards – for both college and career-bound students – expected to be distributed at the end of this school year. Sponsors are also invited – several options, from one-hole contest/tee sponsors ($200) to Premier ($5,000) level.

Watch for details on the August “Ride of Your Life” motorcycle fundraiser, a partnership with Heywood Hospital and the Montachusett Suicide Prevent Task Force.

The final day of classes at Monty Tech is June 14, with an 11 a.m. dismissal. Field Day will take place from 8:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m., and Bulldog Pride Awards will take place from 10 a.m. – dismissal.

Monty Tech Wonders all Around

The Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly (Papilio glaucus) is one of the most common and vibrant eastern butterflies. Broad yellow wings are edged by black, and with four stripes. The bottom edges of the hind wings are colorful with bluish scales and red spots.

Usually solitary, sometimes a group of swallowtail males is “puddling”, where male butterflies come together at damp places in the soil and drink water. The water contains sodium ions and various amino acids, which appear to allow them to live longer. Adults of both sexes take nectar from a wide variety of native and exotic garden plants.

What were the uses of the South Royalston public halls in the past? The Historical Society collection features an 1884 dance card (complete with a dainty pencil to write in partners for the various polkas, mazurkas, and waltzes) for the South Royalston Dance School at Mechanic Hall, the nearly identical predecessor to Whitney Hall that burned. Featuring a 50 cent dinner and ending at three, it sounds very fun.
PUBLIC MEETING INVITATION
FOR WHITNEY HALL MARKETING STUDY

What are the options for transforming our iconic Whitney Hall into a fully functioning, vibrant community asset?

The Town of Royalston has engaged Keen Independent Research, a national research firm, to conduct a marketing feasibility study of Whitney Hall.

This study is being funded through the Massachusetts Rural and Small-Town Grant Program. The study will assess the viability of future municipal, for-profit and/or non-profit uses of Whitney Hall, taking into account community needs and wishes as well as financial feasibility.

The study team welcomes vigorous public participation.

How would you like Whitney Hall to enhance the Town of Royalston in the future?

Join Us at a Public Meeting and Let Your Voice Be Heard!

Location: Town Hall, 13 On the Common, Royalston

Date: Monday, June 12, 2023

Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Desserts and beverages will be served.

Please note: you may drop in at any time and stay as little or as long as you wish during this two-hour time frame.

For those unable to attend the public meeting, additional opportunities to provide input to Keen Independent Research will be provided at a later date. Watch Royalston’s website (www.royalston-ma.gov) and the July/August Newsletter for details.
Garden performance thus far has (and I’ll use the technical term here) sucked. Indoor plantings performed less than ideally. Several germinated poorly. Others experienced damping-off: one day the seedlings are growing, the next they’ve flopped over and are not growing. It has been no better outdoors. Spinach and parsnips did not germinate; radishes and arugula did but were almost immediately devastated by flea beetles. Peas, bless ‘em, are up and undamaged (at least at the moment), the sole remaining survivors of my early spring gardening efforts. There are at least a couple of bright spots. The garlics have never looked better, at least above ground level. It remains to be seen if that is reflected below. The asparagus patch is in full production, our first fresh vegetable in six months.

To complicate matters, the weather has been anything but cooperative. There was a particularly dismal stretch in late April and early May. The rain two days ago was the first in two and a half weeks. There have been many more days below 70º than above. In the world of gardening weather is everything. The gardener can enrich the soil, control the weeds, and take steps to repel insects and varmints, but must live with whatever the weather has to offer.

I seem to be lacking in energy and endurance and enthusiasm. The first two are understandable: I am, after all, eighty years old. I made reference to enthusiasm last month; it has yet to emerge. But the season has barely begun and these lacks have had little impact. This is about to change dramatically over the next several weeks. A dozen and a half different vegetables and flowers will be transplanted and at least a half dozen others direct seeded. Two, corn and butternut squash, will be both transplanted and seeded. Onions and leeks have been in the ground for almost two weeks and, while not particularly thriving, are at least upright. Potatoes were set about the same time are just now emerging.

