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

7 p.m. Royalton Shakespeare Company- Free kids’ theater workshop production of the Tempest at Town Hall. Produced by the Friends of the Library and funded by the Royalston Cultural Council. Brave New world

July 3 Monday
7:39 a.m. Full Buck Moon

July 4 Tuesday Independence Day

July 6 Thursday
4:06 p.m. Aphelion – The day the earth is farthest away from the sun – 94,506,364 miles

July 10 Monday
10 a.m. Preschool Summer Reading Program begins at the Library with Bubbles, Brains and Breathing.

July 13 Thursday
1:30 Make Up-cycled Suncatchers at the Library as the Summer Reading for older kids begins.

July 16 Sunday
noon - 5:30 p.m. The Royalston Music Fest at Bullock Park is packed with local talent. Performers to include Tempo-Airy Jazz Ensemble, Psycho Slaphead, Judy Rice, Sylvia’s Daughter, Doc Arsenault, Gary Amadon, and The Bluez Katz. Presented by the Royalston Cultural Council.

July 17 Monday
2:32 p.m. New Sturgeon Moon
10 a.m. Pre-school summer reading program continues at the Library. Spray-paint a t-shirt. All materials provided.

July 20 Thursday
1:30 p.m. Learn to play the kalimba with Jim Mercier at the Library Summer Reading Program. Take home the kalimba! Pre-register by calling the Library.

July 21 Friday
7 p.m. Historical Society Meeting in the museum at the head of the Common. All welcome.

July 24 Monday
10 a.m. Pre-schoolers’ Summer Reading Program is sing and play with Emily Hall at the Library.

July 26 Wednesday
2 p.m. Whalemobile: Climb inside a whale and learn about Humpbacks and other whales at Town Hall as part of the Library’s Summer Reading Program. Register a spot by calling the Library.

July 29 Saturday
7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tag sale to benefit the First and Second Congregational Churches’ food pantry on the Common.

August 1 Tuesday
2:32 p.m. Full Sturgeon Moon A “Super Moon,” being closest to the earth, and will be followed by another one, also the “Blue Moon,” at the end of the month.


August 4 Friday
4 - 6 p.m. Find your Voice Parade to close out the Summer Reading Programs. Free ice cream. Make a whacky hat. Decorate your bike or baby carriage. Grab an instrument and parade to celebrate summer.

August 11 Friday
Predawn Perseid Meteor Shower – 50/hour from Swift-Tuttle Comet; look northeast. This is one of two spectacular light shows each year, with nearly non-stop “shooting stars” in the pre-dawn darkness (and frequent shooting stars all night long!) between now and August 14th. Being nearly to the new moon – completely dark – makes for fantastic viewing. This is the one for sleeping out under the stars.

August 12 Saturday
1 to 4 p.m. Open Mic at the So. Royalston Gazebo. Sponsored by the Royalston Cultural Council.

August 20 Sunday
8 a.m. Ride of Your Life motorcycle fundraiser by Heywood Healthcare and Monty Tech

August 26 Saturday Women’s Equality Day
2 p.m. Pig Roast at the Royalston F&G

August 30 Wednesday
First Day of School for students in the ARRSO
Select Board Notes
Shelby Bronnes, Clerk

Annual Town Meeting
The Select Board is grateful to all who turned out on June 10 for our Annual Town Meeting. Debate was lively, which is always a good thing. Because Free Cash had not been certified in time for the town meeting, voters approved a continuation of the meeting to Friday, June 30 at 7PM at Town Hall. As the Newsletter will be in your hands after this date we cannot report on the outcome of that meeting, but we hope that you were one of the voters who attended!

Whitney Hall Feasibility Study
The team from Keen Independent Research was in Royalston on Monday and Tuesday, June 12 and 13 to kick off the Marketing Feasibility Study of Whitney Hall. The Select Board is grateful to the many residents, department heads, and board and committee members who took time to meet with the team or attend the public meeting on Monday evening. We encourage people to stay informed and engaged with this study by visiting https://keenindependent.com/WhitneyHall. Look elsewhere in this newsletter for more detailed information on how you can participate in this important work.

Sign for Town Hall
Many people have commented that our Town Hall could use some official signage. Our residents certainly know the Town Hall, but new residents or people from out of town who have business with us have no way of knowing where to go. A sign by the road or a sign at the door, maybe both, would solve the mystery once and for all! The Board is researching possible signage and will work with the Historic District Commission over the next few months to come up with signage that will blend with Royalston’s beauty and historic character.