I am a bit surprised looking out the window at the lilacs in full bloom, especially in light of the failure of the forsythia. There were other casualties from the winter that was. Forty-five years ago, urged on by the glossy photo of a dwarf cherry tree (shrub actually) loaded with fruit, we bought one. Our shrub has never produced fruit. (So much for glossy photos.) On the other hand, it reliably flowered in early spring, year in and year out. Until this year. Last month I predicted the peach trees would have but few flowers. The trees had but no flowers and reports from outlying areas suggest there was not a peach tree in Royalston that bloomed. Combined with a raspberry patch that did not recover from last year’s deer incursion and a strawberry patch that has played out, we will be fruit-deprived this year. I may well be obliged to buy some for the first time in decades. Perhaps it is a good thing, I have missed bananas and pineapples and mangoes, and cherries.

Little Black Flies

For weeks now, I have watched the slow progression of spring. For a while the wet days and cold nights seemed to threaten its arrival. But spring’s tender greens and soft yellows have survived, unfolding into the promise of summer’s deeper shades. Now the warmth of mid-day and the greening of my gardens beckon. So, I grab my gardening tools and head out. Within moments, I am confronted with spring’s only down-side: the little black flies.

They are a familiar nemesis. In the New Hampshire springs of my childhood, black flies were our constant companions. They accompanied us on our walks to school and plagued us as we rambled the woods near our home. Ever hopeful, our parents pinned strips of cloth soaked with “Woodman’s Fly Dope” to our jackets and caps and sent us off in a cloud of strong scent. Despite these efforts, at the end of the day, bites ringed our wrists like bracelets and peppered the tender skin behind our ears. Our mother would note our bites with concern and daub them with Witch Hazel, but we were undaunted. The black flies never stopped our outdoor play.

However, our tolerance diminished with age. As teenagers trying hard to be sophisticated, we were faced with a dilemma. Going to school smelling of fly dope was out of the question, so we feigned indifference. But the swarms at our bus stop were persistent. Abandoning all decorum, we put our books on the ground and flapped our hands wildly to keep the flies at bay. Once on the bus any illusions that we had outsmarted our attackers were dashed by clusters of tiny red marks that already itched. Despite our best efforts, we were undone by the flies.

Having shared a lifetime of springs with little black flies, I’ve become more curious about them. Like everything else in our world, they must have a role to play. I have learned that their larval stage is spent in running water, feeding on algae and bacteria. They are sensitive to pollution, so their presence in any given spring indicates a healthy ecosystem. Once they hatch, black flies are an important food source for fish, amphibians, and birds. In fact, many songbirds time their migration to coincide with the hatching of these tiny insects. Those bites? That’s a female seeking sustenance for the laying of eggs; yet another mother providing for her young.

Little black flies will always be a fact of life come spring. In the end, their time with us is relatively brief. Given the long expanse of summer that lies ahead, their presence seems a small price to pay.

Deb D’Amico

Larry Siegel
To the Royalston Community:

The United States Postal Service has informed the Friends of the Library (after 24 years!) that the sponsorship ads traditionally on this page, do not meet requirements for non-profit mailing. If we want to continue mailing the newsletter, there cannot be ads that bring in revenue to the Friends.

We appreciate the consistent support of all our sponsors. We realize it was true support, rather than advertising with an expectation of a big return.

Here is a list of those great supporters:

Days Gone By Antiques - Bob and Lorraine Casinghino
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Royalston Emergency Management Agency
Director Jim Barclay ema@royalston-ma.gov or phone 978-249-2904, Deputy Director Tom Musco tgmusco@gmail.com or 978-249-9633

If someone is struck by lightning – even if they appear to be ok- there is potential for internal damage that isn’t immediately obvious. DIAL 9-1-1. If a structure is struck by lightning – even if there’s no obvious fire - there is potential for fire, even if it isn’t immediately obvious.