Changes on The Common
As many of you have seen there are several trees losing the battle on the Common. The Select Board has given its approval to the DPW to remove the dying trees and their stumps (about 15). Once this is done, the Select Board will start to consider options for replacement trees.

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,
On June 12 and 13, RSVR assisted the Select Board in gathering focus groups of abutters, community leaders and the South Royalston School Association (one of the longest meeting school associations, which has met for 118 years!) to give input to the consultants at Keen Independent Research, who are conducting the Whitney Hall Marketing Feasibility Study. We want to thank all who participated in these listening sessions, which are the beginning of a 9 month study funded by the MA Rural and Small-Town Grant Program.

If you could not make it to the public meeting on June 12, please go to the website to link to a survey where you can submit your own input and see updates of the study. https://keenindependent.com/WhitneyHall. The study hotline is (978)245-5831 and the team can be reached at WhitneyHall@keenindependent.com.

Thank you to the volunteers who helped on the June 4th Planting Day. A huge shout-out to Tom Mann of TS Mann Lumber Company, who originally quoted Rose Lawrence and Maureen Blasco $600 for the granite step for the front of Gazebo; the bill was for $320 with delivery.

RSVR was asked to help organize this year’s Memorial Day ceremony. Linda Alger chaired the effort. Linda would like to thank the following participants: John Divoll - Master of Ceremonies; Marshall - Sgt. Christian Hansen US, Army, National Guard (currently active); Speaker- Sgt. Jason Consiglio, US Marine Corp. Combat Iraq Freedom 200; Soloist - Jessie James; ROTC- Monty Tech; Peter Newman – Chaplain; TAPS - Bayard Hard, Grade 5, RCS; Sound System - James Bennett; Luncheon – Ladies Benevolent Society; Royalston Fire EMS, Royalston Police Department; Rose Lawerence - making contact with the school, picked up wreaths etc.; Brenda Putney and her grandson Gunnar put out flags in all of the cemeteries in town.

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. For more information, call Janice Trask at 978-249-2510.

“RSVR would like to acknowledge Joyce Neale and Luann Simula, who generously donated funds raised from their home-made Finnish bread and pastries at the Open Mic in 2021. Proceeds went to the new bunting for the Gazebo, which will be displayed from Memorial Day through July 4th.
Town of Royalston Broadband Update
Rick Martin, Select Board

It has been approximately one year since the town signed the contract with Charter Communications to build broadband and cable access in the town. As you have probably noted that throughout town there has been considerable work being done by Verizon and National Grid to upgrade the telephone pole system to prepare for the installation of the cables for the Charter Communications cable and broadband system. We understand that this has been somewhat painful to navigate through town at times, but we feel it will all be worth it in the end to have these services available in town for 100% of the population.

Charter has informed the Select Board that the work should be completed on the poles by the end of June. The great news is that the cabling by Charter should be completed by the end of September this year. This is great news and about six months ahead of schedule! Of course, several events could affect this schedule like weather, and we will keep you updated as we hear from Charter.

As we have communicated in the past, sections of town will come online earlier than others and at this time there is no way to tell which sections these will be. As soon as we hear from Charter, we will pass this information along, or you may be hearing directly from Charter. More updates to come!

New Transmission Lines Coming to Town
From the National Grid web-site
National Grid, operating as New England Power Company, plans to address the deteriorating condition of the existing 69kV A1 and B2 transmission lines constructed in 1909. The scope to re-build these lines includes structure replacements, structure foundations, new conductor, and right of way access improvements where necessary along the approximate 61 miles of existing right of way.

Project Location: This project originates in Vernon, Vermont, travels through Hinsdale and Winchester, New Hampshire and then continues through a number of towns within Northern Massachusetts including, Warwick, Royalston, Winchendon, Gardner, Westminster, Fitchburg, Leominster, and Sterling.

Coming off the mainline, this project also includes the Athol Tap. The Athol Tap runs from Royalston Substation to Chestnut Hill Ave Substation in Athol, Massachusetts.

Project Status: As of April 2023, team members are continuing to work on the permitting and design phase of the Project. Field assessments along the Project route will continue as needed and soil boring activities are expected to continue into Fall 2023. Soil borings require some preparation work so residents may see some tree trimming along the access routes.

This spring/summer, we will send invitations to attend local open houses which will provide another opportunity to meet the Project team, ask questions and learn what to expect as we continue our preparation for construction.

Royalston Department of Public Works
DPW Superintendent Jaret R. Thiem 978-249-4223 or dpwadmin@royalston-ma.gov
Superintendent Jaret R. Thiem reports the paving project on NE Fitzwilliam is completed. Many thanks and worker appreciation goes to residents who avoided the work zone, and the police officers who re-directed those unfamiliar with the area.

Roadside mowing is in full swing. Thiem requests motorists keep an eye out for mowers in the travel lanes on Rt. 32, Butterworth Road, and Bliss Hill. Please drive slowly and pass as far away from the equipment and workers as is safe for the section of roadway.

You may have noticed some newly graded gravel roads around town. The DPW, as the result of learning some new techniques in a gravel roads maintenance class, has changed some of their protocols. Thiem is expecting Royalston, in August, to be among the host communities for a state-wide program on road grading, with Royalston’s gravel roads providing the practical learning component.

In order to properly track questions and concerns (compliments are also welcomed), please e-mail them to dpw@royalston-ma.gov. Of course, if there is an urgent need, call the DPW during business hours, and in an emergency, 9-1-1.

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 were 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 and Second Congregational Church - Marion’s Food Pantry:
New Day and Hours
We know times are tough. Anybody in need –please come visit the pantry, or we can deliver if home-bound during pantry hours, Wednesdays 2 - 4 p.m. There will be a tag sale to benefit the pantry on Saturday, July 24 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Contacts- Deb Conrad (978)895-3505, Jeff & Sue Smith (978)895-7887.
Thank you:
The plant and book sale take a lot of work and generosity from a large number of people. The sales were very successful and we appreciate all the people who not only donate but also those who purchase the plants and books.

Maureen Blasco
Bob and Lorraine Casinginho
John and Kathy Chencharik
Nanji Davison
Buddy Dyer
Beth Gospodarek
Sharon Harmon
Walt Hubbard
Kirby
Marguerite LaCroix
Rose Lawrence
Stephanie McClure
Kathy Morris
Joshua Morris-Siegel
Patti Stanko
Barbara Richardson
Abraham and Halima Sussman
Sonja Vaccari

And to any others we missed. Thanks. Let us know your names.

To Jim and Barb Richardson for the use of their trailer and to Michael Richardson for helping Barb and I load all the books.
Joshua Morris-Siegel for the loan of his EZ up tent.
Richard Weiner and Kathy Corbett for taking all the books after the sale and transporting them to a worthy non-profit reseller.

Thanks to the Library staff and Friends who helped: Cathy Offutt, Pippa Monahan, Barbara Richardson, and Kristi Schellie. Beth Gospodarek, Patti Stanko, and Maureen Blasco for selling plants. And thanks to Robert Fairchild for not helping at the sale and keeping his COVID isolated from all of us.

Thank you to Martha and Ken Bouchard, Rose and Richard Lawrence, Barbara and Jim Richardson, and Sonja and George Vaccari for opening their gardens for the exclusive garden tour.

And to the woman who took all the plants. Really?

Find Your Voice! @ the Library – Important Information!

There are lots of great programs at the Library this summer. Sign up and you are automatically entered into a contest to win some cool prizes. Check out and read books and earn even more chances to win. As you can see from the flier, there are programs for preschoolers and for older kids. The preschool programs will be Mondays at 10:00 with giant bubbles with Nada Plooster, spray painted T-shirts with Brooke Coleman, and music and play with Emily Hall. Gina Verrelli will have kids painting up-cycled mandalas suncatchers. We are excited to offer the kalimba (thumb piano) program with Jim Mercier where you can learn to tune and play your own kalimba. You have to sign up for this program as we have a limited number of instruments to give away. Several adults have shown interest and if there are instruments left after the kids sign up, adults can sign up too.

Nile, a real humpback whale, has just returned to the coast off Scituate, Massachusetts. You can follow Nile and learn about how whales are named and lots more at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/humpback-whale and https://stellwagen.noaa.gov/visit/whalewatching/ Nile is the model for the Whalemobile. She is 43’ long and that is why the program will be upstairs in the Town Hall. You’ll get to climb inside and learn all about whales. Each group will be inside the whale for about a half hour. The Whalemobile requires that you sign up for a slot to go inside the whale. Children less than 4 years of age are not eligible to go into the whale. Adults may accompany children but must sign up as well. When you sign up we can send you an email that contains a video about whales and what to expect from your visit. There will be information on humpback and other types of whales as well as some cool things to see and hear.