From an Emergency Management standpoint, there are two main goals regarding electrical storms: #1 – keep people safe and #2 – prevent property damage. The National Lightning Safety Council was established to accomplish these goals, through awareness and education. The group sponsors National Lightning Safety Awareness Week (June 18-24, 2023).

Statistics from the United States National Weather Service list 19 fatalities from lightning in 2022, and show, in the past ten years, as many as 40 lightning fatalities have occurred in a single year (2016.) Yes, the odds of being struck by lightning are only about 1/18,864, but if you’re the one who’s outside, swimming in the pool, finishing up the lawn work, or chatting while leaning on the chain-link fence while lightning is striking, those odds get a lot worse. It’s easy to dramatically improve the odds by following a few commonsense rules, for example, by adhering to the Council’s adage: “When thunder roars, go indoors!”

If you hear thunder, you’re already a little behind. Be aware of weather predictions before lightning strikes. Keep an eye on the sky for storms; listen for thunder in the distance. At the first indication of a storm, get out of the water if you’re swimming or boating. If you’re outdoors in an open area, head for shelter. If you’re unable to make it to a solid shelter or enclosed motor vehicle, avoid high spots, and isolated tall trees, and of course, steer clear of utility poles or towers. Large groups of people should try to disperse.

There are also tips to avoid being struck by lightning indoors. An electrical storm is not the time to take a bath or shower, or wash dishes or laundry. Stay off of wired phones and radios, and away from electrical outlets. Steer clear of open windows and doors, especially ones with metal frames and screen wire. If you’re down cellar, wear rubber-soled shoes/sneakers. If you have pets down cellar, confine them to an area with rubber mats.

To protect property, it’s a good idea, especially in high-strike areas (and there are a few in Royalston) to have professionally-installed lightning protection – rods, for example, which help circumvent lightning around a structure and to ground. GFI (Ground Fault Interrupter) outlets will short circuit if struck by lightning, and most likely protect whatever is plugged into them A UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply) serves as a GFI with a back-up battery and takes and electrical hit while sparing whatever’s plugged into it. Computer equipment, for example, can power down methodically with a UPS, rather than crash.

During lightning storms, it’s wise to unplug large appliances like refrigerators, freezers, and air conditioners, which can be ruined if struck by lightning, or see permanent motor damage if there are current surges or brown outs when power grids are struck by lightning.

June, July, and August all have weather potential for electrical storms. Be sure to check out the Lightning Safety Council (www.LightningSafetyCouncil.org) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Service (www.weather.gov) for additional information.

Preparedness beats panic every time!
Be informed ~ Make a Plan!
1870 Train Accident in So. Royalston

Michael Adams recently rediscovered this story. While helping his aunt at the Athol Historical Society, where he came upon a box labeled “Royalston”. Inside were details of a very sad train wreck.

On June 16, 1870, a tragic railroad accident occurred on the bridge over Miller’s River, between Athol and Royalston, Massachusetts. A supervisor’s mistake led to a collision between a hand car and an oncoming train from Boston.

Mr. Morse, the section master, misjudged the time and set out on a hand car with another man towards Royalston. However, they couldn’t see the approaching train due to a sharp curve. The collision demolished the hand car and derailed the train, causing three cars to plunge into Miller’s River.

The June 23, 1870 edition of the New Hampshire Sentinel described the wreck and identified the victims. Sadly, four lives were lost in the accident. Mrs. Brewer of Royalston, an elderly woman, died shortly after being taken to the Methodist church in Athol. Johnson, a popcorn vendor, was killed instantly. Connor, a laborer en route to the Hoosac tunnel, was found dead in the wreckage. Mrs. Jonas Turner of Royalston suffered severe injuries and passed away a few hours later.

Images of the event are below. Photo donated to the Athol Historical Society by: Ester (Morse) Davidson, Woodcut donated to the Athol Historical Society by: William Lord

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

Royalston Resident
P.O. Box
Royalston MA 01368