On Friday August 4, come to the Library and eat ice cream from our own ‘ice cream truck’ and make a crazy hat with Amy Newland and parade around the Common while we Find Our Voice. Bring your instruments, use one of ours, or grab a kazoo to play and keep.

All off these programs are made possible by a generous grant from the Royalston Academy with refreshments and prizes provided by the Friends of the Phinehas S. Newton Library.
Some of the new materials at your library

**Adult Fiction**
- Abbott, Megan: Beware the Woman
- Abrams, Stacey: Rogue Justice
- Allende, Isabel: The Wind Knows My Name
- Audrain, Ashley: The Whispers
- Banville, John: The Lock-up
- Bennett, Michael: Better the Blood
- Ceme, James: Central Park West
- Constantine, Liv: The Senator’s Wife
- Dubus, Andre: Such Kindness
- Ford, Richard: Be Mine
- Frank, Victoria B.: My Magnolia Summer
- Goldis, Jaclyn: The Chateau
- Harmel, Kristin: The Paris Daughter
- Hazelwood, Ali: Love, Theoretically
- Hilderbrand, Elin: The Five-Star Weekend (also available in large print)
- Horan, Nancy: The House of Lincoln
- Hostin, Sunny: Summer on Sag Harbor
- Johansen, Iris: The Survivor
- Maden, Mike: Clive Cussler’s Fire Strike
- Monaghan, Annabel: Some Time Next Summer
- Moore, Meg Mitchell: Summer Stage
- Nesbo, Jo: Killing Moon
- Newman, T.J.: Drowning
- Pride, Christine: You Were Always Mine
- Roberts, Nora: Identity
- Rosenblum, Emma: Bad Summer People
- Rowley, Steven: The Celebrants
- See, Lisa: Lady Tan’s Circle of Women
- Taylor, Brandon: The Late Americans

**Adult non-fiction**
- Ackerman, Jennifer: What an Owl Knows
- Sevigny, Melissa: Brave the Wild River

**Children’s Fiction**
- Arnaldo, Monica: Mr. S
- Fleming, Candace: Penny & Pip
- Hammond, Tiffany: A Day with No Words
- Higgins, Carter: Some of these are Snails
- Jarvis: Bear and Bird: The Picnic and Other Stories
- Marshall, Albert: Walking Together
- Portis, Antoinette: A Seed Grows
- Salmon, Caspar: How to Count to One
- Weaver, Jo: Bibi

**Children’s Nonfiction**
- Calkhoven, Laurie: Squad Goals
- De V os, Asha: Humpback Whale
- Demonti, Ilaria: Sheeopology
- Finan, Catherine: Ice Cream Cones
- Goldstyn, Jacques: The Stars

**Young Adult**
- Havrelock, Deidre: Indigenous Ingenuity

**Audiobooks**
- Allende, Isabel: The Wind Knows My Name
- Toobin, Jeffrey: Homegrown

**Yoga**
While the summer hopefully heats up, you can take an hour each Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. in the upstairs of the Town Hall to relax, stretch, breathe, and balance to develop core strength, self-care, and calmness. This restorative program is led by Jess Schanz and is sponsored and funded by the Friends of the Library. Free will donations go to the instructor.

**Art Exhibit**
Be amazed by the botanical paintings of Gordon Morrison during July and August. These focus on wildflowers of different habitats but the more you look the more you see in the paintings – that dragonfly flitting, the small beetle on the flower, a frog at the base of the plants. These are truly extraordinary paintings. Also on display are many of the books that Gordon has either illustrated or written and illustrated and a story walk around the Library featuring Gordon’s book, Oak Tree.

**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. Wherever there is T-Mobile service, the hotspot should work.
**Historical Society News**

*Peter Kraniaj, president*

On recent workdays, the museum has been getting organized and updated. A revised acquisitions and de-acquisitions policy has been proposed. Planning is going forward for some exciting temporary exhibits.

The group is also talking with the DPW about improving the walkway to Old School House #1 so that the drainage is better and it looks more pleasing. In July, the cottage roses cover the old picket fence coming up South Royalston Rd onto the Common, making a lovely tableau. This fence is on Town land and to avoid demolition, the Historical Society took on the responsibility of its upkeep two decades ago. Now, the Society would like to hire someone to maintain the fence. Interested? Let us know.

In October, the popular “living history” cemetery tours will be back, using Riverside Cemetery as the setting. A group of volunteers is researching lives of the people buried there and working on scripts. So far, here are abolitionists, factory workers, neighbors from the polyglottal Pleasant Street duplexes, a state senator/Civil War historian, a soldier for the WWI trenches and more. If you would like to take the role of any of these old souls 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 21 at the Museum, using our web-site, or by calling Maureen Blasco 978-249-5138.

**Royalston Fish and Game Club**

Clubhouse phone: 978-249-3004.

Royalston F&G has a busy summer planned:

Luck of the Draw Horseshoes takes place on Tuesdays, rain or shine, from 5:30-9:30 p.m. Pay-as-you-throw, $5/day. Season points will be calculated by the best of 10-week scores. While one-time players are welcome, in order to qualify for prizes (1st, 2nd, 3rd) and attend the year-end party, participation in at least 10 weeks is required.

Trap Shooting for all skill levels is on Wednesdays, beginning at 5 p.m. Non-members are welcome to join in for $4/round (25 clays.) ATA/MATA members who need more registered targets, can meet that need on August 30th. Trap shooting is weather permitting – please contact Don at 978-430-7822 if the weather is questionable. (Be advised, there is no cell coverage at the Club!)

A Pig Roast is planned for Saturday, August 26th, to be served at approximately 2 p.m. The meal features a whole roast pig with all the to-go-withs, including dessert! Beverages will be available at the bar. Tickets, $20/person, are available in advance at the Club. 2023 memberships are still available. Obtain at the Clubhouse, $50.
CONGRATULATIONS AND GOOD NEWS

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

Emily Davis of Taft Hill Road and Ryan Darling of Laurel Lake Rd. have made the Dean’s List at Fitchburg State University.

Emily Davis

Marnie Anair graduated May 20th from Salem State University with a Masters of Education, focused on student affairs in higher ed. In her early years she attended The Village School, The Chicken Coop School, Monty Tech & then Keene State, all of which helped set her up for future success. A special thank you goes out to Mary Barclay of town for her unwavering support all the way through.

Marnie will be working as assistant director of admissions at Suffolk University School of Law in Boston.

Congratualtions to the recipients of the 2023 Ladies’ Benevolent Society Scholarships:
Nicole Bellabarba - H. Pauline Smith Award
Lillian Johnson- Nancy S. Bolton Award
Samantha West - Maxine E Wilcox Award

Wildlife and Wonders

Andrew and Ellee Newton contributed this photo of a baby fawn they noticed along the edge of Deland Rd. on July 16. Defended with dappled camouflage and very little odor, very young fawns are kept separated and isolated from even their twin siblings. Mothers visit their fawns as little as possible, coming by only to feed and move the babies as needed. This is to keep away predators who can easily spot the big doe.

While this isolation seems to leave the babies vulnerable, in fact it is statistically one of the least risky times in the deer’s life.

Kathy Chencharik sent this photo of a mother snapping turtle laying eggs on River Road. Snapping turtles look pre-historic and can live more than 40 years. After mating, the female leaves the water to find a suitable spot to lay her eggs. She seeks areas of loose soil where she can easily dig. She will dig a shallow bowl-shaped depression, usually in a sunny location, to lay 20-40 creamy white ping pong ball-sized eggs. The female covers the nest and then returns to the water. Snapping turtle eggs are very vulnerable to predation from skunks, raccoons, and foxes. As many as 90% of snapping turtle nests are destroyed by predators.

There is a relationship between temperatures in the nest early in the incubation period and the sex of the hatchlings. When nest temperatures are either cooler than 70°F or greater than 75°F, more females are produced; at the temperatures in between, more males are produced. The young generally hatch in 80 to 90 days. Hatchlings use an “egg tooth” to break open the leathery shell. Then they instinctively head for the water. About as big as a quarter and with a soft shell, these tiny turtles are easily preyed upon by everything from raccoons to great blue herons. They are not safe even when they reach the water, as fish, like bass, and older snapping turtles may eat them.

Do not pick up snappers by the tail as this can damage their vertebral column. Instead scoop into a trash can, put the lid on, move and release.
What is Happening at the Village School?
Rise Richardson, director

The school year ended with field day, a family potluck and graduation. Everyone is off to a well-deserved summer vacation.

Openings for the Fall
There are a few openings for kindergarten for this fall. For more information, call 978 249 3505 or email info@villageschoolma.org

Summer programs are happening at the Village School. Many are already filled up. Find more info at https://www.villageschoolma.org/programs/summer/

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

Summer Vacation in 1930s Royalston

Don Corser remembered setting up camp in the fields and bringing his new puppy to pick blueberries to sell to supplement the family income. He told the story to the Town Scrapbook, a collection of memories put together 23 years ago to mark the changing of the centuries. It can be viewed at the Library. Similarly, kids from Newton Hollow (where Lawrence Brook crosses NE Fitzwilliam Rd) came towards the Center to pick quarts of blueberries (near the current swamp) so they could get enough money to go to the York Theater in Athol to see a movie.

Monty Tech
Sara Dilg at 978-248-9828, Royalston Rep. s-dilig@montytech.net ~ 978-248-9828

Monty Tech finished the year strong, with a spring Career Expo – an evening event for job seekers that featured 53 local business partners.

Throughout the year, students participated in many school improvement projects, wrapping up with a renovation of the school store and construction of a Senior Courtyard pavilion. The number of students participating in coops is the highest in recent years, reaching 229 juniors and seniors by the end of the school year. In the fall, at least 365 new freshmen will have the opportunity to experience vocational education. Many more students are on the waiting list, which is used when a student is accepted but declines their offered seat. When applicable, that slot is offered to a waitlisted student from the same town as the student who declined. Otherwise, waitlisted students are prioritized according to the scores on their admissions evaluations.

On the topic of admissions, as some of you may be aware, a budget amendment was recently submitted to implement a blind lottery system for vocational technical school admissions across Massachusetts. Monty Tech Superintendent-Director Tom Browne and his counterparts across the state opposed this amendment for two main reasons: First, towns would not enjoy the relative budget predictability afforded by the current equitable per-town quota system; and second, the measure would not effectively increase the number of students who would be able to take advantage of vocational education.

Although the amendment was withdrawn, several efforts are still underway at the state legislative level that pertain to vocational education. Two proposed bills would institute the same blind lottery system that was suggested in the budget amendment. Two others would invest in increasing both access to, and support of, vocational technical programs, including funds for workforce-related infrastructure and training equipment.

Heywood Hospital’s “Ride of Your Life” motorcycle fundraiser, a partnership with Heywood Hospital and the Montachusett Suicide Prevent Task Force, is slated for Sunday August 20, 2023, beginning at 8 a.m. at Monty Tech. For more information on the mission of the Suicide Prevention Task Force, click over to https://www.heywood.org/montachusett-suicide-prevention-task-force.
Whitney Hall Marketing Study
Virtual Workshop Survey  Now Available
Let your voice be heard!

Participate in the virtual workshop survey:
https://tinyurl.com/whitneyhall
In less than 10 minutes, register your ideas by answering multiple choice and open-ended questions about Royalston’s priorities and the future of Whitney Hall.

Submit input anytime by:
Calling the study hotline: (978) 245-5831
Emailing the study team: WhitneyHall@keenindependent.com
Visit the project’s website, https://keenindependent.com/WhitneyHall, to:
View slides from the June 12 Public Meeting
Stay apprised as the project unfolds.

FIND YOUR VOICE
THIS SUMMER @ THE P.S. NEWTON LIBRARY

Royalston Shakespeare Company Theater Workshop
"The Tempest" June 28-July 7 Rehearsals 9:30-12:30 Mon.- Sat. @ the Town Hall
Performance Friday, July 7 @ 7 p.m.
Kids ages 8-18, actors, set designers, stage crew, costumes. No auditions.
Everyone is cast!
*This program is supported in part by a grant from the Royalston Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. Additional funds from donations and The Friends of the Library.*

Preschool Programs - Mondays 10 a.m. @ the Library
- July 10 - Bubbles, brains, and breathing w/ Nada Plooster
- July 17 - Design and dream- make spray painted t-shirts w/ Brooke Coleman
- July 24 - Sing and play w/ Emily Hall

Programs for Older Kids - Thursdays 1:30 p.m. @ the Library
- July 13 - Upcycled mandala suncatchers w/ Gina Verrelli
- July 20 - Learn to play a kalimba (thumb piano) w/ Jim Mercier. Take home your own kalimba! Space is limited, call to register.

Wednesday, July 26 2 p.m. @ the Town Hall - The Whalemobile w/ Cynde. Climb inside Nile, a 30’ long Humpback whale!
You must pre-register for a slot by calling the library.

Find Your Voice Parade - Friday, August 4 6 p.m. @ the Library
Scream for some ice cream! Then make a wacky hat w/ Amy Newland and parade around The Common making music and finding your voice! All ages welcome for ice cream and fun.

Phinehas S. Newton Library, 19 On the Common, Royalston, MA 978-249-3572
Garden Notes  
June 22, 2023

Other than additional plantings of a handful of crops (beans and squash and cucumbers and carrots and beets), the garden is in place. I’ve done my part; it remains for the elements to be either cooperative or less than cooperative. Any number can have an impact: insects, disease, varmints and, especially, the weather. Gardening is a humbling affair. I can encourage positive results; I cannot assure them. A case in point: our transplants are moved outdoors, hardening them off prior to putting them in the ground. Something (?) determined the dinner table had been set and proceeded to munch on the seedlings. It had particular tastes: the tomatoes and melons were ignored, the brassicas and peppers were not. We had to scramble for replacements.

With one notable exception, there is little to occupy me in the garden, that exception being the dreaded potato beetles. A combinations of factors have compounded the problem. They arrived early, and because the potatoes were set out relatively late, the plants were small. Damage is inflicted not so much by the adults as it is by the larva. Egg masses are laid on the underside of leaves. There can be several to many, each comprising upwards of a couple dozen eggs. If hatched, the leaves would be nibbled to nothing in short order. The solution? I flip over the plant and crush the masses. I don’t imagine there is a ‘sanctity of life’ in respect to potato larva. Because the plants were so short, this was undertaken on hands and knees. Recently our thirteen-month old granddaughter has discovered the delights of crawling. I experienced no delight crawling down the potato rows.

I did not think I’d ever say this but I am beginning to tire of asparagus. On the other hand, it is the only game in town, at least in respect to a cooked vegetable, and will remain so until mid-July – small ones with long antennae, black ones with red dots, click web. Together we looked for beetles and marveled at their variety - small ones with long antennae, black ones with red dots, click beetles that flipped backwards when touched, and giant June bugs – food? eggs? Others just ran back and forth, over and under the clods of dark earth. I had just exploded a carefully ordered world and the result was chaos. Feeling responsible, I stopped and stood vigil knowing there was nothing more I could do.

The garlic plant might surprise some among you whose knowledge of garlic does not extend beyond two bulbs to a box at the supermarket. Those bulbs are at the base, just under the surface, of a plant four feet tall. At this stage of development, the plant sends up a scape, a curled-up stalk which will eventually uncurl and develop a head of tiny bulbs. We actually do not observe that, since scapes are cut before they do. (More energy is directed to bulb formation.) These scapes are edible and we make a pesto out of them, to be combined eventually with late summer’s basil pesto.

The newsletter is on summer sabbatical next month. The garden is on anything but. Nature permitting, it is pay-off month, almost all the labor in the garden devoted to harvesting. It sure beats dealing with potato beetles.

Summer Lessons

Yesterday, between rain showers, I weeded a patch of daylilies. As I pulled up a particularly stubborn tuft of grass, my eye was caught by a shimmer of moving light. I had unearthed a colony of ants. Hundreds of tiny ants, glossy and brown, tumbled over each other in frantic disarray. Some carried small white specks – food? eggs? Others just ran back and forth, over and under the clods of dark earth. I had just exploded a carefully ordered world and the result was chaos. Feeling responsible, I stopped and stood vigil knowing there was nothing more I could do.

I have not always felt such empathy toward insects. When I was a child, a kind of reflex fear did not discriminate between harmful and harmless. The swoop of a dragonfly or the sudden hop of a cricket sent me running. I recall an overnight at a friend’s lakeside cabin where I discovered a very large wolf spider cowtering in the corner of our bedroom. My squeals brought my friend’s father who swiftly dispatched it with a broom. I didn’t know that wolf spiders are shy and reclusive, not aggressive at all. Poor creature.

Many years later, during our family gatherings in New Hampshire, I took my nieces and nephews on walks along roadsides and wooded paths. Hoping to instill wonder rather than fear, I pointed out the insects that share our world. The children learned to hold out a finger as a dragonfly perch, to notice how a grasshopper’s backwards knees allow them to leap so far, and to watch a spider spin its web. Together we looked for beetles and marveled at their variety – small ones with long antennae, black ones with red dots, click beetles that flipped backwards when touched, and giant June bugs that snapped noisily on the screens at night. They learned that it is the delicate green katydid, and not the cicada, who calls to us from the nighttime forest as we all drift off to sleep.

Fast forward a dozen years when my niece, Alex, moved into her first apartment. One night she sent me a text with a photo of a surprise visitor skulking near her bathtub drain. “I’m trying not to be freaked out by this insect, Aunt Deb,” she wrote. “But I’ve never seen anything like it. What is it?” Despite her apprehension, Alex’s curiosity was as strong as ever. In subsequent texts we discussed its identity (a house centipede) and clarified its family (arthropod, not insect). In the end, Alex used a paper cup to capture the centipede and release it outside. That moment of mercy felt like absolution for my hapless wolf spider of long ago.

Now my nieces and nephews are young adults, sophisticated in the ways of the world. Yet they still marvel at a praying mantis and will call me to the screen on a summer night to look at a particularly spectacular moth. As I crouched in our daylily garden and watched the ants rebuild their world, I thought of all of this and smiled. Those summer lessons of long ago have stayed with me as well. Each act of wonder - admiring a summer moth, gently transferring a house centipede from bathtub to lawn, and standing guard over an ant nest in chaos, seems like a small victory for us all.

Larry Siegel

Deb D’Amico
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

Although with noses in devices, children don’t seem to be complaining about boredom as frequently as they once did, but perhaps you can separate your child and device at least for a short period of time in the interest of accomplishing some meaningful home emergency preparedness. This isn’t busy work, but legitimate actions that can and should be undertaken by every family so they are prepared to “shelter in place” and pretty well take care of themselves for AT LEAST a full 72 hours. (Three days – 72 hours – is the average time it takes local assets to get beyond critical response in a wide-ranging emergency, and begin to deal with specific needs of families and individuals.)

The website https://www.ready.gov/kids provides an impressive amount of information, as well as age-appropriate activities for both younger children and teens, check-off sheets for home preparedness actions, and details about coming together with other like-minded young people to develop specific skills that are useful in an emergency. There’s also information about starting a program if there’s a need not addressed by existing groups.

Our area has regional CERTs (Community Emergency Response Teams) based in both Templeton and Athol that specialize in different areas of emergency management. For students in grades 8-11 who have a passion for community service and disaster preparedness, there is an application process (for next June’s group) to participate in the Youth Preparedness Council.

For those kids who need some electronics in their lives, there are on-line activities, and webinar recordings on (and a search engine to find) more than a dozen topics ranging from cybersecurity to mental health and wellness. You can even print out chapters of your adventure as a “graphic novel” (called comic books back in my era!) along the way!

So, your family can clean out the pantry and ensure that there is plenty of non-perishable food (don’t forget food for Fluffy and Fido), and fresh bottled water. (Make sure you have a can opener!) You can gather up all the first aid kits, supplies, and associated medicines in the house, inventory, and replace as needed. You can also gather all flashlights and radios and give them new batteries. Wrangle your collection of phone charging cords, cubes, packs... anything you need to keep your phones charged in an emergency so you can find what you need when you need it. You can assemble “Go Kits” in case you need to evacuate in a hurry. For the littles, print out a copy of “Preparedness with Pedro,” an impressively informative coloring/activity booklet published by FEMA in cooperation with the American Red Cross. Want to enhance the learning? It comes in multiple languages!

And yes, if the call of the computer is overpowering, you can all sit around and bask in the monitor’s glow, playing Disaster Master. Make it a family competition, as you all work your way through wildfires, tornados, hurricanes and blackouts, home fires, winter storms and extreme cold, tsunamis and earthquakes, and thunderstorms.

Emergency preparedness should be as everyday as breathing, eating, and sleeping. It needn’t be scary. It certainly isn’t boring, and it can, when thoughtfully approached, be a lot of fun for the whole family.

Preparedness beats panic every time!

Be informed ~ Make a Plan!
Tofu Saag Paneer Recipe
If you are lucky, your garden could have a lot of greens right about now (and if not, neighbors might and Market Basket definitely does). If you can get soft cheese from India called paneer, go for it, but if not, tofu makes a decent substitute.

Ingredients:
1 pkg firm tofu cut into 2 inch cubes
1 lb chopped spinach (or other greens)
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp chili powder
2 tsp coriander
1 tablespoon garam masala
1 tsp ground turmeric
4 garlic cloves (or scapes) smashed
1/2 large white onion chopped roughly
2 tsp plain yogurt
juice of 1/2 lemon
cream- optional

Warm the spices with garlic and onion in oil until fragrant. Then, wilt the spinach in the mixture. In a small bowl, blend spinach with lemon juice, yogurt and a little water to preferred texture. Add spinach mixture back to pan to warm. Now fold in tofu or paneer. Serve with hot rice. Serves 4.

The Royalston Community Newsletter
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